Realms of Remembered Violence:

The Emergence of Mass Murder Memorials in the United States, 1986-2012

Jordan Hill

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ABSTRACT

This research explores the new tradition of creating mass murder memorials in the United States at the turn of the twenty-first century. Using written and oral history sources in combination with memorial designs, I explore the planning processes undertaken by five different communities: Virginia Tech, Columbine, University of Texas, Oklahoma City and Edmond, OK. I analyze what these case studies reveal about how changing cultural expectations and political needs transformed commemorative practices concerning violence in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. By exposing how the timely interventions of national figures increasingly shaped local commemorative aspirations, my research illuminates how the brief period of national unity in the immediate aftermath has been discursively and materially foregrounded as the heart of national public memory narratives of mass murder. I argue that at the turn of the twenty-first century the memory of victims of mass murders—assuming something akin to the role that fallen soldiers have played for the bulk of American history—are now viewed by a range of political, religious and cultural actors as a highly effective means of bolstering perceptions of local, organizational and national unity. This project contributes to the interdisciplinary literature on commemoration in three ways. First, I challenge the literature on memorials built in the immediate aftermath of violence and tragedy by illustrating how these memory sites are increasingly but the first stage of the material culture of public memory. Second, my theory of a ritualized assemblage develops the existing literature by forwarding a concept well suited to analyze the relationship of between seemingly disparate memory sites. Lastly, the rhetoric of what I call the Myth of the Slaughtered Citizen contributes to the literature on nationalism and commemoration by explaining how the victims of mass murder were culturally substituted into the commemorative role traditionally held by fallen soldiers to promote a sense of local and national unity.

For my Family,
whose support and love made everything possible.

For Dr. Marian Mollin,
who taught me how to be a scholar.

And for all the people
for whom mass murder is not merely a national public memory,
but an intimate personal reality that has forever left a scar.

Table of Contents

FOREWORD: THE NEW AMERICAN TRADITION OF CONSTRUCTING MASS MURDER MEMORIALS **1**

INTRODUCTION **9**

REFRAMING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MEMORY, RITUAL & PLACE 9
MASS MURDER MEMORIALS' CONTRIBUTION TO THE COMMEMORATIVE CONVERSATION 20
MEMORIALIZING VIOLENCE IN THE PATRIOTIC LANDSCAPE 29

CHAPTER 1 EDMOND, OKLAHOMA - A POTENT COMMEMORATIVE HARBINGER OF MASS MURDER MEMORIAL TRENDS AND COMMEMORATIVE EXPECTATIONS **46**

1.1 A Brief History of Yellow Ribbons in the United States *48*
1.2 "What Do We Do?" Edmond's Exclusive Memorial Process *54*
1.3 Transforming Ephemeral Yellow Ribbons into a Permanent Memorial *60*
1.4 From Symbolic Accretion to Ritualized Assemblage *65*
1.5 The 'Sculptural Life" of The Yellow Ribbon Memorial *69*
A POTENT HARBINGER OF THINGS TO COME 76

CHAPTER 2 OKLAHOMA CITY - FROM SHADOWED GROUND TO SACRED SPACE: THE BIRTH OF A NATIONAL MASS MURDER MEMORIAL TRADITION, 1995-2001 ..... **80**

THE OKLAHOMA CITY MODEL 84
2.1.1 The Rhetoric of the Socio-Political Script Created by President Clinton *84*
2.1.2 Defining "Public" in the Public Commemorative Process *94*
2.1.3 Political Rhetoric and Public Process in the Memorial Mission Statement *105*
THE MEMORIAL COMPLEX: CONCENTRIC CIRCLES IN THE NATIONAL LANDSCAPE 113
2.2.1 The Outdoor Symbolic Memorial *118*
3.2.2 The Memorial Museum *124*
2.2.3 The Oklahoma City Religious Ritualized Assemblage *129*
2.2.4 The Downtown Oklahoma City & Governmental Ritualized Assemblages *131*
2.2.5 The Oklahoma State & Regional Ritualized Assemblages *134*
2.2.6 The United States' Oklahoma City Bombing Ritualized Assemblage *136*
POLITICAL AND PUBLIC MEMORIES OF NATIONAL UNITY 137

CHAPTER 3 COLUMBINE - CROSSES ON REBEL HILL: CHRISTIAN RHETORIC AND COMMEMORATIVE CONFLICT, 1999-2007 ..... **142**

3.1 OF PRESIDENTS AND PASTORS: National Unity Merges with Christian Faith *144*
3.2 THE 15/13 DEBATE: Forgiveness, Conflict & Assemblages of Crosses *158*
3.3 Memorializing Mass Murder Without Established Communal Bonds *172*
3.4 Narrative Remembrances & Memorial Resistances in the Columbine Memorial *191*
MASS MURDER MEMORIALS AND AMERICAN IDENTITY AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURY 200

CHAPTER 4 UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS: STONES AT THE BASE OF THE TOWER: THE RETROSPECTIVE COMMEMORATION OF THE 1966 TOWER KILLINGS, 1999-2007 ..... **205**

4.1 Commemoratively Creating "The Forty Acres," 1910-1937 ..... *209*
4.2 Thirty-Three Years of Commemorative Silence, 1966-1999 ..... *218*
4.3 Reinventing Rituals & Reopening the Tower, 1986-1999 ..... *227*
4.4 Retrospective Memorialization of the 1966 Tower Killings, 1999-2007 ..... *241*
OLD MEMORIAL TRADITIONS IN A NEW MILLENNIUM 257

CHAPTER 5 VIRGINIA TECH - HOKIE NATION: WAR, SPORTS, AND THE INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF MASS MURDER MEMORIALIZATION; 2007-2012 262
5.1 A Landscape of Soldiers and Sportsmen *264*
5.2 "WE WILL PREVAIL!": Convocation, Hokie Nation & President Bush *275*
5.3 HOKIE STONE: Immediate Aftermath Memorials on the Drillfield *283*
5.4 THE 32/33 DEBATE: Communal Dialogue or Administrative Threat? *291*
5.5 Tom Tillar's 'University-Sanctioned' Memorial Committee *300*
5.6 Constructing a New Hokie Nation *316*
INSTITUTIONALIZING MASS MURDER MEMORIALIZATION 330

CHAPTER 7 CONCLUSION - ESTABLISHING AN AMERICAN MEMORY AND TRADITION OF DOMESTIC MASS MURDER 334

BIBLIOGRAPHY 344
ARCHIVES AND COLLECTIONS 344
ORAL HISTORIES 344
PUBLICATIONS 345

FOREWORD: The New American Tradition of Constructing Mass Murder Memorials

> Until quite recently, events of mass murder… led almost exclusively to obliteration and rectification [of the site of the violence]. The first memorial I have been able to identify for a mass murder was the one erected in 1990 in San Ysidro, California, honoring the victims of the a 1984 shooting in a McDonald's restaurant. The second was the small memorial raised to the victims of the 1991 mass murder at a restaurant in Killeen, Texas… San Ysidro and Killeen—and now Oklahoma City—have set a precedent that other communities are emulating: to designate or even sanctify such sites that once would have been considered too shameful to mark…it is still too soon to say whether this trend will grow into a cultural tradition spanning more than a single generation, but it may.[1]

—Kenneth Foote,
Shadowed Ground: America's Landscapes of Violence and Tragedy
From the "Afterword" of the 2003 2nd Edition

There are only a few types of memorials because the human actions deemed worthy of public commemoration have generally been limited to wars, heroic male leaders, moments of national political import, and, far more rarely, to the victims of political repression. This dissertation is an investigation of the emergence of an entirely new kind of memory site in the United States: mass murder memorials. Mass murder is nothing new in U.S. history, yet for over two centuries U.S. Americans have seen such events as shameful and have sought to forget and move on as quickly as possible.[2] The notion of creating a permanent public memorial after an event of mass murder is an idea that only a generation ago was inconceivable in American culture. In the past twenty-five years, however, national commemorative sensibility has undergone a 180-degree

[1] Kenneth E. Foote, *Shadowed Ground: America's Landscapes of Violence and Tragedy* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003). 339-340.
[2] Ibid. 291-292.

shift in which citizens now actively promote such memorials under the interchangeable call to "never forget/always remember." In the twenty-first century, the creation of a memorial after mass murders has become a national expectation. This dissertation helps explain how this came to be by examining changes in the public memory of violence at the dawn of the 21st century, the local commemorative processes that underlie this transformation, and the sites in the patriotic landscape where memory narratives of the national significance of mass murder have been inscribed.

In order to be clear from the outset, in this dissertation I define "mass murder" as U.S. American citizen-on-citizen violence in which ten or more people are killed in a single event. The FBI defines mass murder as four or more victims in a single episode, whereas scholars have generally argued for three or more, but culturally speaking, the sad truth is that national attention is almost never captured by such events.[3] Quantity matters in the United States in nearly every realm of our social existence, and while some exceptional single-digit killings are labeled a "national tragedy," double-digit mass murders always are. The designation of citizens-on-citizen murder is important because of the assumed social contract of rights and responsibilities that citizens share. When

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[3] In his review of the literature, Dowden writes "the most common definition [for scholars] uses the killing of three or more victims during a single event." Craig Dowden, "Research on Multiple Murder: Where Are We in the State of the Art?," *Journal of Police and Criminal Psychology* 20, no. 2 (2005). 9. Fox and Levin note that "the FBI's Behavioral Sciences Unit (BSU) defined mass killings (or massacres) as homicides involving four or more victims in a single episode." In their discussion of the distinction between serial and mass murder the authors make an interesting point that the reason for the FBI's definition "may simply be a matter of resources and funding priorities. Broadening the scope of the problem, artificially, may help law enforcement secure additional resources for investigation." While they were referring specifically to the definition of serial murder, it makes sense that this might also underlie the rational for selecting four as the official FBI definition of mass murder. James Alan Fox and Jack Levin, *Extreme Killing: Understanding Serial and Mass Murder*, 2nd Edition ed. (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2012). 19-21. This project is less interested in governmental or scholarly quantification of the events of mass murder. My choice of ten or more in the definition of mass murder focuses on national attention in the aftermath, and the public memory that persists beyond the departure of the media. For more on definitions of mass murder, see also, Ronald M. Holmes and Stephen T. Holmes, *Mass Murder in the United States* (Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 2001).

someone from another country comes to the United States to kill American citizens, as in the case of September 11, for example, issues of international geopolitics result in violence that is of a wholly different constellation. Similarly, I exclude American citizens who are military or police from this definition because being ordered to kill your fellow citizens changes the issue of agency involved in killing. I am suggesting that, *in substance*, this definition captures what is meant when American citizens refer to the often used, but ill-defined, term “mass murder.”

The study of mass murder memorials is important for three interrelated reasons. Socially, there has been neither general public recognition nor sustained scholarly research on the reality of this new kind of memory site. For the communities where these killings have taken place, although there is usually the awareness of the existence of other such memory sites, the norm is still to locally define these memorials by describing them as memorials to the victims. While all memory sites built for people killed too soon are ultimately dedicated to victims, memorials are traditionally named by identifying the kind of event in which the victims were killed. For example, while there are many memorials in the patriotic landscape dedicated to American citizens who were killed while serving as soldiers in the armed forces, we don’t refer to them as such; we call them “war memorials.” People uncomfortable with the label “mass murder memorial” commonly question whether naming them as such glorifies the event of mass murder, yet, is that not exactly what war memorials do as well? As I will show in the pages that follow, like war memorials, mass murder memorials have never been apolitical sites focused purely on the memory of victims. The reality is that the planning of such memory sites are contentious

cultural battles over issues of politics, citizenship, and religion in which the memory of victims and the involvement of their families often become a secondary consideration.

Culturally, these memorials are important because they materially mark the increase both in mass murder and in the normalization of extreme violence as a form of American entertainment at the turn of the 21st century. On the one hand, this observation points to the historical increase of events of mass murder and the saturation level media coverage that occurs in the aftermath. With each new mass murder—the Aurora Batman killings, the Sandy Hook killings, and the D.C. Navy Yard killings being but the most recent—regularly scheduled television programming is brought to a halt and we collectively direct our national gaze towards SportsCenter-like coverage of the newest slaughter. On the other hand, this observation points to the normalization in popular culture of excessive violence as a means of entertainment in our everyday lives. While adults often wax lyrically about the developmental peril of exposing children to violent video games, television and movies, many American adults spend a great deal of time entertaining themselves with realistic depictions of murder watching shows like N.C.I.S. and playing games such as Grand Theft Auto. Mass murder memorials are thus touchstones, not only for the real killings whose names they carry, but also as cultural markers of our collective desire to entertain ourselves with violent simulacra.

Nationally, mass murder memorials matter because they have rapidly become a powerful and significant part of the United States' patriotic landscape. While memory sites like the National Mall in Washngton, D.C., and Plymouth Rock are important components of this landscape, historian Edward Linenthal explains that "dominating the

patriotic landscape are various places that memorialize war."[4] Throughout the majority of the twentieth century, war memorials physically embodied what George Mosse calls "the cult of the fallen soldier," a belief that "fighting and dying became a sacred duty…death in war made life meaningful" and was "central to the development of nationalism."[5] By the end of the twentieth century, however, the controversies surrounding the Vietnam Veteran's War Memorial tellingly illuminated the decline of the ability of war memorials to foster an unquestioned perception of national unity.[6] It was during the period between the end of the Cold War in 1989 and the beginning of the War on Terror after 2001 that the new American tradition of constructing mass murder memorials emerged in the patriotic landscape and filled the commemorative void produced by the decline of the symbolic power of war memorials. Importantly, this new tradition had established a memorial precedent of valorizing the death of citizens on American soil by September 11 2001, and thus provided a recent and recognizable memory script for promoting a patriotic sense of national unity at the onset of the War on Terror.

In this dissertation I argue that, like the symbolic power of fallen soldiers for most of American history, at the end of the twentieth century, a range of political, religious and cultural actors appropriated the memory of victims of domestically perpetrated mass murders as highly effective means of bolstering perceptions of local, institutional and

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[4] Edward Tabor Linenthal, *Sacred Ground: Americans and Their Battlefields* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991). 3.

[5] George L. Mosse, "National Cemeteries and National Revival: The Cult of the Fallen Soldiers in Germany," *Journal of Contemporary History* 14, no. 1 (1979). 2.

[6] "That old symbols have lost their power is not merely a sign of changing tastes, but an expression of attitudes toward war. The Vietnam War Memorial can stand not only as a monument to the fallen of the war, but also, snatching victory from defeat, as a monument to the death, however provisional, of the Myth of the War Experience." *Fallen Soldiers: Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990). 225.

national unity. In the traumatic aftermath of each new mass murder, round-the-clock news media coverage produces what Linenthal calls a nationwide "imagined bereaved community" that

> is one of the only ways Americans can imagine themselves as one; being 'together' with millions of others through expressions of mourning bypasses and transcends the many ways in which people are divided—by religion, by ideology, by class, by region, by race, by gender.[7]

After Oklahoma City, President Bill Clinton established and promoted a socio-political script that became what I call the Myth of the Slaughtered Citizen, which acknowledged the violence of the killings but stressed that what all American citizens need to remember is the national unity that they felt in the hours and days afterwards. Repeated again after Columbine and in each killing since, this Myth underlies a new commemorative sensibility in the United States that mass murder is something that should never be forgotten. Moreover, because the local authenticity of the planning of mass murder memorials is always stressed, in many cases the ritualized commemorative processes also transform the identity of the communities and institutions where the memorials reside. At the turn of the twenty-first century, the social stigma that has historically plagued mass murder has receded significantly, and the memory of domestically perpetrated "massacres have become vital" as a means of promoting collective perceptions of unity.[8]

This dissertation is comprised of five chapters, each of which is a case study of a community that played a significant role in developing the new American tradition of constructing mass murder memorials. Every chapter covers the period from the moment

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[7] Edward Tabor Linenthal, *The Unfinished Bombing: Oklahoma City in American Memory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001). 109, 111; respectively.

[8] Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality Volume I: The Will to Knowledge* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978). 137.

that the proverbial "last bullet shell hits the ground" up until the dedication of a public memorial in the national landscape, with a few of the chapters examining the cultural impact of the memorial after its completion. Chapter Two reviews the history of the memorialization of violence in the United States; Chapter Three investigates Edmond, Oklahoma's creation of "The Yellow Ribbon" memorial, a memory site that marks the onset of a period of national production of mass murder memorials; Chapter Four examines how Oklahoma City established both a model and a national expectation of the creation of such a memory sites; Chapter Five analyzes the contentious cultural and religious battles at Columbine; Chapter Six explores the phenomenon of retrospective commemoration of mass murder by analyzing the case of the University of Texas at Austin; Chapter Seven examines the institutionalization of the mass murder memorial tradition at Virginia Tech. Ordered in this way, the dissertation also traces the rough outlines of three phases of the new tradition. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, Edmond and Oklahoma City established the tradition that became the foundation for the national expectation of such memorials. From 1999-2007, Columbine and the University of Texas' commemorative process both persisted for eight years and show that the cultural acceptance of the new tradition was anything but a given. Virginia Tech's move after 2007 to rapidly complete their permanent memorial in four months illustrates the first example of the efficient institutionalization of the tradition.

This dissertation is also a spatial history in which I investigate the cultural discourses inscribed in geographic locations in order to access how the memory of violence in the United States has changed over time *in space.* The primary sources I use are: newspaper and magazine articles; the texts inscribed in the memorials; oral history

interviews with memorial committees, architects, landscape designers, politicians and civil servants, and family members; and architectural and landscape designs, blueprints, and models. I use these sources to answers a number of central questions. What are the precedents of marking violence in the American landscape that preceded mass murder memorials? How do the politics of commemoration influence the construction of public memory and ritual sites related to violence? Who has had commemorative agency in crafting memory narratives of mass murder, and who is excluded or limited from participating? How do memory sites influence and produce personal, communal and national identities? What role does ritualization play in linking memory to specific sites in the landscape? In order to highlight the significance of these questions, this introduction investigates the relationship between the literature on memory, ritual and place, before detailing my integrated contributions to these literatures identifies three important trends—one cultural, one spatial and one socio-political—that enabled the emergence of the new American tradition of constructing mass murder memorials.

INTRODUCTION

Reframing the Relationship Between Memory, Ritual & Place

> [The memorializing function is a] practice of permanently recording history [that] also serves to reinforce power. It too is a sort of ritual of power…history, then, makes things memorable, and by making them memorable, inscribes deeds in a discourse that constrains and immobilizes minor actions in monuments that will turn them to stone and render them, so to speak, present forever.[1]

—Michel Foucault

Understanding the emergence of mass murder memorials demands an interconnected understanding of the relationship between memory, ritual and place that crosses the boundaries of each concept's field of study. From ancient philosophy to modern scholarship, the border between memory and ritual remains blurry. Recent scholarship has begun to bridge the "new ritual scholarship and the literature focused on issues of commemoration, public memory, and national identity," and this project seeks to further integrate our understanding of these connections.[2] This section traces the relationship between these different fields of study in order to demonstrate that ritual and memory are fundamentally interconnected, and that the point of their connection is always located in a site.[3]

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[1] *Society Must Be Defended: Lectures at the Collège De France, 1975-76* (New York: Picador, 2003). 67.
[2] Kenneth Foote, "Shadowed Ground, Sacred Place: Reflections on Violence, Tragedy, Memorials and Public Commemorative Rituals," in *Holy Ground: Re-Inventing Ritual Space in Modern Western Culture*, ed. Paul Post and Arie L. Molendijk (Leuven: Peeters, 2010). 94.
[3] Recent scholarship in memory and ritual studies has created a number of similar "triads" that seek to understand memory, ritual, or both in an integrated fashion. The rhetoricians Dickinson et al. argue for a the relationship between public memory, ritual and rhetoric. In the field of new ritual studies, Paul Post writes about "the place/space-ritual-sacrality/religion triad." Post immediately notes, however, that "it is striking how dominant the repertoires of remembrance are . . . this does not so much refer to the tradition of

An interconnected understanding of ritual, memory and place is both enduringly ancient and increasingly acknowledged in contemporary scholarship. Sitting at the nexus between these two periods is Francis Yates' 1966 book, *The Art of Memory,* a staple citation of memory studies scholars that seeks to point toward the longer Western conversation that provides an important roadmap for detailing this relationship.[4] Yates begins her book with of a tale that has become the creation myth of contemporary memory studies itself: that of the Greek poet Simonides, who leaves a dinner party briefly only to witness the roof cave in and crush everyone around the table at which he had just been sitting.[5] The bodies of those who were killed were so mangled that they could not be visually identified. Simonides was able to identify the bodies by recalling exactly where each guest had been sitting at the table. This story served as the impetus

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lieux de memoire . . . but rather more broadly to our contact with the past . . . it is interesting, for instance, to see how a broad and often fundamental discussion 'took place' around ritual memorial loci." The closest triad in the scholarship is the recent formulation of Thomas Quartier who suggests a relationship between memorial culture, place, and a three pronged third tier comprised of objects, actions and attitudes. As the work of Grimes and others has argued, ritual itself is comprised of objects, actions and attitudes, and it is in this reading of Quartier that I suggest a parallel between my triad and his. See, respectively, Greg Dickinson, Carole Blair, and Brian L. Ott, *Places of Public Memory: The Rhetoric of Museums and Memorials* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2010). 2; Paul Post and Arie L. Molendijk, *Holy Ground: Re-Inventing Ritual Space in Modern Western Culture*, Liturgia Condenda (Lueven Peeters, 2010). 8; Thomas Quartier, "Memorialising the Death: Places, Objects, Actions, Attitudes," in *Sacred Places in Modern Western Culture*, ed. Paul Post, Arie L. Molendijek, and Justin Kroesen (Leuven: Peeters, 2011). Diagram on 73.

[4] This historiography is circular in the sense that *The Art of Memory* points towards the classical literature on the relationship between memory and place, and has also become the citation in the contemporary literature that is often used to "acknowledge" this literature; regardless of whether it actually does so in any meaningful way. On the other hand, the transitional literature's critique of the classical conceptions and its subsequent presentation of new frameworks for understanding the relationship of memory and place are located both before and after the publication of *The Art of Memory*. Lastly, and as will be pointed out at the end of this section, Yates influence on Nora's work—which I argue is *the foundational* text in the literature—illustrates this circularity for all the literature that will be reviewed in this section.

[5] Dickinson et. al. note how Yates' text is both foundational to the field of memory studies, but also rarely engaged in any depth beyond the obligatory citation. My engagement with the "ancient conceptions," albeit brief, seeks to point to the importance the relationship between memory and place throughout both the past and the present literature. "Almost regardless of the claims they forward . . . memory theorists refer back to [Yates] work. Ultimately, though, her treatise typically represents little more than an aside for most, since memory's many historical discontinuities appear to dislocate its modern manifestations from ancient conceptions." See Dickinson, Blair, and Ott, *Places of Public Memory: The Rhetoric of Museums and Memorials*. 10.

for what Yates termed the "art of memory, or the classical mnemonic technique which "seeks to memorize through a technique of impressing 'places' and 'images' on memory."[6]

Yates points backwards to the mnemonic traditions of orators during the western classical age as the origins of the relationship between memory and place. All western conceptions of memory are, she argues, varying responses to Plato's concept of "the Forms" as forwarded most clearly in *Phaedo* and "The Allegory of the Cave" chapter of *The Republic*.[7] Yates analyzes the works of three post-Platonic authors—Cicero, Quintillian, and the anonymous author of *Ad Herennium*—as important iterations of the mnemonic techniques of the classical "the art of memory." All three of these writers agreed that for orators, the creation of active images (*imagines agentes*) intentionally situated in places, both real and imagined, was crucial for the creation of enduring memories.[8] "Ritual" is not emphasized in Yates or the ancient texts by name; however, recent debates in ritual studies illustrate that the action of assigning active images to

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[6] Frances Amelia Yates, *The Art of Memory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966). xi.
[7] Plato speaks of the Forms as "the invisible [existence which] is unchanging . . . pure, and eternal, and immortal, and unchangeable" before noting that "each of the [Forms] exists and . . . phenomena take on the names of the [Forms] as they participate in them." The most famous discussion of the Forms comes in the "Allegory of the Cave," in which Plato notes how prisoners chained inside a cave watch shadows on a wall and come to believe these shadows are reality. Plato, "Phaedo," in *Ancient Philosophy*, ed. Forrest E. Baird and Walter Kaufman (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1997). 79a-d; 102b; Plato and Reginald E. Allen, *The Republic* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006). 227-261.
[8] The earliest text, the 86-82 BCE text *Ad Herennium* lays out two components that were seen as essential for the creation of memory: "a *locus* is a place easily grasped by the memory . . . [and] Images, [which] are forms, marks, or simulacra of what we wish to remember." Cicero builds upon the importance of place in memory in his 55 BCE text *De Oratore* by noting "a memory of things is a very special property . . . [it] can imprint on our minds by a skillful arrangement of several masks (*singulis personis*) that represent them, so that we may grasp ideas by means of images and their order means of places." Nearly a century later, Quintilian's 50 CE text *Institutio Oratorio* illustrates succinctly the enduring belief during the classical era that ritual, site, and memory were interrelated in his statement that "it is an assistance to the *memory* if places are stamped upon the mind . . . we require . . . places, either real or imaginary, and images or simulacra which must be invented." See, respectively, Yates, *The Art of Memory*. 6. Italics in original; Cicero, *De Oratore*, trans. E.W. Sutton and H. Rackham, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1948). 359; Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria Vol. Iii*, trans. H. E. Butleribid. (1921). 20-21.

places for the purpose of aiding memory is itself a preparatory ritual by which orators effectively linked place and memory.[9]

The beginnings of the modern conversations on memory and ritual have both focused on where these phenomena take place.[10] In the early twentieth century, Sigmund Freud and Henri Bergson explained memory as a warehouse of individual experience, and this understanding has become the foundation of both psychological and colloquial contemporary understandings of memory.[11] In 1925, Maurice Halbwachs argued against this understanding and posited that memory is not a "combination of individual recollections . . . [or] empty forms," but is instead reliant on "collective frameworks . . . to reconstruct an image of the past which is in accord, in each epoch,

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[9] The author of *Ad Herennium* directs that the images used to foster lasting memory cannot be vague but must be "active images" (*imagines agentes*) which should be "something exceptionally base, dishonorable, unusual, great, unbelievable, or ridiculous, that we are likely to remember for a long time . . . nature shows us that she is not aroused by the common ordinary event, but is moved by a new or striking occurrence . . .[we must] establish similitudes as striking as possible . . . [to] ensure our remembering . . ." [Anonymous, *Ad Herennium* trans. Harry Caplanibid. (1954). III, xxii.] Yates is clearly uncomfortable, however, with the mandate to employ active images as evidenced in her description of this concept as a "weirdly populated memory" (Yates, 10. See also page 25.). It is worth preliminarily noting that I believe a critique of her interpretation of *Ad Herennium's* presentation of *imagines agentes* might illuminate some of the issues that contemporary memory studies still wrestles with, particularly the infamous quote from Robert Musil that "nothing is so invisible as a monument," in the sense that *imagines agentes* should be, if nothing else, *unforgettable*. Visits to a range of memory sites illustrates that while occasionally notable, monuments tend to have a generally anesthetized or 'traditional' aesthetic which would disqualify most from being *imagines agentes*. See, Robert Musil, *The Man without Qualities*, ed. Burton Pike, trans. Sophie Wilkins (New York: A.A. Knopf 1995).

[10] Something interesting happens in the footnotes of contemporary scholarship that needs to be noted here: For all intents and purposes, there is a 1700 year gap in memory studies citations that reaches from Quintilian up until the late 1800s. In memory studies this explains the ubiquitous Yates citation—put simply, Yates' most pragmatic legacy may in fact be that by citing *The Art of Memory* many scholars effectively "account" for the 1700 year gap in our collective conversation. While it is not within the scope of this project, the development of a historically accurate scholarly discussion on ritual, place and memory needs to engage this nearly two-millennium gap.

[11] Freud put forward the theory that memory was located in the individual and was stored and enacted in the unconscious. Sigmund Freud, "Mourning and Melancholia," in *The Freud Reader*, ed. Peter Gay (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1917). See also, "Repetition, Recollection and Working-Through: Further Recommendations on the Technique of Pscyho-Analysis Ii," in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. James Strachey (1914); "On Transience," in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* ed. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1957). For Bergson, memory was more of a temporal phenomenon by which individual experience helped in assessing duration. Originally published in Henri Bergson, Nancy Margaret Paul, and William Scott Palmer, *Matter and Memory* (London: G. Allen & Co., 1912). Most current publication, Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory* (Mineola, N.Y.: Dover Publications, 2004).

with the predominant thoughts of the society."[12] For Halbwachs, "collective memory" was located primarily in language or discourse, which he acknowledged was problematic because language "fails to encompass all memories that are even slightly complex."[13] Collective memory was thus an imperfect copy of the events that it claimed to represent.

Scholarly discussions of the role of ritual in the creation of sacred space have had similar debates. Paul Post calls the 'classical' view the perspective most famously articulated by Mircea Eliade but also developed by Van der Leeuw, Otto, Heiler and others, that sacred space creates itself and "is the opposite of profane [space]."[14] Kim Knott termed the oppositional line of thought the 'situational' view, as shown in the work of Jonathan Z. Smith and also forwarded in the writing of Foucault, LeFebrve, Bell, Rapport and others that argues that human actions and rituals create sacred space.[15] While understandings of individual memory and ontological sacred space have had a profound influence on the scholarship, Halbwach's collective memory and Smith's ritual emplacement perspectives have become the dominant paradigm of the contemporary fields of memory and ritual studies.

Building on these early works, during the period that extends from roughly 1965 to 1985, the modern fields of the study of memory, ritual and place emerged. The works

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[12] Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, trans. Lewis A. Coser (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1925 [1992]). 40.
[13] Ibid. 45.
[14] Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion* (New York: Harcourt, 1959). 10. Paul Post, "Place of Action: Exploring the Study of Space, Ritual and Religion," in *Holy Ground: Re-Inventing Ritual Space in Modern Western Culture*, ed. Paul Post and Arie L. Molendijk, Liturgia Condenda (Leuven: Peeters, 2010). 35, see also 42 & 27. Kim Knott calls this view the "situational' line. See Kim Knott, *The Location of Religion: A Spatial Analysis* (London: Equinox Pub., 2005). 43.
[15] *The Location of Religion: A Spatial Analysis*. 43. Johnathan Z. Smith, *To Take Place: Toward a Theory in Ritual* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987).; Michel Foucault, "Of Other Spaces," *Diacritics* Spring (1986). 22-27; "Space, Power, Knowledge," in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984).; Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991).; Catherine M. Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997); Roy A. Rappaport, *Religion and Ritual in the Making of Humanity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

of Yates (1966), Paul Fussell (1975), Eric Hobsbawm (1983) and David Lowenthal (1985) mark the oft cited and early texts of memory studies. Fussell argues that "modern memory" is ironic and emerged from the need to cope with the violence of the First World War; Hobsbawm argues that many social practices are in fact 'invented traditions' with no past but which we perceive/remember as being dictated by longstanding rules and rituals; and Lowenthal argues that memory is a selective reconstruction of the past that is not the past, but a manipulation of the past in the present.[16] Grimes' aptly titled *Beginnings in Ritual Studies* (1982) argues that a comparative study of ritual outside of liturgy was emerging and that its focus was on "the performative, non-verbal elements of action."[17] Lastly, the work of Yi-Fu Tuan (1974, 1977, 1979) began the project of inquiring into the relationship of space, place and "the affective bond between people and place"[18] that would later be termed "humanist geography."[19] Even a decade later, Lowenthal (1986) noted simply that for scholars "landscape involves a paradox . . . it includes virtually everything around us . . . yet virtually nothing is known about landscape in its totality."[20] Viewed collectively, it is clear that the growing scholarly awareness of memory, ritual and place in the post-war years led the development of new fields of inquiry.

[16] Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975). 35; E. J. Hobsbawm and T. O. Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983). 1; David Lowenthal, *The Past Is a Foreign Country* (Cambridge Cambridge University Press, 1985). 210, 185-187.
[17] Ronald L. Grimes, *Beginnings in Ritual Studies* (Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1982). "Preface," page 3.
[18] Yi-fu Tuan, *Topophilia: A Study of Environmental Perception, Attitudes, and Values* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1974). 4.
[19] See also, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977); *Landscapes of Fear* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1979).
[20] David Lowenthal, "Introduction," in *Landscape Meanings and Values*, ed. Edmund C. Penning-Rowsell, David Lowenthal, and Landscape Research Group (London Allen and Unwin, 1986). 1.

While much of the scholarship on memory, ritual and place has its own unique literature and authors, the diverse work of Michel Foucault is a notable exception that has profoundly influenced each field. Building upon Halbwach's formulation of collective memory, Foucault's related concepts of countermemory, popular memory and subjugated knowledges have become central to the modern study of memory.[21] In different ways, each of Foucault's terms distinguished between what John Bodnar would later call the vernacular memory of the masses from the official memory narratives created by the structures of power in society.[22] Foucault also coined the term "heterotopia" to refer to "those singular spaces to be found in some given social spaces whose functions are different or even the opposite of others… [because] space is fundamental in any form of communal life; space is fundamental in any exercise of power."[23] Post reflects that in the study of both ritual and place, heterotopia is helpful in analyzing "the dynamics or representation of space and spaces of representations… [and] is why Foucault… is so popular in circles of scholars reflecting on sacred/religious places."[24]

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[21] Foucault explained countermemory as "a use of history that servers its connection with memory" by pushing history's "masquerade to its limit and prepare the great carnival of time where masks are constantly reappearing . . . in the form of a concerted carnival." Michel Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, ed. Donald F. Bouchard (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1977). 160-161. Foucault termed "popular memory" the memory of "those who are barred from writing . . . these people nevertheless do have a way of recording history, or remembering it . . . [and] a whole number of apparatuses have been set up . . . to obstruct the flow of this popular memory." "Film and Popular Memory," in *Foucault Live: Interviews, 1961-1984*, ed. Sylvere Lotringer (New York: Semiotext(e), 1996). 123. Lastly, Foucault described subjugated knowledges as "historical knowledges that have been buried or masked in functional coherences or formal systemizations . . . the dividing lines of confrontations and struggles that functional arrangements or systematic organizations are designed to mask… a whole series of knowledges that have been disqualified as nonconceptual knowledges, as insufficiently elaborated knowledges." *Society Must Be Defended: Lectures at the Collège De France, 1975-76*. 6-8. The original English translation of this lecture that was cited by scholars before 2003 was Michel Foucault and Colin Gordon, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977* (New York, N.Y.: Pantheon Books, 1980).

[22] John E. Bodnar, *Remaking America: Public Memory, Commemoration, and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1992). 13-15.

[23] Foucault, "Space, Power, Knowledge." 252.

[24] Post, "Place of Action: Exploring the Study of Space, Ritual and Religion." 25.

More fundamentally, Foucault's work has pushed scholars to analyze how sites of memory and ritual are contested spaces where battles over issues of identity and inclusion are waged. In memory studies, Bodnar argues "public commemoration in the present is contested and involves a struggle for supremacy between advocates of various political ideas and sentiments."[25] In his analysis of United States historic battlefields, Linenthal notes that these memorials are "centers of power [that] have helped to define, for numerous generations, those who are 'insiders' and 'outsiders' in American culture."[26] Ritual studies literature makes similar observations about ritual. For Molendijk and Post, "ritual space as contested ground…there, we suspect, we catch sight of the 'sacral' character of space, there 'sacral' identities are at stake."[27] Contestation and identity are so integral to ritual that Grimes defines ritual itself as "a primary means of identifying ourselves with, and defining ourselves against, others."[28] The role of struggle is so pronounced in the literature on both memory and ritual that Chidester and Linenthal suggest that "the battlefield provides the governing metaphor [of the] poetics and politics of space…ritualized and reinterpreted, American sacred space remains contested space."[29]

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[25] Bodnar, *Remaking America: Public Memory, Commemoration, and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century*. 13.

[26] Linenthal, *Sacred Ground: Americans and Their Battlefields*. 216. Two other important works on the relationship between identity memory and commemoration are "Memory and Identity: The History of a Relationship" in John R. Gillis, *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994). and Phillip Handler, "Is 'Identity' a Useful Cross-Cultural Concept" in ibid. Gillis writes, "both identity and memory are political and social constructs, and should be treated as such…commemorative activity is…in fact the product of processes of intense contest, struggle, and in some instances, annihilation."

[27] Post and Molendijk, *Holy Ground: Re-Inventing Ritual Space in Modern Western Culture*. 9.

[28] Ronald L. Grimes, *Marrying & Burying: Rites of Passage in a Man's Life* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1995). 233.

[29] David Chidester and Edward Tabor Linenthal, *American Sacred Space*, Religion in North America (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995). 24.

In the 1980s Pierre Nora and Jonathan Z. Smith emphasized how memory and ritual are fundamentally connected to sites. In Nora's massive work *Les Lieux de Memoire*—which translates into English as "Sites of Memory"—he infamously argued that "it is the exclusion of the event that defines the *lieux*…memory attaches itself to sites, whereas history attaches itself to events."[30] Many scholars have chosen to temper Nora's provocative assertion by siding with Marita Sturken's interpretation that "cultural memory and history [are] entangled rather than oppositional."[31] Nora's influence, however, has led to a proliferation of literature that Karen Till calls "biography of site" that "provide nuanced depictions of the ways national histories, memorial cultures, and shared stores are remembered and forgotten, to analyze change to existing public cultures of memory within a given country."[32] J.Z. Smith also emphasized the role of places in his argument that "ritual is, first and foremost, a mode of paying attention. It is a process of marking interest…the role of place [is] a fundamental component of ritual: place directs attention."[33] The work of Nora and Smith established the centrality of place in understanding and analyzing both memory and ritual.

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[30] Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: Les Leiux De Memoire," *Representations* Special Issue: Memory and Counter-Memory, no. 26 (1989). 22. Nora acknowledges "I took [*lieux*] from ancient and medieval rhetoric as described by Francis Yates in . . . *The Art of Memory*, which recounts an important tradition of mnemonic techniques . . . a systematic inventory of *loci memoriae*, or 'memory places'. . . something like that of the English word 'roots'" "From *Lieux De Memoire* to Realms of Memory," in *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past* ed. Lawrence D. Kritzman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992). 2.

[31] Marita Sturken, *Tangled Memories: The Vietnam War, the Aids Epidemic, and the Politics of Remembering* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997). 5.

[32] Karen Till, "Memory Studies," *History Workshop Journal*, no. 62 (2006). 327.

[33] Smith, *To Take Place: Toward a Theory in Ritual*. 103. Girmes responded, "To me, it seems obvious that ritual is a kind of action, that it inevitably occurs in a specific place, and that such places vary in their importance to the rites they ground. To Smith, however, it is obvious that ritual is a kind of emplacement and that emplacement constitutes ritual. Both Smith and I theorize about ritual, but he privileges space, and I do not. If I privilege anything, it is action. Accordingly, my aim is to engage in a critical reading of Smith's spatial theory of ritual from the point of view of a more action-oriented theory." Ronald L. Grimes, "Jonathan Z. Smith's Theory of Ritual Space," *Religion* 29, no. 3 (1999). 261. The fact that Grimes himself responded to Smith made one thing clear: accurate or not, by the mid-90s sites were a fundamental component of how scholars understood ritual.

With the foundational literature on these concepts in place, scholarship in the last two decades of the twentieth century made bold pronouncements about an explosion of both memory and ritual in western societies. The proliferation of memorials, monuments, museums, and archives during this period led Andreas Huyssen and other memory scholars to identify "a memory boom of unprecedented proportions."[34] In ritual studies, Gerald Lukken similarly noted "the 'ritual explosion' of the 1990s…so much so that there are now rituals in abundance."[35] Erica Doss' recent book *Memorial Mania* goes a step further and argues that this cultural behavior "is excessive, frenzied and extreme—hence manic…modern [America has an] obsession with commemoration."[36] But as Doss herself acknowledges, a century earlier there was a "statue mania" that addressed "anxieties unleashed by the rapid advance of modernism, immigration, and mass culture" that echoes many contemporary cultural patterns and concerns.[37] To what degree the commemorative impulse at the turn of the twenty-first century is unique—as opposed to cyclical—only time will tell. What can be said with certainty, however, is that during

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[34] Andreas Huyssen, *Twilight Memories: Marking Time in a Culture of Amnesia* (New York: Routledge, 1995). 5-7. The most comprehensive monograph on the "memory boom" and "memory crisis" is Erika Doss, *Memorial Mania: Public Feeling in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010). See also, George Lipsitz, *Time Passages: Collective Memory and American Popular Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990). 12; M. Christine Boyer, *The City of Collective Memory: Its Historical Imagery and Architectural Entertainments* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1994). 1-28; Andreas Huyssen, "Monuments and Holocaust Memory in a Media Age," in *Twilight Memories: Marking Time in a Culture of Amnesia* (New York: Routledge, 1995); *Present Pasts: Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003).; Emily S. Rosenberg, *A Date Which Will Live: Pearl Harbor in American Memory* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003). 186; Kerwin Lee Klein, "On the Emergence of Memory in Historical Discourse," *Representations* Special Issue: Grounds for Remembering, no. 69 (2000). 127; Marita Sturken, *Tourists of History: Memory, Kitsch, and Consumerism from Oklahoma City to Ground Zero* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007). 14.

[35] Gerard Lukken, *Rituals in Abundance: Critical Reflections on the Place, Form and Indenity of Christian Ritual in Our Culture* (2005). 3; In the quote, Lukken references his earlier book, *Rituelen in Overvloed: Een Kritische Bezinning Op De Plaats En De Gestalte Van Het Christelijke Ritueel in Onze Cultuur* (Baarn: Gooi en Sticht, 1999).

[36] Doss, *Memorial Mania: Public Feeling in America*. 13.

[37] Ibid. 27. For a full discussion of the late 19th century statue mania, see 20-30. For the sake of clarity, perhaps the concerns of the late 20th century might be better understood as anxieties about post-modernism, immigration, and mass digital culture.

this era there was a notable proliferation of public engagement with, and academic scholarship on, the sites of memory and ritual.

Within the broader literature, recent cross-boundary scholarship has focused on the ritual and memory sites born in the aftermath of events of violence and tragedy.[38] Building on the work of Lukken, Paul Post writes that "increasingly, after a disaster, people turn to rituals," and recent ritual studies literature has investigated a wide array of these disaster rituals.[39] Within the memorial landscape itself, Marita Tumarkin coined the term "traumascapes," to refer to the places "marked by traumatic legacies of violence…spaces, where events are experienced and re-experienced across time…places of shared human suffering…they are places that compel memories, crystallize identities

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[38] These terms, respectively, are landscapes of fear, topography of terror, shadowed ground, deathscapes, landscapes of calamity, disaster rituals, and traumascapes. See, Tuan, *Landscapes of Fear*.; James Edward Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993). 283; Kenneth E. Foote, *Shadowed Ground: America's Landscapes of Violence and Tragedy*, 1st ed. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1997).; Lily Kong, "Cemeteries and Columbaria, Memorials and Mausoleums: Narrative and Interpretation in the Study of Deathscapes in Geography," *Austrailian Geographical Studies*, no. 37 (1999).; Peter W. Williams, "Sacred Space in North America," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 70, no. 3 (2002).; Paul Post et al., *Disaster Ritual: Explorations of an Emerging Ritual Repertoire*, Liturgia Condenda (Leuven Peeters, 2003).; Maria M. Tumarkin, *Traumascapes: The Power and Fate of Places Transformed by Tragedy* (Carlton, Victoria: Melbourne University Publishing, 2005).

[39] Post et al., *Disaster Ritual: Explorations of an Emerging Ritual Repertoire*. 3. For new ritual studies literature that deals with violence, ritual and commemoration, see, Irene Stengs, "Commemorating Victims of 'Senseless Violence': Negotiating Ethic Inclusion and Exclusion," in *Reframing Dutch Culture*, ed. Peter Jan Margry and H. Roodenburg (Hampshire: Burlington, 2007); Peter Jan Margry, "Secular Pilgrimage: A Contradition in Terms," in *Shirnes and Pilgrimage in the Modern World: New Itineraries into the Sacred*, ed. Peter Jan Margry (Amsterdamn: Amsterdamn University Press, 2008); Foote, "Shadowed Ground, Sacred Place: Reflections on Violence, Tragedy, Memorials and Public Commemorative Rituals."; Arie L. Molendijk, "The Notion of the 'Sacred'," ibid., Liturgia Condenda; Post and Molendijk, *Holy Ground: Re-Inventing Ritual Space in Modern Western Culture*; Irene Stengs, "Public Practices of Commemorative Mourning: Ritualized Space, Politicized Space, Mediated Space. Three Cases from the Netherlands," in *Holy Ground: Re-Inventing Ritual Space in Modern Western Culture*, ed. Paul Post and Arie L. Molendijk, Liturgia Condenda (Leuven: Peeters, 2010); Judith Tonnaer, "Collective Memorial Rituals in a Dutch Landscape," ibid.; Ronald L. Grimes et al., *Ritual, Media, and Conflict* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); Michael Houseman, "Refracting Ritual: An Upside-Down Perspective on Ritual, Media, and Conflict," in *Ritual, Media, and Conflict*, ed. Ronald L. Grimes, et al. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011); Peter Jan Margry, "The Silent March: A Ritual of Healing and Protest for an Afflicted Society," in *Sacred Places in Modern Western Culture*, ed. Paul Post, Arie L. Molendijek, and Justin Kroesen (Leuven: Peeters, 2011); Paul Post, Arie L. Molendijek, and Justin Kroesen, *Sacred Places in Modern Western Culture* (Leuven: Peeters, 2011); Quartier, "Memorialising the Death: Places, Objects, Actions, Attitudes."

and meanings, and exude power and enchantment."[40] A comparative analysis of mass murder memorials provides an ideal entry point for developing the scholarly conversation on the relationship between ritual, memory and place in the traumascapes where these disaster rituals are enacted.

Mass Murder Memorials' Contribution to the Commemorative Conversation

> What memorials like the Vietnam Wall…remind us is that the nation-state itself is not a natural or unchanging feature of our lives. It is one that has to be continually reproduced, often through wars and their remembrance, always through violence. [And] we ourselves are implicated in that violence.[41]
>
> —Jenny Edkins

Mass murder memorials are unique public spaces that illuminate changing cultural expectations regarding rituals and memories of violence in the United States at the turn of the twenty first century. The year 1989 marked a period in which communities across the country began to consistently abandon the previous commemorative sensibility that mass murder was shameful and instead framed it as something that citizens should never forget/always remember.[42] This cultural transformation was so far reaching that many communities which had experienced mass murders earlier in the twentieth century initiated retrospective processes to create memorials, some with more success than others. My comparative analysis of the new

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[40] Tumarkin, *Traumascapes: The Power and Fate of Places Transformed by Tragedy*. 12, 14.
[41] Jenny Edkins, *Trauma and the Memory of Politics* (Cambridge, UK Cambridge University Press, 2003). 109.
[42] The commemorative processes that created these memorials started before 1989 in three communities: Edmond, Oklahoma after their 1986 killing, San Ysidro, California after their 1984 killing, and in Bath, Michigan as a retrospective process of commemorating their 1927 killing.

American tradition of constructing mass murder memorials engages and develops the existing literature by identifying three trends that undergirded this period of commemorative change. Culturally, communities facilitated this commemorative transition by transforming their immediate aftermath memorials into central components of their permanent memory sites. Spatially, the memorials themselves were built amidst ritualized assemblages of other significant memory sites in the proximate landscape. Socio-politically, a mass murder memory script was created and repeated tirelessly that framed the imagined bereaved community that emerged briefly in the aftermath as the primary memory worth keeping. Between the end of the Cold War in 1989 and the beginning of the War on Terror in 2001, these trends established and solidified the memorialization of mass murder into an unquestioned national expectation.

Mass murder memorials challenge the literature on memorials built in the immediate aftermath of violence and tragedy by illustrating how these memory sites are increasingly but the first stage of the material culture of public memory. In the 1980s, Jack Santino called these sites "spontaneous shrines," and Erica Doss later described them as "the material culture of grief [that]…demonstrated the faith that Americans place in things to negotiate complex moments and events, such as traumatic death."[43]

[43] Jack Santino, "'Not an Unimportant Failure': Rituals of Death and Politics in Northern Ireland," in *Displayed in Mortal Light*, ed. Michael McCaughan (Antrim, North Ireland: Antrim Arts Council, 1992).; Erika Doss, "Spontaneous Memorials and Contemporary Modes of Mourning in America," *Material Religion* 2, no. 3 (2006). 299. For more on spontaneous memorials, see Allen Haney, Christina Leimer, and Juliann Lowery, "Spontaneous Memorialization: Violent Death and Emerging Mourning Ritual," *OMEGA--Journal of Death and Dying* 35, no. 2 (1997); Kristin Ann Hass, *Carried to the Wall: American Memory and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998); Erika Doss, *Elvis Culture: Fans, Faith, & Image*, Culture America (Lawrence, KA: University Press of Kansas, 1999); Harriet F. Senie, "Mourning in Protest: Spontaneous Memorials and the Sacralization of Public Space," *Harvard Design Magazine*, no. Fall (1999); Sylvia Grider, "The Archaeology of Grief: Texas a&M's Bonfire Tragedy Is a Sad Study in Modern Mourning," *Discovering Archaeology*, no. 2 (2000); Martha Cooper and Joseph Sciorra, *R.I.P.: Memorial Wall Art* (New York, N.Y.: Thames & Hudson, 2001); Sylvia Grider, "Spontaneous Shrines: A Modern Response to Tragedy and Disaster (Preliminary Observations Regarding the Spontaneous Shrines Following the Terrorist Attacks of September 11, 2001)," *New*

Subsequent scholarship has described these memory sites as "ephemeral," "performative," "makeshift," "temporary," and "grassroots", yet each new designation highlights that each of these terms are but adjectives that describe such memorials, not accurate descriptions of all such phenomena.[44] The only constant with these sites is that

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Directions in Folklore, no. 5 (2001); Sylvia Grider and C. Wayne Smith, "Views and Commentaries: The Emergency Conservation of Waterlogged Bibles from the Memorabilia Assemblage Following the Collapse of the Texas a&M University Bonfire," *International Journal of Historical Archaeology* 5, no. 4 (2001); Jack Santino, *Signs of War and Peace: Social Conflict and the Use of Public Symbols in Northern Ireland*, 1st ed. (New York: Palgrave, 2001); Sylvia Grider, "Spontaneous Shrines and Public Memorialization," in *Death and Religion in a Changing World*, ed. Kathleen Garces-Foley (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 2006); Jack Santino, *Spontaneous Shrines and the Public Memorialization of Death* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006); "Peformative Commemoratives: Spontaneous Shrines and the Public Memorialization of Death," in *Spontaneous Shrines and the Public Memorialization of Death*, ed. Jack Santino (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006); Sylvia Grider, "Public Grief and the Politics of Memorial: Contesting the Memory of 'the Shooters' at Columbine High School," *Anthropology Today* 23, no. 3 (2007); Peter Jan Margry and Cristina Sanchez Carretero, "Memorializing Traumatic Death," ibid.; Sylvia Grider and Kenneth Foote, "Vernacular Memorials and Spontaneous Shrines," in *Sacred Places in Modern Western Culture*, ed. Paul Post, A.L. Moldendijk, and J.E.A. Kroesen (Leuven: Peeters, 2011); Beatrice Fraenkel, "Street Shrines and the Writing of Disaster: 9/11, New York, 2001," in *Grassroots Memorials: The Politics of Memorializing Traumatic Death*, ed. Peter Jan Margry and Christiana Sanchez-Carretero (New York: Berghahn Books, 2012); James B. Gardner, "September 11: Museums, Spontaneous Memorials, and History," ibid.

[44] Doss levies a similar critique. "It is important to remember that temporary memorials, and the contemporary cultures of public feeling that they embody, do not always yield the results that their analysts and critics may prefer—such as cultural economy of radical social protest, or ritualized performances of civic affirmation and solidarity." Erika Doss, *The Emotional Life of Contemporary Public Memorials: Towards a Theory of Temporary Memorials* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2008). 134-135, see also, 8-9. I acknowledge and agree with Irene Steng's critique that the term "spontaneous memorial" is highly problematic because "using the adjective 'spontaneous' to address such memorials is confusing. The adjective conceals that these memorials, irrespective their unofficial and temporary nature, are composed in accordance with what people deem to be *the* appropriate and customary response towards violent deaths. The memorials thus are not the outcome of 'instantaneous' impulses." Iren Stengs, "Ephemeral Memorials against 'Senseless Violence': Materializations of Public Outcry," *Enofoor* 16, no. 2 (2003). 38. However, even her term "ephemeral memorials" suffers from the same problem of being an adjective that is not always true with regards to all such memory sites. Ephemeral and temporary can no longer be said to be accurate because of the new commemorative practice of archiving these sites, which in effect, makes them enduring and/or permanent. Sanchez-Carretoro's 2007 article on the archiving of these memory sites has itself become a phenomenon as routine as the emergence of immediate aftermath memorials. See, Cristina Sanchez-Carretero, "The Politics of Archiving Ephemera in Times of Crisis: The Case of the "Mourning Archive," a Research Project on the Mourning Rituals in the Aftermath of March 11th, 2004 Train Bombing in Madrid," in *Culture Archives and the State: Between Nationalism, Socialism, and the Global Market* (Ohio State University2007). For scholarship on the other adjectives used to describe the phenomenon, see Erika Doss, "Death, Art and Memory in the Public Sphere: The Visual and Material Culture of Grief in Contemporary America," *Mortality* 7, no. 1 (2002); Stengs, "Ephemeral Memorials against 'Senseless Violence': Materializations of Public Outcry."; Peter Jan Margry, "Performative Memorials: Arenas of Political Resentment in Dutch Socieity," in *Reframing Dutch Culture: Between Otherness and Authenticity*, ed. Peter Jan Margry and Herman Roodenburg (Amsterdamn: Ashgate, 2007); Peter Jan Margry and Christiana Sanchez-Carretero, "Memorializing Traumatic Death," *Anthropology Today* 23, no. 3 (2007); Doss, *The Emotional Life of Contemporary Public Memorials:*

they are created quickly in aftermath of events of violence and tragedy, and as such, I will refer to them herein as "immediate aftermath memorials."[45] Starting in the early 1980s, news media increasingly fixated on these memory sites, routinely as backdrops for their newscasts, because as Peter Jan Margry and Christian Sanchez-Carretero note, "[immediate aftermath] memorials represent a theme on which the media is always eager to publish: personal death and trauma."[46] Heightened media coverage of immediate aftermath memorials familiarized Americans with the phenomenon, and solidified public expectation of their construction in the aftermath of events of traumatic violence.

Mass murder memorials illuminate the cultural transformation of the most recognized symbol from the immediate aftermath memorials into a fundamental component of the permanent memorial. The thousands of yellow ribbons tied to mailboxes throughout the town of Edmond after the killings at the local post office

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Towards a Theory of Temporary Memorials; Peter Jan Margry and Christiana Sanchez-Carretero, "Rethinking Memorialization: The Concept of Grassroots Memorials," in *Grassroots Memorials: The Politics of Memorializing Traumatic Death*, ed. Peter Jan Margry and Christiana Sanchez-Carretero (New York: Berghahn Books, 2012); *Grassroots Memorials: The Politics of Memorializing Traumatic Death* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2012); Christiana Sanchez-Carretero, "The Madrid Train Bombings: Enacting the Emotional Body at the March 11 Grassroots Memorials," in *Grassroots Memorials: The Politics of Memorializing Traumatic Death*, ed. Peter Jan Margry and Christiana Sanchez-Carretero (New York: Berghahn Books, 2012); Jack Santino, "Between Commemoration and Social Activism: Spontaneous Shrines, Grassroots Memorialization, and the Public Ritualesque in Derry," ibid.

[45] This term is forwarded to address what might be called the "adjective problem" that plagues the scholarship which investigates these memory sites.

[46] "Research affirms that since the mid-1980s, the phenomenon of roadside and grassroots memorials in the Western world received, in interaction with the media, new impetus and new forms…the modern forms of makeshift memorials is, on a mere incidental basis, ascertained in the West from approximately 1980 onward…the alliterating concept of makeshift memorials represents a theme on which the media are always eager to publish: personal death and trauma." Margry and Sanchez-Carretero, *Grassroots Memorials: The Politics of Memorializing Traumatic Death*. 6-7. Sylvia Grider also touches on the role the media played in spreading the expectation and form of immediate aftermath memorials. "The media probably played a very active role in teaching the public what these look like and where to put them--because they make great photo ops [for news broadcasts]." Grider, quoted in Kevin Simpson, "A Tribute Etched in Stone: Communities once tucked away all signs of tragic events. But shrines can offer an outlet for families," *Denver Post,* September 21, 2007. Grider and Foote also write, "the role of media in encouraging spontaneous shrines…the apparent similarity of many contemporary shrines suggests that the media may exert some influence. However, as mentioned above, precedents for spontaneous shrines have a long history and the power of the media to influence these precedents may be overestimated." Grider and Foote, "Vernacular Memorials and Spontaneous Shrines." 2.

became the inspiration for the “Yellow Ribbon” memorial design that was selected as the community’s permanent memorial. Similar decisions were made in other communities: the Memory Fence at Oklahoma City, crosses and ribbons at Columbine, and Hokie Stone at Virginia Tech. For the first decade of this new commemorative tradition, many citizens still held the previous commemorative sensibility that permanently marking mass murder was shameful and absurd. Adopting the most recognized symbol thus became an important and strategic means of encouraging buy-in and acceptance among local populations of still skeptical citizens. In the years after the dedication of the memorial, the incorporation of these symbols also established continuity for the annual replication of the rituals born in the traumatic aftermath of the killings.

In fact, the emergence of mass murder memorials illuminates that increased attention towards immediate aftermath memorials in the 1980s quickly led to public efforts to preserve and transform them into permanent memorials. Recent scholarship addresses how various publics have deemed the materials in immediate aftermath memorials worthy of preserving, leading to the creation of archives that serve the role of “constructing the memory of social traumas,” that Sanchez-Carretero writes “participate in the metacultural process of adding value to what might constitute heritage in the future.”[47] In the case of mass murder memorials specifically, the most popular local symbol from the immediate aftermath memorials was transformed into the centerpiece of the permanent memorial that was later designed. Since the late 1980s, the cultural move

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[47] Sanchez-Carretero, "The Politics of Archiving Ephemera in Times of Crisis: The Case of the “Mourning Archive," a Research Project on the Mourning Rituals in the Aftermath of March 11th, 2004 Train Bombing in Madrid." 1, 13. See also, Aaron D. Purcell, "More Than Flowers Left Behind: Building an Archival Collection and Remembering April 16, 2007 at Virginia Tech," *Journal of Archival Organization* 10, no. 3-4 (2012); Grider, "The Archaeology of Grief: Texas a&M’s Bonfire Tragedy Is a Sad Study in Modern Mourning."

to preserve and make immediate aftermath memorials permanent has resulted in their being neither temporary nor the sole propriety of the individuals who initially created them. Put simply, immediate aftermath memorials are not static historical entities, but rather, are now increasingly but the first stage in a series of progressions that often results in their transformation into permanent memory sites.

Spatially, mass murder memorials have been constructed amidst ritualized assemblages of other significant memory sites, similar to the intentionally relational landscape of the National Mall. This has been done in two different ways. In the case of Edmond, Oklahoma City and Columbine, there were no memory sites in the nearby landscape, so a number of secondary memory sites were created throughout the community, and often noticeably proximate to the official memorial. At the University of Texas and Virginia Tech, each campus had a Mall-like landscape of memorials that exerted a profound influence on the final location of the mass murder memorial. In both cases, these ritualized assemblages illustrate what Jane Bennett calls "vibrant materiality," defined as "the capacity of things…not only to impede or block the will and designs of humans but also to act as quasi agents or forces with trajectories, propensities, or tendencies of their own."[48] In different ways, the memorial created in each of these communities profoundly altered the local landscape. Most importantly, the ritualized assemblages themselves became the spaces where the most prized communal rituals were enacted to exemplify unity as a means of creating a sense of collective identity in the years that followed.

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[48] Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010)., viii.

The theory of a ritualized assemblage develops the existing literature by forwarding a concept well suited to analyze the relationship of between seemingly disparate memory sites. Building on Kenneth Foote's concept of symbolic accretion, I define ritualized assemblages as the routinely imperceptible yet planned assemblages of separate memory sites that are related spatially and/or productively through ritual performance.[49] Many previous authors in the fields of both ritual and memory studies have suggested related or similar concepts, but none have sufficiently developed either the spatial or cultural dynamics of these relationships.[50] Early mass murder memorials were never constructed in isolation, and instead either entered into, or inspired the growth of, a ritualized assemblage as a fundamental component of their emergence. Mass murder memorials thus provide fertile ground for developing a theory of ritualized assemblages and analyzing the spatial dynamics involved in the politics of commemoration.

[49] For Foote's original usage of the term, see Foote, *Shadowed Ground: America's Landscapes of Violence and Tragedy*. 231-232; Dwyer and Alderman have developed the term significantly. See, Owen J. Dwyer, "Symbolic Accretion and Commemoration," *Social and Cultural Geography* 5, no. 3 (2004). 421. See also, Steven D. Hoelscher and Derek H. Alderman, "Memory and Place: Geographies of a Critical Relationship," ibid., no. 5; Owen J. Dwyer and Derek H. Alderman, *Civil Rights Memorials and the Geography of Memory* (Chicago: University of Georgia Press, 2008); "Memorial Landscapes: Analytic Questions and Metaphors," *GeoJournal*, no. 73 (2008); "Memorials and Monuments," in *Author's Personal Copy* (Elsevier Ltd., 2009).

[50] Each of the following terms and passages helped me to think through the politics of commemoration related to multiple memory sites in proximate landscapes. Zelinsky talks about "ceremonial centers." Wilbur Zelinsky, *Nation into State: The Shifting Symbolic Foundations of American Nationalism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988). 183; Nora speaks of "ensembles constructed over time" in his larger discussion of the four material aspects of the *lieux de memoire.* Nora, "Between Memory and History: Les Leiux De Memoire." 22. Architectural theorist Christine Boyer talks variously about "architectural strata" and "architectural residue." Boyer, *The City of Collective Memory: Its Historical Imagery and Architectural Entertainments*. 19-21. Ritual studies founder Ronald Grimes also talks the relationship of sites of ritual with the colorful term "motely assemblage." Grimes, *Marrying & Burying: Rites of Passage in a Man's Life*. 5-6. Andreas Huyssen writes at length about "urban palimpsests" and "palimpsests of space." Huyssen, *Present Pasts: Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory*. 7-10. Lastly, in the new ritual studies literature, Margry and Sanchez-Carretro discus both the material and affective dimensions of "ephemeral memorial bricolages and assemblages." Margry and Sanchez-Carretero, *Grassroots Memorials: The Politics of Memorializing Traumatic Death*. 4.

The emergence of a socio-political script, that later became what I call the Myth of the Slaughtered Citizen, supports the argument of Carole Blair, Greg Dickinson and Brian Ott that "public memory is rhetorical."[51] In the aftermath of the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing, President Bill Clinton did something that no previous president had ever done: he actively involved himself in framing the national importance of the memory and meaning of the mass murder.[52] In the days, weeks, and months after the killing, Clinton tirelessly and repeatedly implored all American citizens to understand that

> [while the Oklahoma City bombing was a terrible tragedy], we learned something about ourselves when it did happen that we should never forget…we ought to remember how all of us were in the aftermath of Oklahoma City and how that magnificent spirit made everyone a little more human, a little more alive, and a lot more proud to just have the opportunity to help our fellow human beings and our fellow Americans who needed it. If we can remember that, then that lasting tragedy will always have changed America for the better.[53]

Different iterations of this script proliferated rapidly throughout the country, and have been repeated ever since Oklahoma City—not only by each subsequent U.S. President, but also by state and local leaders, media talking heads and, increasingly, by citizens themselves. The repetition of this script after the Columbine killings transformed it into a Myth of the Slaughtered Citizen that solidified widespread acceptance of the new

[51] Dickinson, Blair, and Ott, *Places of Public Memory: The Rhetoric of Museums and Memorials*. 22.
[52] Mayor Carl Reherman and others in the Edmond community had a similar script that they used locally; however, it was not until after the Oklahoma City bombing that this script was aired and repeated nationally by President Bill Clinton.
[53] Bill Clinton, "Remarks to Oklahoma City 'Thank You America' Participants," September 27, 1995. *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States*, U.S. Government Printing Office, (hereafter referred to as PPPUS). Available online at: http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/browse/collection.action?collectionCode=PPP&browsePath=president-58&isCollapsed=true&leafLevelBrowse=false&ycord=0 Accessed June 4, 2013. What is notable about the script is the absence of the victims and survivors after the call to never forget. Instead, this 'never forget culture' produces a commemorative sensibility based upon all living Americans' brief memory of national unity in the aftermath of each new killing. National public memory is indicative of this—few citizens not directly impacted by the killings can actually name the victims of any mass murder they lived through. The mass murder memory script is about the living and has become a new means by which the imagined community is continually reproduced.

commemorative sensibility and culturally repositioned mass murder as a kind of event that American citizens should never forget.

The Myth also contributes to the literature on nationalism and commemoration by explaining how the victims of mass murder were culturally substituted into the commemorative role traditionally held by fallen soldiers to promote a sense of local and national unity. Rene Girard writes that

> substitution concerns the entire community…it is a substitute for all the members of the community, offered up by the members themselves. The sacrifice serves to protect the entire community from its own violence…[the] common denominator is internal violence—all the dissentions, rivalries, jealousies, and quarrels within the community that the sacrifices are designed to suppress. The purpose of sacrifice is to restore harmony to the community, to reinforce the social fabric.[54]

For most of U.S. history, the memory of the victims of mass murders was a private affair limited mostly to the friends and families of the individual in the years after the killings receded from national public attention. In the 1990s, the Myth of the Slaughtered Citizen effectively reconstituted victims posthumously as those who may not be killed, but instead, are to be perpetually sacrificed in permanent memory sites. While the mass murder memorials are ostensibly about the people who died, more fundamentally, the Myth that helped to justify their existence was used by the living as a means of promoting a sense of unity for the living.

The Myth of the Slaughtered Citizen was established between the end of the Cold War and the beginning of the War on Terror as a means of promoting a sense of national unity during a time of relative international peace.[55] Drawing inspiration from George Mosse's work on the memory of fallen soldiers, we see that during the 1990s the Myth of the Slaughtered Citizen made an inherently unpalatable form of violence acceptable, not just for the purpose of unifying citizens, but above all, to enable the continued

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[54] René Girard, *Violence and the Sacred* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977). 8.
[55] The phrase "Myth of the Slaughtered Citizen" draws inspiration from George Mosse's work on the memory of fallen soldiers. Also, it is important to note that this is Levy and Sznaider's "cosmopolitan" period. While they used the term on the more traditional sense of worldly and familiar, I use it in the natural sciences sense of being ubiquitous.

reproduction of the imagined community of the nation.[56] By the time the bombing of the World Trade Towers occurred on September 11, 2001, the Myth had spread and established a national expectation that memorials should be constructed after events of mass murder.[57] In this way, the victim of mass murder are now posthumously sacrificed in nationally significant memory sites in the same way that fallen soldiers have been for most of U.S. history. Before telling the story of this Myth and the commemorative process that it inspired, however, it is first necessary to briefly detail the long history of commemorating violence that preceded the emergence of mass murder memorials as a vital part of the United States' patriotic landscape.

Memorializing Violence in the Patriotic Landscape

> Man could never do without blood, torture, and sacrifices when he felt the need to create a memory for himself; the most dreadful sacrifices and pledges, the most repulsive mutilations, the cruelest rites of all the religious cults—all this has its origin in the instinct that realized that pain is the most powerful aid of mnemonics.[58]
>
> —Friedrich Nietzsche

Memories of violence are not like other memories—they are the most powerful memories. For the vast majority of U.S. history, war memorials have served as the

[56] I have used Mosse's definition of the Myth of the War Experience as a template for articulating the Myth of the Mass Murder Experience. The original text is as follows: "The reality of the war experience came to be transformed into what one might call the Myth of the War Experience…the aim was to make an inherently unpalatable past acceptable, important not just for the purpose of consolidation but above all for the justification of the nation in whose name the war had been fought." Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers: Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars*. 7.

[57] Oklahoma City National Memorial Director Kari Watkins acknowledged that the 9/11 memorial commission reached out to her and the OKC foundation extensively in the beginning of their own memorial process. Kari Watkins, Interview with the Author, May 31, 2012. Based upon the research that each of the communities covered in this project underwent before creating their own memorials, it seems prudent to hypothesize that the research project initiated after 9/11 extensively examined most, if not all, of the mass murder memorials covered in this work.

[58] Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals* ed. Walter Arnold Kaufmann (New York: Vintage Books, 1967). 61.

material touchstones of nationalism. In order to understand how mass murder memorials emerged within this cultural milieu, it is first necessary to understand the ways in which violence has been understood, communicated, ritualized, and finally, commemorated permanently in the national landscape. This is not to say that memory sites dedicated to violence operate in isolation, as the work of Foote and others has clearly shown that commemorative traditions span a wide array of aesthetic, social and political memorial forms.[59] Instead, I want to emphasize that the marking of violence as a means of promoting a narrative of unity requires a unique set of cultural, spatial and political discourses if it is to be effective.[60] Underlying the transformation of the sites of mass murder into nationally recognized sacred spaces in the patriotic landscape is a series of changes in the ritualized commemoration of violence throughout the history the United States.

While many small markers were erected in the near aftermath of the Revolutionary War, the monumental legacy of that war did not begin until nearly seven decades after the nation's founding.[61] Scholars widely agree with William Laas that "the American monument tradition starts [in 1843]…with the Bunker Hill Monument in Charleston, Massachusetts …the first historical marker of major consequence in the United States."[62] J. P. Jackson argues that "every new revolutionary social order, anxious

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[59] The fact that people have commemorated various events in a similar fashion speaks more to the strength of established patterns of commemoration and ritualization, it does not however, answer why new patterns of commemoration—in this case, mass murder memorials—have emerged. See Foote, *Shadowed Ground: America's Landscapes of Violence and Tragedy*.
[60] This is doubly true with domestically perpetrated mass murders in which American citizens are both the perpetrators and the victims.
[61] For earlier memory sites, see, "The Pivot on Which the World Turns: Lexington and Concord" in Linenthal, *Sacred Ground: Americans and Their Battlefields*. 9-52; Foote, *Shadowed Ground: America's Landscapes of Violence and Tragedy*. 114-117, 271.
[62] William Lass, *Monuments in Your History* (New York: Popular Library, 1972). 7; See, also, Zelinsky, *Nation into State: The Shifting Symbolic Foundations of American Nationalism*. 186; Edward G. Ellis,

to establish its image…produces many commemorative monuments and symbols and public celebrations…to remind (the public) of what it should believe and how it is to act."[63] The sixty-seven years it took the U.S. to dedicate its first significant monument, however, suggests that American anxiety was far less pronounced than Jackson suggests. In fact, in his analysis of the 1876 Centennial, David Lowenthal notes that the ritualized celebrations "contained many monuments to remarkable contemporary achievements and future hopes, but…[Americans] paid little overt attention to the past."[64] Including the 1884 Washington Monument, the first significant patriotic memory sites were monumental in form and dedicated to the Revolutionary War.

The mass casualties of the Civil War resulted in a new vernacular commemorative sensibility to account for all the bodies of the American citizens who died on both sides of the battlefield.[65] In stark contrast to previous war monuments, the Gettysburg Soldiers National Cemetery is located on the battlefield and has a marker for every soldier who

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Skethes of Bunker Hill Battle and Monument (Charleston, MA: C.P. Emmons, 1843).; Nathalia Wright, "The Monument That Jonathan Built," *American Quarterly* 5 (1953).

[63] John Brinckerhoff Jackson, *The Necessity for Ruins, and Other Topics* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1980). 92.

[64] David Lowenthal, "The Bicentennial Landscape: A Mirror Held up to the Past," *Geographical Reveiw* 67, no. 3 (1977). 265-266.

[65] The emerging vernacular commemorative sensibility of this period extended far beyond the Civil War battlefield. Jackson points to the Revolutionary War "statue of the anonymous [Concord] Minute Man, by D. C. French, erected in . . . in 1876" as the first of this style that sought to portray "a vernacular past . . . the chronicle of everyday existence. It is (no) coincidence that . . . [in] the last decades of the 19th Century the average American public building began to lose some of its monumental, palatial quality." Jackson, *The Necessity for Ruins, and Other Topics*. 95. Perhaps no single memory sites represent the commemorative tensions of the period better than the split memory sites built after the 1886 Haymarket bombing. One memory site was installed for the police who were killed in the square itself in 1899, but "popular support was so low" for funding the site that it was created only after "the intervention of antiunion businesses [executives], many from outside Chicago." The second site for the executed citizens was mandatorily located outside of the city of Chicago and was fully funded by a relief group founded by the widows. The dedication parade on the 25 June, 1893 received international attention and support because it coincided with the now infamous Columbian Exposition at the Chicago World's Fair. The site for the executed citizens has become a place of pilgrimage, whereas, as William Adelman has noted, the monument installed for the police has been repeatedly defaced, bombed, and relocated for over a century. See, Foote, *Shadowed Ground: America's Landscapes of Violence and Tragedy*. 136-139; William J. Adelman, *Haymarket Revisited: A Tour Guide of Labor History Sites and Ethnic Neighborhoods Connected with the Haymarket Affair* (Chicago: Illinois Labor History Society, 1976).

died. Jackson notes that the Gettysburg memorial "was something unheard of…[because this memory site] was no longer a reminder, it no longer told us what to do; it simply explained the battle…there were tens of thousands of soldiers…[who had] died and deserved a collective monument."[66] The dedication of this memorial on November 19, 1863 was its own historically significant ritual moment, since it also served as the site of President Lincoln's reading of the Gettysburg Address.[67] Speaking of the power of blood to transform American soil into sacred ground, Lincoln reflected, "in a larger sense, we can not dedicate, we can not consecrate, we can not hallow this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract."[68] The convergence of this new vernacular style of commemoration driven by what Kristin Ann Haas called a "memory of bodies" with the ritualized dedication ceremony was so historically significant, in fact, that on the fifth anniversary of the battle the United States held its official celebration of the first "Memorial Day" at the Gettysburg memorial.[69]

The 1901 McMillan Plan, while not overtly related to violence, is important because it effectively redesigned the National Mall in Washington D.C. as "the

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[66] Jackson, *The Necessity for Ruins, and Other Topics*. 93.
[67] Barry Schwartz argues that Lincoln was intuitively cognizant that this event was "not merely recalling the past but becoming a part of it—identifying with it and being identified by it—such is the heart of the matter of collective memory." Barry Schwartz, *Abraham Lincoln and the Forge of National Memory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000). 294.
[68] Abraham Lincoln, "Gettysburg Address," November 19, 1863, the dedication ceremony of the Gettysburg Soldiers National Cemetery. For President Lincoln, sacred space was not ontological, it was created by people "who struggle," and more importantly, as humanist geographer Yu-Fi Tuan notes, "to enhance loyalty" it is necessary to cultivate "the belief that the blood of heroes sanctifies the soil." Tuan, *Landscapes of Fear*. 99.
[69] Haas argues that the "memory of bodies" was itself the driving force behind "the effort to make the battlefield sacred ground." Hass, *Carried to the Wall: American Memory and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial*. 43-53.

monumental core" of the growing patriotic landscape.[70] Led by architect Daniel Burnham and other top designers of the period, the new design of the Mall sought to manifest American civil religion in the landscape of the nation's capitol.[71] Jeffery F. Meyer argues that the redesign of the Mall sought to carve "myths in stone" in order to make "Washington . . . a unique modern blend of politics and religion that is nevertheless grounded in the archaic past."[72] Kirk Savage makes a more sweeping historical argument that there was "a shift from the nineteenth century concept of public grounds to a twentieth century concept of public space…space is no longer mere emptiness or the enchanted realm of God but a medium that human beings can now claim the power to control and manipulate."[73] At the dawn of the twentieth century, the redesigned Mall offered Americans a public space where "the imagined community actually materializes," writes Savage, "and the existence of the nation is confirmed in a simple but powerful way…a pilgrimage site where communities of believers actually come together in the act of occupying a holy site."[74] The new National Mall quickly became the center the

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[70] Kirk Savage, *Monument Wars: Washington, D.C., the National Mall, and the Transformation of the Memorial Landscape* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009). 152.

[71] Robert Bellah coined the term "civil religion" to denote that "the political realm [has] a . . . religious orientation that the great majority of Americans share . . . [and] this public religious dimension is expressed in a set of beliefs, symbols, and ritual." Robert N. Bellah, "Civil Religion in America," in *Beyond Belief: Essay on Religion in a Post-Traditional World*, ed. Robert N. Bellah (New York: Harper & Row, 1970). 171. While claiming to restore L'Enfant's original design, the McMillan Plan actually entailed "acts of conquest and destruction far more sweeping than anything that L'Enfant had contemplated," and was described by planner Charles Eliot II, in the discourse of the early City Beautiful movement, as going "to war against disordered cities." Savage, *Monument Wars: Washington, D.C., the National Mall, and the Transformation of the Memorial Landscape*. 147, Charles Eliot II cited on 158.

[72] For Meyer, there are three largely hidden roots of biblical thought that manifest physically in the Mall, and thus nationally in our civil religion: the belief that significant events be interpreted in terms of a historical god, the elevation of "good and evil to transcendent dimensions," and "the worship of specific texts as sacred." Jeffrey F. Meyer, *Myths in Stone: Religious Dimensions of Washington, D.C* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001). 7-8.

[73] Savage, *Monument Wars: Washington, D.C., the National Mall, and the Transformation of the Memorial Landscape*. 13-14.

[74] Ibid. 4. Savage's reference to "imagined communities" and "public space" are references to, respectively, Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of*

patriotic landscape and its design and aesthetics continue to be replicated and referenced whenever American's seek to create sacred space.[75]

The scale of the atrocity and death during the First World War necessitated new commemorative discourses and memorial forms to account for the violence of the world's first technologically modern war.[76] War historian George Mosse writes

> the new dimension of death in [WWI] called for a much greater effort to mask and transcend death in the war than had ever been made before …the reality of the war experience came to be transformed into what one might call the Myth of the War Experience…designed to mask war and to legitimate the war experience; it meant to displace the reality of war.[77]

Paul Fussell, in his landmark book *The Great War and Modern Memory*, noticed that the memories of soldiers who survived were drawn, time and again, to the irony as a reference point amidst the seemingly unending violent primal scenes they had experienced.[78] To address the incomprehensible violence of WWI, the Myth of the War

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Nationalism (New York: Verso, 2006).; Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989).

[75] In the chapters that follow, three public spaces that contain mass murder memorials were built in the early twenty first century and replicated the design of the National Mall: the Oklahoma Mall at the Oklahoma State Capitol, the Texas Mall located on both the Texas State Capitol and the University of Texas grounds , and the Drillfield at the heart of the Virginia Tech campus.

[76] Daniel Hendrick argues that the scale of the death and maiming was the result of Europeans, who had used their modern warfare technologies in the late nineteenth century imperial period, for the first time using these new armaments against each other. "Arms Gap and Colonial Confrontations," Daniel R. Headrick, *The Tools of Empire: Technology and European Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981). 115-124.

[77] Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers: Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars*. 4-7.

[78] Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory*. 1-35. While Jay Winter acknowledges that irony did emerge as a troupe of WWI, from an aesthetic perspective he sees irony as the defining characteristic of the "modernist approaches" as opposed to the "traditional approaches" which relied on religious, romantic and classical motifs. Winter thus argues that in commemoration, "the strength of traditional modes of expressing the debt of the living to the dead must be acknowledged. That strength . . . lays in the power of traditional languages to mediate bereavement. Irony's cutting edge . . . could express anger and despair, and did so in many enduring ways, but it could not heal." Jay M. Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995). 115.

Experience provided a memory narrative that helped a grieving nation to remember the "glory [of valor] rather than the horror of war."[79]

In terms of new memorial forms, WWI led to two different commemorative responses: the abstraction of names in Europe, and the creation of buildings as utilitarian memorials in the United States. The reality that all of the death in WWI occurred in the European landscape led to the creation of memorials like the neoclassical arch-shaped Menin Gate Memorial in Ieper, Belgium, which is inscribed with over 55,000 names.[80] Haas explains that the scale of the violence and death "made it difficult for memorializers to justify the individual losses for the sake of the nation. Memorializers responded to this difficulty by abstracting the names of the dead."[81] In the United States, the Bureau of Memorial Buildings was created in 1919 "'to assist the guidance of the nation-wide movement to erect community buildings as war memorials'…that would carry American idealism 'into practical effect."[82] The Myth of the War Experience was thus amplified by the war memorials built after WWI in the U.S. that often masked the reality of the violence of war with practical buildings constructed as venues for a range of daily activities, social events and bureaucratic functions.

Compared to the commemorative innovations of previous wars, what is striking is that World War II established no notable commemorative innovations. The reason for this is that the Holocaust, and not the war itself, became the driving force behind changes in memories of violence in the post-war years. It is not that the war itself was not

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[79] Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers: Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars*. 6. For more on the cult of fallen soldiers, see "National Cemeteries and National Revival: The Cult of the Fallen Soldiers in Germany."
[80] Foote callsthe Menin Gate Memorial "one of the most important battlefield memorials every built." Kenneth Foote, "The Menin Gate, Ieper," in *Sacred Places in Modern Western Culture*, ed. Paul Post, Arie L. Molendijek, and Justin Kroesen (Leuven: Peeters, 2011). 253.
[81] Hass, *Carried to the Wall: American Memory and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial*. 56.
[82] Bureau of Memorial Buildings cited in ibid. 58.

commemorated, as memory sites to WWII are so numerous that Hass argues, "the whole country became, in a sense, a living memorial to World War II."[83] Quantity, however, does not denote commemorative innovation. James Mayo, in his detailed chronicling of the entire history of U.S. war memorials, notes three basic patterns of WWII memory sites: a significant number are located on foreign soil, WWII memory sites in Washington followed established commemorative patterns; and citizens' expectations about war memorials changed or followed the utilitarian trend established after WWI.[84] The two World Wars should thus be understood as having established and maintained a utilitarian commemorative sensibility in the United States for over six decades in the middle of the twentieth century.

Far more than altering commemorative forms, retrospection illuminates that the Holocaust irrevocably changed how the Western world understood both violence and memory.[85] As such, the recent work of Daniel Levy and Nathan Sznaider, which proposes four periods of memory of the Holocaust, is helpful as a frame for understanding, more generally, changes in memories of violence in America in the second half of the twentieth century.[86] Levy and Sznaider suggest that representations of

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[83] Ibid. 59.
[84] James M. Mayo, *War Memorials as Political Landscape: The American Experience and Beyond* (New York: Praeger, 1988). 100. Mayo's statement that "American people generally changed their attitudes about what war memorials should be" is ill-defined in the sense that he does not explain what he means by this statement. Elsewhere, however, he states "Mayo states in an offhanded fashion that is nevertheless highly significant for understanding American commemoration, that "both world wars . . . have been memorialized in similar ways." I have taken the cautious liberty of interpreting this to be a reference towards the shift from the monumental to utilitarian memorial forms that began after WWI. My articulation of this shift is widely supported in the literature generally. Ibid. 62.
[85] This is not a novel claim, merely a new way of articulating what many who have written about the Holocaust have already said. My emphasis is on addressing the relationship between violence, memory and commemoration, specifically. Kerwin Klein Lee, for example, writes, "if the appearance of memory in academic and popular discourse is to be understood in metahistorical terms . . . memory is the belated response to [the Holocaust]." Klein, "On the Emergence of Memory in Historical Discourse." 139.
[86] Daniel Levy and Natan Sznaider, *The Holocaust and Memory in the Global Age* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2006). 16-18.

the Holocaust were recast in the decade after the WWII, and were characterized by *silence* about the slaughter of the European Jewry throughout the United States, Germany and Israel; from 1955 to 1975 when the discourse of "the Holocaust" emerged and resulted in a growing international *awareness*; from 1975 to 1985 when Holocaust representations were *Americanized*, most notably in the airing of the 1978 television miniseries staring Meryl Streep titled *The Holocaust*; and, lastly, from 1985 to 2000 when memories of the Holocaust were *cosmopolitanized* in the sense that it became a new universal touchstone at the end of the Cold War.[87] In the final section of this literature review I will use this four period framework to help historicize the changes in patterns of commemorating violence in the U.S. American landscape.[88]

The United States victory in WWII and subsequent economic prosperity resulted in a general silence about memories of violence from 1945-1954 throughout the country.[89] During this period the term "Holocaust" had not yet been coined and American were mostly "(silent) concerning the destruction of European Jewry."[90] The post-war years were the Age of Affluence in the United States because jobs were plentiful as American industry kicked into high gear to help rebuild the war torn landscape of

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87 Ibid. 1-18.

88 I will be changing the years by a year or two here and there to more accurately reflect the American context of memories of violence.

89 My changing of Levy and Sznaiders year from 1955 to 1954 is due to two factors. First, in terms of commemoration of violence, 1954 was the year that the first significant, non-utilitarian WWII memorial was dedicated, the Marine Corps. War Memorial (a.k.a. the Iwo Jima Memorial). Second, 1954 is the year of Brown v. Board of Education which is widely credited with being the beginning of the classical phase of the civil rights movement. See, for example, Juan Williams, *Eyes on the Prize: America's Civil Rights Years, 1954-1965* (New York, NY: Viking, 1987).

90 Levy and Sznaider, *The Holocaust and Memory in the Global Age*. 16. The general silence about violence that pervades this period can be seen as a historical embodiment of the discourses that were to become the touchstones of discussions of the Holocaust in subsequent periods. The discourses of "unspeakablity," "unimaginable," "incomprehensibility," "unrepresentability," and "incomparability" are not merely discourses that emerged in later discussion of the Holocaust, they are in fact the way in which American dealt with—or completely avoided dealing with—the slaughter of the European Jewry in the post war years.

Europe.[91] Bodnar notes that after the war many American families were "devoted more to the pursuit of leisure and entertainment."[92] The many MacArthur Boulevards and Eisenhower High Schools constructed across the country during this period are but two examples of Haas' observation that Americans wanted to "advance the prosperity of the victorious nation… so they built football fields, playgrounds, and highways and called them war memorials."[93] The "Leave it to Beaver" lifestyle of middle class American's during the post-war years was a cultural pursuit that shaped national commemorative sensibilities.

From 1954 to 1976, an awareness of memories of the violence of WWII itself emerged concurrently with the many civil rights and anti-war movements, resulting in surge in memorials built after domestically perpetrated killings.[94] During this period, the two most significant WWII memorials, the Marine Corps. War Memorial (a.k.a. the Iwo Jima Memorial) and the USS Arizona Memorial at Pearl Harbor, were dedicated in 1954 and 1962, respectively.[95] It was also during this period that the marking of violence perpetuated domestically began to be marked more regularly. The killing of multiple

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[91] See, for example, Lizabeth Cohen, *A Consumers' Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America* (New York: Knopf 2003).; and "Cornucopia and its Discontents" in Todd Gitlin, *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage* (Toronto Bantam Books, 1987).
[92] Levy and Sznaider, *The Holocaust and Memory in the Global Age*. 16; Bodnar, *Remaking America: Public Memory, Commemoration, and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century*. 250-251.
[93] Hass, *Carried to the Wall: American Memory and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial*. 59.
[94] My reference to the "many civil rights…movements" is meant to highlight contemporary civil rights literature's disambiguation of what Clayborne Carson calls the "black freedom struggle" from what Jaqueline Hall Dowd has termed the "long civil rights movement" that lasted far longer than the "classical" phase of the black freedom struggle and included the many movements of groups other than black American citizens. See Clayborne Carson, "Civil Rights Reform and the Black Freedom Struggle," in *The Civil Rights Movement in America*, ed. Carles W. Eagles (Jackson, Miss.: 1986).; Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, "The Long Civil Rights Movement and the Political Uses of the Past," *Journal of American History* 91, no. 4 (2005).; Bayard Rustin, *Down the Line* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1971). 111-122.
[95] The significance of these two memorials is due to their not being utilitarian memorials but more traditional in their aesthetics. The USS Arizona Memorial in Pearl Harbor was not even authorized by Congress until 1958 and was subsequently dedicated twenty-one years after the attack in 1962. See Linenthal, *Sacred Ground: Americans and Their Battlefields*.; Rosenberg, *A Date Which Will Live: Pearl Harbor in American Memory*. 72.

students at South Carolina State University (1968), Kent State University (1970) and Jackson State University (1970) during civil rights and anti-war protests led to the establishment of memory sites and the beginning of annual commemorative rituals at each university.[96] These three memorials are important because "universities have a long history of celebrating the accomplishments of their faculties and students as well as of marking their losses," but Foote and Grider argue that

> substantial changes have occurred, however, in the range of event which result in spaces of mourning…a transition beginning in the late 1960s spurred by the civil rights movement and anti war events…seem to be the first instances we can identify in which [domestically perpetrated] violent death…resulted in new spaces of mourning.[97]

During this period of increasing domestic strife, a national awareness of the violence of the past and present emerged and was marked in a variety of ways in the national landscape.[98]

The 1976 Bicentennial was a year of transition for United States' memory of itself

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[96] Nicholas Bromell, "The Other Campus Massacre," *The Boston Globe Magazine*, February 10 1985; Tim Spofford, *Lynch Street: The May 1970 Slayings at Jackson State College* (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1988); Martin Oppenheimer, "Orangeburg, South Carolina," *The Sit-In Movement of 1960* (1989); Jack Bass and Jack Nelson, *The Orangeburg Massacre* (Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 1996); Jack Bass, "Documenting the Orangeburg Massacre: Campus Killings of Black Students Received Little News Coverage in 1968, but a Book About Them Keeps Their Memory Alive," *Nieman Reports: The Neiman Foundation for Journalism at Harvard University* 57, no. 3 (2003); Renee C. Ramano and Leigh Raiford, *The Civil Rights Movement in American Memory* (Athens, Ga.: University of Georgia Press, 2006); Kathryn J. Weiss, *The Kent State Memorial to the Slain Vietnam War Protestors: Interpreting the Site and Visitors' Responses* (Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2008).

[97] Kenneth Foote and Sylvia Grider, "Memorialisation of Us College and University Tragedies: Spaces of Mourning and Remeberance," in *Deathscapes: Spaces of Death, Dying, Mourning and Rememberance*, ed. James D. Sidaway Avril Maddrell (Ashgate, 2010). 197.

[98] More broadly speaking, Owen J. Dwyer and Derek H. Alderman have recently illustrated that the larger significance of this period in noting that "the contributions of African Americans to American history were largely neglected prior to the 1970s" and that "the production of memorials dedicated to the [Long Civil Rights] Movement is *a watershed in the commemoration of American history*." During the 1970s the "civil rights memorial" emerges across the American landscape in both monumental forms—statuaries, busts, and traditional monuments—and utilitarian forms, such as street signs, gardens, and historically preserved bowling alleys. The innovation here is not merely the recognition of the civil rights, but the usurping of the long tradition of "commemoration in the United States (being) almost entirely devoted to lauding white men." Dwyer and Alderman, *Civil Rights Memorials and the Geography of Memory*. 48 & 8, respectively.

and the continued growth of national willingness to mark domestically perpetuated violence. Celebrations of the Bicentennial on July 4, 1976, were very different from the Centennial celebrations that took place a century earlier. Lowenthal observes that celebrations were dispersed into thousands of local and sometimes regionally antagonistic events in which history was treated as private property, and if there was a unifying theme, it was the implication that "the nation's greatness lay wholly in the past."[99] Eight days after the Bicentennial celebrations, on July 12, 1976, a member of the California State University in Fullerton community came to campus and killed seven people. The university created a "Memorial Grove" that consisted of seven Italian Stone Pines and a memorial plaque that included not only the names of the victims, but also, uniquely, the names of the two individuals who were badly wounded.[100] Foote and Grider note that the memory site that resulted was the United States' "first memorialization of non-political [mass murder]."[101] It is a sad yet telling historical irony that the Fourth of July Bicentennial celebrations focused on the past, yet the Fullerton murders a week later presaged the widespread emergence of a new national commemorative tradition a decade later.

Two commemorative happenings undergirded the Americanization of memories of violence from 1976 to 1989: the increasing public focus on immediate aftermath

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[99] Lowenthal, "The Bicentennial Landscape: A Mirror Held up to the Past." 266. Moreover, the past being celebrated was not the historically substantiated picture of the difficult, dangerous, and monotonous lives of our forbearers, but rather a mythical past in which "those aspects of life that, because we ourselves have lost them, we mistakenly suppose our forebears enjoyed." ibid. 267.

[100] The memorial plaque reads: "Memorial Grove/This living memorial is dedicated in/Remembrance of/Stephen L. Becker, Bruce A. Jacobson/Seth A. Fessenden, Donald E Aarges/Paul E. Becker, Deborah D. Paulsen/Frank Teplansky/And in recognition of the suffering/Of Donald W. Karar and Maynard Hoffman/The families of the victims and the/Many other persons whose lives were/Touched by the Tragedy of July 12, 1976." Private email exchange with Gregory Dyment, Director of the California State at Fullerton Arboretum, April 26, 2014.

[101] Foote and Grider, "Memorialisation of Us College and University Tragedies: Spaces of Mourning and Remeberance." 193.

memorials, and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Jack Santino was the first to investigate the spontaneous memorials that Erica Doss later describes as "the material culture of grief [that]…demonstrated the faith that Americans place in things to negotiate complex moments and events, such as traumatic death."[102] Subsequent scholarship describes these memory sites as "ephemeral," "performative," "makeshift," "temporary," and "grassroots", yet each new designation highlights that each of these terms are but adjectives that describe such memorials, not accurate descriptions of all such phenomena.[103] The only constant with these sites is that they are created quickly in

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[102] Santino, "'Not an Unimportant Failure': Rituals of Death and Politics in Northern Ireland."; Doss, "Spontaneous Memorials and Contemporary Modes of Mourning in America." 299. For more on spontaneous memorials, see Haney, Leimer, and Lowery, "Spontaneous Memorialization: Violent Death and Emerging Mourning Ritual."; Hass, *Carried to the Wall: American Memory and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial*; Doss, *Elvis Culture: Fans, Faith, & Image*; Senie, "Mourning in Protest: Spontaneous Memorials and the Sacralization of Public Space."; Grider, "The Archaeology of Grief: Texas a&M's Bonfire Tragedy Is a Sad Study in Modern Mourning."; Cooper and Sciorra, *R.I.P.: Memorial Wall Art*; Grider, "Spontaneous Shrines: A Modern Response to Tragedy and Disaster (Preliminary Observations Regarding the Spontaneous Shrines Following the Terrorist Attacks of September 11, 2001)."; Grider and Smith, "Views and Commentaries: The Emergency Conservation of Waterlogged Bibles from the Memorabilia Assemblage Following the Collapse of the Texas a&M University Bonfire."; Santino, *Signs of War and Peace: Social Conflict and the Use of Public Symbols in Northern Ireland*; Grider, "Spontaneous Shrines and Public Memorialization."; Santino, *Spontaneous Shrines and the Public Memorialization of Death*; "Peformative Commemoratives: Spontaneous Shrines and the Public Memorialization of Death."; Grider, "Public Grief and the Politics of Memorial: Contesting the Memory of 'the Shooters' at Columbine High School."; Peter Jan Margry and Cristina Sanchez Carretero, "Memorializing Traumatic Death," ibid.; Grider and Foote, "Vernacular Memorials and Spontaneous Shrines."; Fraenkel, "Street Shrines and the Writing of Disaster: 9/11, New York, 2001."; James B. Gardner, "September 11: Museums, Spontaneous Memorials, and History," ibid.

[103] Doss levies a similar critique. "It is important to remember that temporary memorials, and the contemporary cultures of public feeling that they embody, do not always yield the results that their analysts and critics may prefer—such as cultural economy of radical social protest, or ritualized performances of civic affirmation and solidarity." Doss, *The Emotional Life of Contemporary Public Memorials: Towards a Theory of Temporary Memorials*. 134-135, see also, 8-9. I acknowledge and agree with Irene Steng's critique that the term "spontaneous memorial" is highly problematic because "using the adjective 'spontaneous' to address such memorials is confusing. The adjective conceals that these memorials, irrespective their unofficial and temporary nature, are composed in accordance with what people deem to be *the* appropriate and customary response towards violent deaths. The memorials thus are not the outcome of 'instantaneous' impulses." Stengs, "Ephemeral Memorials against 'Senseless Violence': Materializations of Public Outcry." 38. However, even her term "ephemeral memorials" suffers from the same problem of being an adjective that is not always true with regards to all such memory sites. Ephemeral and temporary can no longer be said to be accurate because of the new commemorative practice of archiving these sites, which in effect, makes them enduring and/or permanent. Sanchez-Carretoro's 2007 article on the archiving of these memory sites has itself become a phenomenon as routine as the emergence of immediate aftermath memorials. See, Sanchez-Carretero, "The Politics of Archiving Ephemera in Times of Crisis: The Case of

aftermath of events of violence and tragedy, and as such, I will refer to them herein as "immediate aftermath memorials."[104] Starting in the early 1980s, news media increasingly fixated on these memory sites, routinely as backdrops for their newscasts, because as Peter Jan Margry and Christian Sanchez-Carretero note, "[immediate aftermath] memorials represent a theme on which the media is always eager to publish: personal death and trauma."[105] In the 1980s, heightened media coverage of immediate aftermath memorials familiarized Americans with the phenomenon, and solidified public expectation of their construction in the aftermath of events of traumatic violence.

The dedication of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial ("The Wall") in 1982 was also a turning point in the commemoration of violence that eschewed monumental aesthetics in favor of spaces of affect and reflection. The memorial was the winning submission of

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the "Mourning Archive," a Research Project on the Mourning Rituals in the Aftermath of March 11th, 2004 Train Bombing in Madrid." For scholarship on the other adjectives used to describe the phenomenon, see Doss, "Death, Art and Memory in the Public Sphere: The Visual and Material Culture of Grief in Contemporary America."; Stengs, "Ephemeral Memorials against 'Senseless Violence': Materializations of Public Outcry."; Margry, "Performative Memorials: Arenas of Political Resentment in Dutch Socieity."; Margry and Sanchez-Carretero, "Memorializing Traumatic Death."; Doss, *The Emotional Life of Contemporary Public Memorials: Towards a Theory of Temporary Memorials*; Margry and Sanchez-Carretero, "Rethinking Memorialization: The Concept of Grassroots Memorials."; *Grassroots Memorials: The Politics of Memorializing Traumatic Death*; Sanchez-Carretero, "The Madrid Train Bombings: Enacting the Emotional Body at the March 11 Grassroots Memorials."; Jack Santino, "Between Commemoration and Social Activism: Spontaneous Shrines, Grassroots Memorialization, and the Public Ritualesque in Derry," ibid.

[104] This term is forwarded to address what might be called the "adjective problem" that plagues the scholarship which investigates these memory sites.

[105] "Research affirms that since the mid-1980s, the phenomenon of roadside and grassroots memorials in the Western world received, in interaction with the media, new impetus and new forms…the modern forms of makeshift memorials is, on a mere incidental basis, ascertained in the West from approximately 1980 onward…the alliterating concept of makeshift memorials represents a theme on which the media are always eager to publish: personal death and trauma." Margry and Sanchez-Carretero, *Grassroots Memorials: The Politics of Memorializing Traumatic Death*. 6-7. Sylvia Grider also touches on the role the media played in spreading the expectation and form of immediate aftermath memorials. "The media probably played a very active role in teaching the public what these look like and where to put them--because they make great photo ops [for news broadcasts]." Grider, quoted in Kevin Simpson, "A Tribute Etched in Stone: Communities once tucked away all signs of tragic events. But shrines can offer an outlet for families," *Denver Post,* September 21, 2007. Grider and Foote also write, "the role of media in encouraging spontaneous shrines…the apparent similarity of many contemporary shrines suggests that the media may exert some influence. However, as mentioned above, precedents for spontaneous shrines have a long history and the power of the media to influence these precedents may be overestimated." Grider and Foote, "Vernacular Memorials and Spontaneous Shrines." 2.

then-Yale University undergraduate Maya Lin to the international design competition organized by Vietnam veteran Jan Scruggs.[106] Kirk Savage calls the Wall an "epochal work that had as much impact on the Mall as the Washington Monument a century earlier…the memorial was at once a culmination of trends that had already altered the mall and the beginning of a new era in the memorial landscape."[107] Aesthetically speaking, the Wall was the antithesis of the monumental tradition, what James Young calls a "countermonument," which is a site that "contemptuously [rejects] the traditional forms and reasons for public art, those spaces that either console viewers or redeem such tragic events…or purport to mend the memory of a murdered people."[108] The Vietnam

[106] Like the controversy that surrounded the Vietnam War itself, the design of Wall initially met significant resistance. For more information on the design process, the controversy that ensued after the selection of Lin's design, the compromises that resulted, and the rapid public endearment that came after the dedication of the memorial, see Jan C. Scruggs and Joel L. Swerdlow, *To Heal a Nation: The Vietnam Veterans Memorial* (New York: Harper & Row, 1985); Freida Lee Mock, *Maya Lin: A Strong Clear Vision* (United States: Ocean Releasing, 1995).

[107] Savage, *Monument Wars: Washington, D.C., the National Mall, and the Transformation of the Memorial Landscape*. 253. Other scholars, while differing in their individual assessments, agree on the significance of the impact of the Wall. For David Thelen, "the creation of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial may exemplify the most common resolution of the tension between participants' private memories of an event and elites preferences for turning the past into myths that promote uniformity and stability." David P. Thelen, *Memory and American History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990). xvii. Marita Sturken, building on Frued's concept of "screen memory" notes that "The kinds of screens that converge in the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C. both shield and project: the black walls of the memorial act as screens for innumerable projections of memory and history…while they screen out the narrative of defeat in preparing for wars to come…also evokes the screens on which the war was and continues to be experienced--cinematic and television screens-through which the contested history of the war is being made…since its construction in 1982, the memorial has been the center of a debate on precisely how wars should be remembered." Marita Sturken, "The Wall, the Screen, and the Image: The Vietnam Veterans Memorial," *Representations* Summer, no. 35 (1991). 118-119, reprinted in *Tangled Memories: The Vietnam War, the Aids Epidemic, and the Politics of Remembering*. Haas, similar to Savage, sees that "the Wall might even be usefully imagined as a merger, in the new memorial terrain established at Gettysburg, of the WWI and WWII memorial impulses. It carries the existential angst of the absence of meaning beyond names that marks the World War I battlefield memorials, and it carries the commodified, if no the functional, impulses of WWII memorials." Hass, *Carried to the Wall: American Memory and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial*. 62.

[108] James Edward Young, "The Counter-Monument: Memory against Itself in Germany Today," *Critical Inquiry* 18, no. 2 (1992). 272. For more on countermonuments, see also, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning*; Andreas Huyssen, "Monument and Memory in Postmodern Age," in *Art of Memory: Holocaust Memorials in History*, ed. James E. Young (New York: Prestel-Verlag, 1994); James Edward Young, *The Art of Memory: Holocaust Memorials in History* (New York, N.Y.: Prestel Pub. Co., 1994); Andreas Huyssen, "Memory Sites in an Expanded Field: The Memory Park in Buenos Aires," in *Present Pasts: Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory*, ed. Andreas Huyssen (Stanford, CA:

Veterans Memorial offered no definitive narrative of the war or a promise of closure, but its immense popularity shifted national commemorative sensibility towards an expectation that memory sites to violence should be intimate spaces of collective catharsis.

Even more significantly, the Wall marked the end of war memorials as a widely accepted symbol of national unity, which created a commemorative void in the patriotic landscape. At the end of the twentieth century, Mosse suggests

> [that] old symbols have lost their power is not merely a sign of changing tastes, but an expression of attitudes toward war. The Vietnam War Memorial can stand not only as a monument to the fallen of the war, but also, snatching victory from defeat, as a monument to the death, however provisional, of the Myth of the War Experience.[109]

Before the Wall, the marking of violence in the patriotic landscape had grown through aesthetic representations of monumentality, bodies, names and the more utilitarian forms that were the dominant form after both World Wars. During the domestic turbulence of the Cold War years, the breadth of kinds of murdered citizens that could be commemorated expanded significantly, particularly on universities campuses. In the 1980s, both the Wall and immediate aftermath memorials highlighted the growing emphasis on spaces and rituals that enabled "affective dimensions…[in] cultural

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Stanford University Press, 2003); James Edward Young, *At Memory's Edge: After-Images of the Holocaust in Contemporary Art and Architecture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000); "Against Redemption: The Arts of Countermemory in Germany Today," in *Symbolic Loss: The Ambiguity of Mourning and Memory at Century's End*, ed. Peter Homans (Charlottesville: The Unviersity Press of Virginia, 2000).

[109] Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers: Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars*. 225. Savage makes a similar claim. "the immense success of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial sealed the fate of the public monument…in the wake of (Lin's) success it could be taken for granted that 'the space itself serves as the memorial'…these words would have baffled most readers just a few decades earlier." Savage, *Monument Wars: Washington, D.C., the National Mall, and the Transformation of the Memorial Landscape*. 20-21.

negotiations of public grief."[110] While war memorials have dominated the patriotic landscape for most of U.S. history, changing commemorative sensibilities regarding the marking of violence in the late twentieth century substantially undermined war's previously unquestioned ability to instill a sense of national unity.

And from this commemorative void, mass murder memorials emerged.

[110] Doss, *The Emotional Life of Contemporary Public Memorials: Towards a Theory of Temporary Memorials*. 8. Doss is speaking specifically about temporary/spontaneous memorials, however, I believe her description points far beyond this phenomenon to the more generally commemorative sensibility of the historical period.

Chapter 1 EDMOND, OKLAHOMA - A Potent Commemorative Harbinger of Mass Murder Memorial Trends and Commemorative Expectations

On Memorial Day in May of 1989, over three hundred people gathered in Edmond, Oklahoma for a dedication ceremony that, unbeknownst to them at the time, marked the inception of a new historical period in which the construction of mass murder memorials became a cultural expectation in the United States. Inspired by the yellow ribbons which had covered the town in the days after the killings, the "Yellow Ribbon" memorial permanently marked the August 1, 1986 murder of fourteen employees of the Edmond Post Office by a coworker who then committed suicide—an event that was quickly canonized in popular culture with the slang term "going postal." Former Edmond Mayor Carl Reherman spoke at the ceremony and explained that the memorial was about more than just the killing or the victims, it had been constructed so that people in "the future would look back [and understand] that this was something that was tragic yet pulled the community together. The memorial is more than a reflection of the past. It is hope for the future."[1] On the one hand, the mayor's aspirations for the future influence of the memorial would be limited by the fact that knowledge of its existence remained almost entirely within the Edmond community.[2] On the other hand, the process that resulted in the creation of The Yellow Ribbon provides valuable insight into the

[1] See Curtis Killman, "Many Move Beyond Grief With Memorial," *Edmond Evening Sun*, May 30, 1989; Stacy D. Johnson, "Monument Honors 14 Slain Postal Employees," *The Daily Oklahoman*, May 30, 1989.
[2] Perhaps the most telling example of this being that Robert Johnson, Chair of the Oklahoma City bombing Memorial Task Force was completely unaware of the existence of The Yellow Ribbon memorial despite the fact that it was dedicated just six years beforehand, and was located a mere fourteen miles away from the site of the bombing. Robert "Bob" Johnson, Interview with the Author, July 31, 2012.

significant transformation of national commemorative sensibilities about remembering violence that took place during the 1980s. At the end of the dedication, local therapist Jim Orsi commented "I think [the ceremony] is kind of a completion," and for citizens of the small town of Edmond this was undoubtedly true. Yet, the dedication of The Yellow Ribbon marked the first mass murder memorial constructed before the rapid proliferation of similar memory sites in the 1990s.

In this chapter I argue that two of the commemorative trends that would become the cornerstones of the emerging mass murder memorial tradition were first enacted in Edmond; one that was established before the dedication ceremony, the other which emerged afterwards. The first trend was the adoption of the most publicly recognized symbol from the immediate aftermath memorials—which in the case of Edmond was a yellow ribbon—as the centerpiece of the permanent memorial. Because many citizens of Edmond were ambivalent about creating a permanent memorial, the adoption of the still-resonating symbol of the yellow ribbon effectively garnered the support of the community at large. The second trend was the spatial proclivity of mass murder memorials to either enter into, or influence the creation of, a ritualized assemblage comprised of other geographically proximate memory sites. In the case of Edmond, the dedication of The Yellow Ribbon memorial initiated a rapid period of growth of public artwork and memory sites that in just two decades came to frame the very identity of the city.

I will support this assertion by first detailing the history of the yellow ribbon tradition in the United States in order to illustrate how the citizens of Edmond adoption of yellow ribbons expanded their symbolic meaning to encompass the memory of the dead.

I will show how the Edmond community transformed the ephemeral symbol of yellow ribbons into the foundation of their permanent memorial as a means of unifying the community amidst their collective bereavement. In the second section of the chapter, I explain how the theoretical concept of "symbolic accretion" first forwarded by Kenneth Foote can be productively expanded as a means of better understanding the relationship between multiple and often disparate permanent memory sites, which I call a "ritualized assemblage." I will then illustrate how The Yellow Ribbon memorial influenced the emergence of a local ritualized assemblage of memory sites that increasingly came to define the public identity of the town of Edmond. In conclusion, I will show that while Edmond's memorialization process was ultimately locally contained, its enduring significance lies in its role as a potent harbinger of two of the commemorative trends that became the hallmarks of the mass murder memorials that quickly proliferated throughout the United States at the turn of the 21st century.

1.1 A Brief History of Yellow Ribbons in the United States

Edmond's commemorative response was both an important turning point in the national meaning of yellow ribbons, and an early example of adopting a publically resonating symbol from immediate aftermath memorials as means of successfully creating a mass murder memorial. To better understand Edmond's role in these transformations, it is first necessary to briefly trace the changing symbols and meanings of the contemporary "ribbon culture" up to their first mass material manifestation in the national landscape as a symbol of waiting for the return of the American hostages taken

during the 1979 Iranian Revolution.[3] After the Edmond postal killings, the community immediately adopted yellow ribbons as a communal means of mourning, and in so doing, expanded the symbolic meaning of ribbons in the United State to encompass death generally, and violent death more specifically. Moreover, the adoption of the symbol of the yellow ribbon as the central feature of the design in the permanent memorial proved to be a vital means of assuaging members of the Edmond community who held the long-standing commemorative sensibility that memorializing mass murder was shameful and absurd. The 1980s were a period of significant transformation in the ways in which American's commemorated violence, and the Post Office killings of 1986 positioned Edmond as a historical harbinger of things to come.

Scholarship on the origins of the yellow ribbon in the United States illuminates that the original symbol was not a ribbon at all, but a willow which signified missing a loved one who was far away. Gerald Parsons, a folklorist and librarian at the Library of Congress, identified the first American precursor of the ribbon tradition as the 1838 song by John Hansell, "All Around My Hat" which used a "green willow" as a symbolic memento.[4] Songs themselves would be the means by which the tradition was communicated for over a century, and the concluding line of this nineteenth century song would be replicated in slightly varied ways in nearly all the subsequent iterations:

If hanyone should hax,
the reason vy I vears it,
Tell them that my true love
is *far, far away*.[5]

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[3] "Ribbon Culture" here referring to Sarah E. H. Moore, *Ribbon Culture: Charity, Compassion, and Public Awareness* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

[4] Gerald E. Parsons, "Yellow Ribbon: Ties with Tradition," *Folklife Center News* 4, no. 2 (1981). np; Musical historian Sigmund Spaeth called "All Around My Hat," "unquestionably the ancestor of the later song *Round Her Neck She Wore a Yellow Ribbon,"* Sigmund Spaeth, *A History of Popular Music in America*, (New York: Random House, 1948), 83-84.

[5] John Hansell, "All Around My Hat," 1838.

"All Around My Hat" is the earliest know American predecessor of the ribbon tradition, but in the song a green willow worn on an individuals clothing symbolized longing for a far off loved one.

Sarah Moore suggests the practice of wearing Flag Day lapel pins and Armistice Day Poppy's around World War I were early "historical precedents" for symbolizing national unity and mourning, a touchstone of late twentieth century ribbon traditions.[6] The first Flag Day was celebrated in 1914 as a "charity [campaign] in which lapel pins are given out in return for the donation" and were billed as representing "a sense of national unity and stability during the First World War."[7] Four years later, in 1918, the tradition of the Armistice Day Poppy was developed to "give expression to the tide of national mourning" but was also embraced rapidly because "enthusiasm for flag days was beginning to ebb."[8] The poppy was aimed specifically at "remembering lost loved ones… [and] constituted an expression of personal loss as well as a statement of belonging."[9] These early charitable campaigns illuminate similar symbolic meanings and the routinely ephemeral nature of the ribbon traditions of the later twentieth century.

The actual symbol of the ribbon was used in two songs in the mid-twentieth century, and firmly established remembering someone far away while adding color as a marker of identity into the tradition. In 1917, George A. Norton's wrote the song "Round Her Neck She Wears a Yellow Ribbon (For Her Lover Who is Fur, Fur Away)" that musical historian Sigmund Spaeth called "unquestionably the ancestor" of Hansell's "All

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[6] Moore, *Ribbon Culture: Charity, Compassion, and Public Awareness*. 43.
[7] Ibid. 43, 46.
[8] Ibid. 46.
[9] Ibid. 49.

Around My Hat."[10] During the 1920s and 1930s the song was altered by many colleges and the ribbon was substituted for a garter, which Parson's explains was a way "to implicate a student of an appropriate college: crimson for Harvard, orange for Princeton, and so on."[11] In 1949, the John Wayne film *She Wore a Yellow Ribbon* featured the theme song "(Round Her Neck) She Wore a Yellow Ribbon." The song referenced the lead actress, Joanne Dru, who wore a yellow ribbon in her hair as a sign that she is dating someone who was serving in the Army. A number of other variations on these two early songs were released in the 1960s and illustrate that by the mid-twentieth century, the ribbon firmly expressed recognition of, and longing for, someone of importance who was "far, far away."[12]

It was the 1973 song "Tie A Yellow Ribbon Around the Ole Oak Tree," however, that inspired two different women to "put the story into action," which initiate the first nationwide public displays of yellow ribbons in the American landscape.[13] The first was Gail Magruder, who in 1975 tied dozens of yellow ribbons all over the front porch of her house to welcome her husband, Jeb Stuart Magruder of Watergate fame, home from jail. Penny Laingen, whose husband was Iranian Ambassador Bruce Laingen was taken hostage in the U.S. embassy in Tehran during the Iranian revolution on November 4, 1979. saw the Magruder's reunion broadcast nationally on television. Parsons credits Laingen with being responsible for making "the ribbon into a [national] emblem."[14] Laingen was inspired by the Gail Magruder to tie a yellow ribbon around an oak tree on

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[10] Sigmund Spaeth, *A History of Popular Music in America* (New York: Random House, 1948). 82-83.
[11] Parsons, "Yellow Ribbon: Ties with Tradition." np.
[12] For a list of songs that replicated the usage of the ribbon, see see Gerald Parson's well researched and extensive detailing of this period of the ribbon tradition in ibid.; "How the Yellow Ribbon Became a National Folk Symbol," *Folklife Center News* 13, no. 3 (1991).
[13] "How the Yellow Ribbon Became a National Folk Symbol." Song by Dawn, featuring Tony Orlando,
[14] Ibid.

her property as a symbol of waiting for her husbands return, and Parsons credits Laingen with making "the ribbon into a [national] emblem."[15] When asked on television why she had done this, Penny responded, "it just came to me to give people something to do, rather than throw dog food at Iranians. I said, 'Why don't they tie a yellow ribbon around the old oak tree?' That's how it started."[16] As a result of Laingen action, yellow ribbons "blossomed [all across the nation] in January [1981] to welcome the American hostages home from Iran."[17] At the beginning of the 1980s, the symbol of the yellow ribbon became a nationally recognized symbol of unity with people who were far away.[18]

Within days of 1986 Edmond killings, one of the immediate aftermath memorial forms that quickly spread across the town was "residents [tying] yellow ribbons on their mailboxes,"[19] and in so doing, the symbol of the yellow ribbon was used for the first time as a means of publically memorializing death in order to unify the living. Unlike Gail Magruder, who used ribbons to represent an imprisoned love one, or Penny Laingen whose ribbons represented awaiting the return of national heroes, in the case of the Edmond the yellow ribbons symbolized for the first time not people who were far away, but the dead, those forever beyond the reach of the living. Many Edmond residents recalled that within a day the entire town was literally blanketed with "this huge outpouring of … yellow ribbons" that remained "all over the town for a long time."[20] Likely due to the speed with which the ribbons proliferated, no one has any recollection of who started this practice or where exactly the idea emerged. What is clear,

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[15] Ibid.
[16] "Penny Laingen's Wait," *Washington Post*, December 10, 1979.
[17] Parsons, "Yellow Ribbon: Ties with Tradition."
[18] Penny Laingen quoted in ibid.
[19] Rosemary Tobin, "The Unthinkable Becomes the Unforgettable."
[20] Quote from Tim Richardson, Interview with the Author, May 31, 2012; see also, Iris Muno Jordan Interview.

retrospectively, is that the Edmond community expanded the symbolic meaning of the yellow ribbon to include the memory of people who were dead.

Edmond's yellow ribbons are important because they stand as one of the last historically significant immediate aftermath memorials that were not an object of the intense media fixation that increasingly drove the cultural expectation of this phenomenon. Peter Jan Margry and Cristina Sanchez-Carretero note that the term "'spontaneous memorial' started to appear as new expression in the English vocabulary in newspapers incidentally in 1985 and more frequently from 1989 onward."[21] The two notable early 1980s American cases of spontaneous memorials were the mass murders at a McDonalds in San Ysidro, California in 1984 and the post office killings in Edmond. In each of these cases, "newspaper articles on the 'new' trend… still dealt with them as fairly unknown phenomenon."[22] Time magazine, for example, published an article weeks after the Edmond killings that paid only passing notice to the "wreaths and baskets of flowers … and notes of condolence in mailboxes" for the letter carriers, yet completely failed to mention the yellow ribbons that were tied to nearly every single mailbox in the town.[23] Scholars have generally cited media coverage after Princess Diana death in 1997 as the emergence of worldwide public awareness of immediate aftermath memorials.[24] Sylvia Grider aptly notes that as the result of increased "media coverage, we have come

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[21] Margry and Sanchez-Carretero, *Grassroots Memorials: The Politics of Memorializing Traumatic Death*. 7.

[22] Ibid. 7.

[23] Jacob V. Lamar Jr. and J. Madeleine Nash, "'Crazy Pat's' Revenge: A Postman Kills 14 Co-Workers in Oklahoma," *TIME*1986. 19.

[24] Margry and Sanchez-Carretero, *Grassroots Memorials: The Politics of Memorializing Traumatic Death*. 7. See also, Santino, "'Not an Unimportant Failure': Rituals of Death and Politics in Northern Ireland."; Grider, "Spontaneous Shrines: A Modern Response to Tragedy and Disaster (Preliminary Observations Regarding the Spontaneous Shrines Following the Terrorist Attacks of September 11, 2001)."; Santino, *Spontaneous Shrines and the Public Memorialization of Death*.

to expect these shrines to follow in the wake of otherwise unbearable tragedies."[25] Edmond thus stands historically as one of the last major American tragedies in which immediate aftermath memorialization took place in a more organic fashion—indeed, perhaps we might even say 'spontaneously'—before invasive media coverage turned the phenomenon into a cultural expectation.

1.2 "What Do We Do?" Edmond's Exclusive Memorial Process

Much like the rapid spread of yellow ribbons throughout Edmond in the days after the killings, the political response of city and state officials was equally swift. Edmond Mayor Carl Reherman, who had been in New York City the day of the bombing, returned late that night and began a process that Rev. Tim Richardson recalled was centered on the question "What do we do?"[26] The mayor responded pragmatically by seeking to address the immediate community needs. The first major commemorative event was a community memorial service held at the University of Central Oklahoma in Edmond, which was attended by Oklahoma Governor George Nigh.[27] In the days and weeks that followed, Mayor Reherman keenly leveraged his reputation for being a public figure who "liked to get consensus from people" by working to involve as wide an array of community members as possible in the recovery efforts.[28] As Rev. Richardson importantly recalled

> I don't believe the committee's first purpose was for the memorial. I think it was just a response committee… the committee had a broader topic, not just the memorial. The memorial, it almost seemed like it came a little bit later… [planning the memorial]

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[25] Grider, "Spontaneous Shrines: A Modern Response to Tragedy and Disaster (Preliminary Observations Regarding the Spontaneous Shrines Following the Terrorist Attacks of September 11, 2001)." np.
[26] Tim Richardson Interview.
[27] The university was known as "Central State University" at the time of the killings. See Tobin, "The Unthinkable Becomes the Unforgettable."
[28] Randel Shadid Interview.

> came more as—it was not an afterthought, but a continuation of the question, 'What do we do? What do we do?'[29]

Mayor Reherman's communal leadership style and experience with recent local tragedy quickly mobilized the Edmond community. Two prior tragedies in Edmond—the 1985 murders of three grocery store employees and a 1986 tornado that destroyed and damaged over 150 houses and caused over $15 million dollars in damage—had given the mayor experience of pulling the community together. Calls for assistance were quickly answered by Rev. Richardson of the Edmond Ministerial Alliance, Director Amy Hann of the recently created HOPE Center (Helping Our People in Emergency) and Jim Orsi, a psychiatrist at the North Care Center. Each of these community figures helped lead an effort to organize "food, housing, out-of-pocket expenses…[and a] 24-hour (hotline) to match victim's needs with offers for assistance" as well as short and long term ministering and counseling.[30] Rev. David Egbert, then President of the Ministerial Alliance, noted, "service organizations, churches, the university and the town all pulled together to assist in healing broken hearts."[31] The official leadership and communal involvement that Mayor Reherman cultivated during the immediate aftermath fostered an environment that encouraged participation and further strengthened the community's bonds of attachment.

Amidst this widespread communal involvement, the idea of creating a permanent memorial was put forward by William "Bill" Wallo, Chair of the Edmond Arts and Humanities Council. In struggling to figure out how he could meaningfully assist his

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[29] Tim Richardson Interview.
[30] Robmary Tobin, "Tragedies Strengthen Community Spirit of Caring," *Edmond Evening Sun*, August 18, 1987; Curtis Killman, "Many Move Beyond Grief With Memorial," *Edmond Evening Sun*, May 30, 1989.
[31] Tobin, "Tragedies Strengthen Community Spirit of Caring."

community, Wallo asked himself, "what do we do about this aesthetically?"[32] Wallo contemplated the answer to this question at a time when media attention was pervasive, a fact which inspired him to develop the following insight.

> There was a strange awkwardness in the community of Edmond and throughout Oklahoma because our state had been known as this quite little, if you will, 'dinner community.' Then suddenly there was this national media inquisition which resulted in an amazing communal self-consciousness. So the position that I took and that I put forward [in my proposal] was that we needed to respond [aesthetically because] … with all the overwhelming national media attention … in my mind, the question of how we were going to be identified with this as a community and how to do anything in any true, constructive sense, certainly justified the thought of looking into a memorial group coming together… It became clear to me that the community was going to be negatively impacted by doing nothing. Even if [creating a permanent memorial] might not gain much attention, it was at least clear as an act of conscience that we were being drawn together as a community and that we wanted to find some way to express that.[33]

With these considerations in mind, Wallo drafted a proposal for the creation of a committee to pursue the creation of a permanent memorial. The Arts and Humanities Council adopted Wallo's proposal and then took it to the Mayor, who immediately pledged his full support. Wallo was named Chair of the Edmond Postal Memorial Committee, and Mayor Reherman quickly and pragmatically assembled individuals from the community organizations and public offices that would be necessary to coordinate the endeavor. The committee included representatives from Edmond Parks and Recreation, the Post Office, the Ministerial Alliance, the Fine Arts Center, the Arts and Humanities Council as well as a handful of other well known community leaders.[34] The memorial

[32] Bill Wallo, Interview with the Author, February 13, 2013.
[33] Ibid.
[34] The original members of the Edmond Postal Memorial Committee were David Bickham, Herb Rettke, Tim Richardson, Mitzi Hancuff, Jess Mengle as well as Jim Orsi and Ross Brashears.

committee met for the first time in November 1986 and began to develop a framework for their commemorative process by the end of the year.

The Mayor established a central requirement for the committee that illustrates Edmond's historical position amidst a period of commemorative transition in the marking violence in the American landscape. Wallo recalled that from the outset the Mayor instructed the committee that "because it might not make sense for some members of the community that we were pursuing a memorial of this kind, whatever we would pursue [needs to not] confound the issue that we were creating some negative. [We need] to be clear that we were creating something positive."[35] It was clear to the mayor that there were people in Edmond for whom the notion of creating a permanent memory site made no sense. The commemorative sensibility that had endured for the bulk of American history was expressed in Bill Wallo's succinct observation that many locals considered the creation of a memorial after the Post Office killings as a "ludicrous memorial to [a] travesty."[36] The memorial committee sought to address the mayor's caveat by requiring that all design submissions "should express an attitude of life affirmation, human dignity, and provide a sense of renewal and cleansing."[37] To address the stigma that still existed in the 1980s about the creation of a permanent memorial after a mass murder, the mayor insisted that Edmond's memorial must be aesthetical designed and publicly explained as being something positive for the community.

The Mayor made two other important decisions that resulted in an exclusive memorial process that only certain people were allowed to be a part of, yet which had the

[35] Bill Wallo interview.
[36] Ibid.
[37] The Edmond Postal Memorial Committee, "Memorial Design Solicitation." From the "Iris Muno Jordan Edmond Post Office Memorial Archive," in the personal possession of Iris Muno Jordan (hereafter IMJMA).

appearance of being an inclusive public project. The first decision made by the Mayor was that while family members of the victims would be consulted, they were not allowed to join the memorial committee.[38] The rationale for this was, as Mayor Reherman explained, "if you had a family member [on the committee] then you would have emotions, and if they didn't like what you were doing" it could hinder the entire process.[39] While Reherman's decision was based upon efficiency, then City Councilmember Randel Shadid, who was involved in telling family members their loved one had been murdered, saw the decision in another light.

> You don't want the families involved in that at all because you don't want to dredge up any more memories than they are already suffering. And that suffering is not going to end easily or in a short period of time, if it ever ends… There is no way in the world that I would have asked them to participate in the [memorial committee]. And it's not out of disrespect for them, it is just too gut wrenching.[40]

Both pragmatic and emotional considerations led to the creation of a memorial process that, while it included a wide array of people in the community, nevertheless excluded the members of the community most intimately affected by the killings.

The decision to exclude family members was in line with the mayor's other objective to not create a victim memorial, but to instead construct a memory site focused on unifying the Edmond community. The guiding question that drove Mayor Reherman's thinking was "who are we building this memorial for?'[41]

> Is [the memorial going to be] for those who are dead? Is it for their families? In the case [of Edmond] it was for the community.

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[38] Committee member and postal worker Herb Rettke put his ongoing effort into being the liaison to family members. Rettke worked tirelessly "visiting all the families of the deceased and talking to them. I was somewhere every night after I finished with my route … [and I did this] until after the dedication," three years later. Herb Rettke, Interview with the Author, May 30, 2012.
[39] Ibid.
[40] Randel Shadid, Interview with the Author, May 30, 2012.
[41] Carl Reherman, Interview with the Author, May 29, 2012.

> My way of looking at it, I was for the kind of memory site for the community, to continue that healing process… My goal was to take care of the community… I did not want my community going into depression[42]

The mayor's decision resulted in the memorial committee pursuing the project as part of the larger communal healing process, as opposed to one designed primarily to remember the people who were murdered.

Mayor Reherman acknowledged that he sought to create a controversy-free memorial process due to his military background and memory of the recently constructed Vietnam Veteran's Memorial. Reherman served in the Army in Vietnam for seven years, and during his last two years of service, was an aide to General Carl Turner at Walter Reed Army Medical Center. Every Wednesday, Reherman accompanied General Turner as they visited the various wards to award Purple Hearts to the wounded. After the postal killings, Mayor Reherman recalled that he "went back to…my memory of those Walter Reed visits…it hardened me in some way, but it made me more aware of the level of suffering…I almost equate the post office [killings with]… the loss that those young men and women had gone through."[43] Reherman recalled that the proposal Bill Wallo presented to him immediately reminded him of the national controversy that had recently surrounded the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, which he said taught him that "you cannot build any memorial that everybody is going to like. Everybody is a critic if they didn't do it."[44] Mayor Reherman's past work with wounded veterans and desire to avoid the

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[42] Ibid.

[43] Carl Reherman interview.

[44] Ibid. As a veteran, the mayor had originally been skeptical about Lin's design, but his personal experience of actually going to The Wall "changed my mind totally, because I was able to go through the book and the names of the individuals who I had served with in the past. I was a cleansing process; I went through the tears and the sense of loss. And I think it helped me to understand."

controversy that surrounded the Vietnam Veterans Memorial led him to create a commemorative process in Edmond designed to avoid public contention.

The exclusivity of Edmond's memorial committee membership coupled with a community focused vision produced exactly what Mayor Reherman had hoped for: a commemorative process almost entirely free of contention.[45] As Bill Wallo remembered, "it was a complex project" that nevertheless was completed "quite effectively and everyone kept in pretty clear communication throughout the completion of this process."[46] Shadid added simply, "I'm glad [our process] went smoothly."[47] Erica Doss has observed that "sites of memory are, at their core, sites of struggle," and while this is generally the case in memorials created after events of violence, it makes the absence of such contention in Edmond notable.[48] By envisioning the memorial as primarily for the community of the living, and in excluding family members of the victims, Edmond's exclusive process effectively avoided any significant public commemorative struggles.

1.3 Transforming Ephemeral Yellow Ribbons into a Permanent Memorial

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[45] The only significant exception to this was a short-lived disagreement in January 1987 about whether the memory site should be located at the Post Office or on the nearby recreational area surrounding Lake Arcadia. See "Memorial Comment Rapped," *Edmond Evening Sun,* January 8, 1987; "The Memorial Should Be At Post Office," *Edmond Evening Sun,* January 13, 1987; "Put Memorial At Post Office," *Edmond Evening Sun*, January 13, 1987; "Memorial Plan Draws Criticism," *Edmond Evening Sun*, January 14, 1987.
[46] Bill Wallo interview.
[47] Randel Shadid interview.
[48] Doss, "Death, Art and Memory in the Public Sphere: The Visual and Material Culture of Grief in Contemporary America." 69.

In June of 1987, the memorial committee unanimously selected local sculptor Richard Muno's memorial design entitled "Yellow Ribbon" because the symbol resonated strongly with the public after the killings. Muno's design depicted a man and a woman, who Muno's daughter Iris noted were chosen to "represent a good family image," holding a long and flowing yellow ribbon and standing in the middle of a pool with fourteen fountains—one for each of the victims (Fig. 1).[49] Upon receiving the memorial design process solicitation in January, Richard Muno spent nearly two weeks driving around the community looking for inspiration for his design. On one of those drives, Muno saw one of the many "yellow [ribbons] tied to a curbside mailbox. 'That's what hit me. The one good thing that came out of the whole tragedy was the way the citizens of our community came together and tied all those ribbons on the mailboxes to tell the surviving postal worker we cared.'"[50] Bill Wallo believed that Muno's design was so effective for the people of Edmond because the symbol of the yellow ribbon "was a very valid principle to realize that people had been drawn together in response to an extremely negative event, that that by definition is the positive symbolism that is worthy of being memorialized."[51] For the community at large, the symbol of the yellow ribbon resonated powerfully and resulted in "the Muno design [becoming] the overwhelming favorite."[52]

The symbol of the yellow ribbon not only resonated strongly with the community; it also fulfilled the mayor's aim for the commemorative process to be a means of healing

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[49] Iris Muno Jordan, Interview with the Author, May 30, 2012.
[50] Richard Muno cited in Brunis Argo, "Work Begins on Post Office Memorial," *The Daily Oklahoman*, March 11, 1988.
[51] Bill Wallo interview.
[52] Carl Reherman cited in Ellie Sutter, "Yellow Ribbon Focus of Memorial Sculpture," *The Daily Oklahoman*, August 19, 1987. Herb Rettke and Bill Wallo also echoed this opinion in their respective interviews.

and unifying the community. Mayor Reherman called Muno's selection of the yellow ribbon one of "the salient symbols" of the aftermath, yet for the mayor the main objective of the memorial process

> wasn't the erecting of the memorial, it was putting that ribbon around our community… There is no question in my mind that our memorial would not win a prize medal for memorials. Ok? It is fairly simple. But when you understand the context, how and why… we designed the memorial to help heal.[53]

By all accounts, the commemorative and communal recovery processes resulted in a strong sense of community in Edmond. Rev. Kyle Maxwell asserted on the eve of the first anniversary "following the tragedy… the city [of Edmond] has more of a sense of identity."[54] On the fifth anniversary, Randel Shadid noted that the killings "brought the community together. It did unite us—we suffered together, grew out of it and got on with life."[55] Edmond's three-year memorialization process helped to unify the community amidst their collective bereavement.

The effectiveness of the memorialization process in unifying the citizens stands in stark contrast with the rapid decline in communal rituals and public memory in Edmond. On the first anniversary the *Edmond Evening Sun* unveiled a weeklong "series of articles to respectively commemorate" entitled "How Hearts are Mending," in which the newspaper encouraged residents to "once again … decorate their mailboxes with yellow

[53] Ibid. Reherman shared that before he became the Mayor of Edmond he taught a course entitled "Urban Violence" at the University of Central Oklahoma, where one of his teaching goals was to stress the importance of "understanding that symbols will outlast reality."
[54] Maxwell quoted in Rosemary Tobin, "Community to Remember Those Who Died in Tragedy," *Edmond Evening Sun*, August 16, 1987.
[55] Shadid quoted in Rosemary Tobin, "Time Has A Way of Healing," *Edmond Evening Sun*, August 18, 1991.

ribbons."[56] By the second anniversary, however, the *Edmond Evening Sun* rolled back its coverage to only the day of the anniversary and aptly titled their front page article "Remembrance: Quiet Observance Marks Day of Postal Tragedy."[57] In the article, the paper spoke for the first time in the past tense of how "yellow ribbons tied to mailboxes symbolized sympathy two years ago."[58] Mayor Reheman later recalled that public anniversary observances only "lasted five or less years after the memory site was dedicated."[59]

National public memory of the mass murder was equally rapid in its decline. At a national mayor's conference three years after the killings, the mayor of another city asked Mayor Reherman, "something happened in Edmond and I can't remember, what it is that made national news there?" Reherman responded, tongue-in-cheek, "well, we had the PGA Tournament in 1988," to which the other mayor replied, "oh, that's what it was, it was the PGA Tournament!"[60] The success of the memorial process in bringing the Edmond community together did not result in any enduring local or national public memory of the killings beyond the slang term "going postal."

The high level of local ambivalence in Edmond about the appropriateness of their memorial represents the reality of a community historically situated in a period in which national commemorative sensibilities regarding violence were rapidly changing. Jim Orsi, a member of the Edmond memorial committee and local counselor who worked with many family members in the years after the killings, explained that "[people] don't

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[56] "Articles Respectively Commemorate 'Sad Event,'" *Edmond Evening Sun,* August 16, 1987; encouragement to redisplay yellow ribbons was given on the front page in the caption below the picture "A WAY OF SHOWING SUPPORT," Ibid.
[57] Rosemary Tobin, "'Remembrance': Quite Observance Marks Day of Postal Tragedy," *Edmond Evening Sun,* August 19, 1988.
[58] Quote from caption below the front page photo, ibid.
[59] Carl Reherman Interview.
[60] Ibid

want reminders of the tragedy itself but, at the same time, [they] don't want their loved ones to be forgotten."[61] On the day of the dedication, Orsi expressed his belief that "the memorial service should be the final public remembrance of the tragedy… I think (the dedication) is kind of a completion."[62] In the 1980s, the expressions "never forget" and "always remember" had not yet become the ubiquitous discourse used in the aftermath of mass murder. The ambivalence of the Edmond community might thus be understood as a local representation of the national change in cultural sensibilities about the marking of violence during this decade. Moreover, the rapid disappearance of both local and national public memory of the mass murder itself demonstrates the Edmond communities' vanguard position in the creation of mass murder memorials.

On Memorial Day of 1989, the city of Edmond Oklahoma dedicated a mass murder memorial that marked the inception of a cultural expectation of the creation of such memory sites in the United States. The Edmond community accomplished this feat before other communities like San Ysidro, California or Killeen, Texas, by transforming the communally resonant yellow ribbon symbol into the cornerstone of their permanent memorial. Mayor Reherman's goal when he assembled the memorial committee was to efficiently create a positively themed memorial design that promoted local unity while concurrently avoiding any public controversy. These objectives led to the excluding of family members out of fear that their emotions might hinder the memorial process. Ultimately, Richard Muno's design of the "Yellow Ribbon" curtailed most of the public ambivalence about the appropriateness of a memorial by making permanent the symbol which had literally tied the community together in the traumatic aftermath of the killings.

[61] Rosemary Tobin, "'Remembrance': Quite Observance Marks Day of Postal Tragedy," *Edmond Evening Sun,* August 19, 1988.
[62] Curtis Killman, "Many Move Beyond Grief With Memorial," *The Daily Oklahoman*, May 30, 1989.

While the dedication ceremony marked the completion of the Yellow Ribbon memorial, it also foreshadowed the second commemorative trend that would become a hallmark in subsequent mass murder memorials.

The Yellow Ribbon quickly began to grow.

1.4 From Symbolic Accretion to Ritualized Assemblage

In the communities where mass murder memorials have been constructed in the past three decades, there has routinely been an important relationship to other memory sites in the geographic vicinity of the official memorial. The prevalence of this relationship, coupled with the lack of scholarly or colloquial acknowledgment of its existence, highlights the need to further develop our understanding of the phenomenon. To do this it is necessary to build on Kenneth Foote's theory of "symbolic accretion" by forwarding the concept of a "ritualized assemblage" as a means of accounting for the relationship between different memory sites. Symbolic accretion, Foote explains, denotes how

> the sanctity of some [memory] sites has been reinforced over the years by the construction of additional monuments and memorials. That is, once sanctified, the [memory] sites have attracted additional memorials. This process of symbolic accretion . . . [creates] a repository for other memorials that help to reinforce its status as a meaningful place"[63]

A practical case of symbolic accretion would be the construction one or more spontaneous memorials nearby a permanent memory sites on the occasion of an anniversary, for example. Owen Dwyer has since developed the concept of symbolic accretion by differentiating between "allied accretion [that] enhances and confirms the

[63] Foote, *Shadowed Ground: America's Landscapes of Violence and Tragedy*. 231-232.

dominant discourses associated with a memorial whereas antithetical accretion is counter-intentional and seeks to contradict or otherwise adjust the conventional message."[64] Symbolic accretion helps to explain the processes by which individual memorials or monuments attract other, often temporary, memory sites in the proximate landscape.

Symbolic accretion illustrates how the politics of memory are enacted at existing memory sites, but illuminated two limitations of the concept need to be addressed and developed. First, the concept of symbolic accretion addresses only individual memory sites and the commemorative growth that occurs therein or nearby. Symbolic accretions encourages us to perceive a diverse range of commemorative features in relation to one another, but this insight can also serve as the model for understanding the relationship between multiple permanent memory sites. Second, the term "accretion" itself speaks of a building up of layers that all add up—palimpsest-like—to create a memory site. The discourse of "accretion" is insufficient, however, because it obscures the often intentionally planned and affectively synergistic relationship between sites.

It is thus necessary to expand on what Dwyer has called the "politics of memory associated with symbolic accretion,"[65] with the concept of a "ritualized assemblage," which I define as the routinely imperceptible yet planned assemblages of separate memory sites that are related spatially and/or productively through ritual performance. A ritualized assemblage differs from symbolic accretion and increases the methodological capacity of this commemoration theory in two ways. First, whereas an accretion is not

[64] Dwyer, "Symbolic Accretion and Commemoration." 421. See also, Steven D. Hoelscher and Derek H. Alderman, "Memory and Place: Geographies of a Critical Relationship," ibid., no. 5; Dwyer and Alderman, *Civil Rights Memorials and the Geography of Memory*; "Memorial Landscapes: Analytic Questions and Metaphors."; "Memorials and Monuments."
[65] Dwyer, "Symbolic Accretion and Commemoration." See also, Dwyer and Alderman, *Civil Rights Memorials and the Geography of Memory*; "Memorial Landscapes: Analytic Questions and Metaphors."; "Memorials and Monuments."

necessarily intentional, an assemblage is always intentional. "To assemble" denotes both a common purpose and fitting together, a degree of intention not necessary in an accretion. While the level of intentionality can different dramatically, the intentional spatial negotiation of the relationship between subsequent memory sites is always a fundamental consideration of architects, artisans and planners in the design process. Second, the discourse of accretion focuses on "growth" and "layers" and implies a physical proximity or connection. The discourse of assemblage, on the other hand, provides a more flexible means of interpretation in its emphasis on "gathering" and "grouping" of often seemingly disparate components. The concept of a ritualized assemblage expands the theoretical lexicon on the politics of memory sites by addressing the relationship between supposedly disparate memory sites and the degree of intention involved in their design relative to each other.

As ritualized assemblages are often difficult to perceive, Judith Butler's discussion of "apprehension" provides a beneficial framework and means of identifying these often-obscured relationships.[66] Spatial breadth is a crucial component of a ritualized assemblage because the physical and geographical distances between the memory sites are often remote to the point where they are, literally, "out-of-sight" of one another. Butler proposes that "apprehension" encourages an ability to discern that which is

> less precise, since it can imply marking, registering, acknowledging without full cognition . . . it is bound up with sensing and

[66] Architectural theorist Christine Boyer suggests a similar sentiment that was also helpful in coming to understand the importance of apprehension as a frame for seeing ritualized assemblages. Boyer suggests that "to read across and through different layers and strata of the city requires that spectators establish a constant play between surface and deep structured forms, between purely visible and intuitive or evocative allusions." Boyer, *The City of Collective Memory: Its Historical Imagery and Architectural Entertainments*. 21.

> perceiving . . . we can apprehend, for instance, something that is not recognized by recognition . . . recognizability precedes recognition . . . [apprehension is] an intelligibility**,** understood as the general historical schema or schemas that establish domains of the knowable.[67]

Apprehension is foremost a skill necessary for sensing the routinely imperceptible relationship between the sites that make up a ritualized assemblage. The term 'sensing' is important as it seeks to shift beyond the ocular dominance of modern culture to the underutilized senses. A musical performance at rituals which takes place at an established memory site, for example, can provide auditory cues that trance lines of connection often obscured on the more routine days in which no ceremonies take place. The sense of feeling, both physically and in terms of what is commonly referred to as "the sixth sense," are also important affective experiences that heighten awareness amidst spaces which commonly have an air of sacredness associated with the site. Coupled together with—and building upon—the concept of symbolic accretion, apprehending ritualized assemblages provides a formidable means for producing nuanced, incisive, and ranging descriptions of the relationships between various types of memory sites.

Ritualized assemblages associated with mass murder memorials have developed two very different kinds of spatial relationships. In communities that had no significant established memorial landscapes--Edmond, Oklahoma City and Columbine--a ritualized assemblage of secondary memorials grew around the official memorial. In communities that already had complex memorial landscapes--the University of Texas and Virginia Tech--the established assemblages profoundly circumscribed where rituals and memory sites were established. What both of these relationships illustrate is that the emergence of mass murder memorials has required significant external spatial support. Put differently,

[67] Judith Butler, *Frames of War: When Is Life Grievable?* (London Verso, 2010). 5-6.

mass murder memorials have, up to this point historically, never been constructed in isolation, but have inspired the growth of, or required the existence of, an established ritualized assemblage as the spatial prerequisite for their formation.

1.5 The 'Sculptural Life" of The Yellow Ribbon Memorial

In the years after its completion, the Yellow Ribbon memorial began to exert a subtle yet profound influence on the local landscape that slowly transformed the very identity of the city of Edmond. Bill Wallo pointed out that at the beginning of the commemorative process, the memorial committee and Mayor Reherman discussed that

> [The Yellow Ribbon memorial] was going to be our first piece of art responding to a very public incident inside the city. Therefore, it was not art in a superficial sense, but a memorial idea that would have a sculptural life of its own … [so] we were very focused on creating a precedent that was a constructive one that could lead to future community involvement in public art.[68]

The "sculptural life" of The Yellow Ribbon memorial represents what Jane Bennett calls the "vibrant materiality" of objects and things to exert an influence on human actions.[69] Mass murder memorials, however, carry an extra degree of material agency by nature of the emotive chords they strike by being framed as sacred space.[70] After the dedication of

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[68] Bill Wallo Interview.

[69] Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things*. viii.

[70] The contemporary discussion of "sacred space" is an extensive literature that emerged largely in reaction to the work of Mircea Eliade. See Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*. Key texts in the field are ibid.; Smith, *To Take Place: Toward a Theory in Ritual*; Phillip Smith, "Toward a Theory of War as Ritual," *Theory and Society* 20, no. 1 (1991); Edward Tabor Linenthal, *Sacred Ground: Americans and Their Battlefields*, 2nd ed. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993); Chidester and Linenthal, *American Sacred Space*; Grimes, *Marrying & Burying: Rites of Passage in a Man's Life*; Bell, *Ritual: Perspectives and Dimensions*; Grimes, "Jonathan Z. Smith's Theory of Ritual Space."; *Deeply into the Bone: Re-Inventing Rites of Passage* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000); Doss, "Death, Art and Memory in the Public Sphere: The Visual and Material Culture of Grief in Contemporary America."; Post et al., *Disaster Ritual: Explorations of an Emerging Ritual Repertoire*; Margry, "Secular Pilgrimage: A Contradition in Terms."; Foote, "Shadowed Ground, Sacred Place: Reflections on Violence, Tragedy, Memorials and Public Commemorative Rituals."; Arie L. Molendijk, "The Notion of the 'Sacred'," ibid., Liturgia Condenda; Post and Molendijk, *Holy Ground: Re-Inventing Ritual Space in Modern Western Culture*; Stengs, "Public Practices of Commemorative Mourning: Ritualized Space, Politicized Space,

the Yellow Ribbon, a ritualized assemblage of memory sites and public artwork began to proliferate in the local landscape. While Edmond's ritualized assemblage did not have the degree of intentionality of subsequent mass murder memorials, a comprehensive analysis of the people involved in its emergence, the aesthetic overlaps in its formation, and the prevalence of memory sites for other dead community members it included helps to illuminate the overall spatial relationship. Most tellingly, by 2012 the ritualized assemblage had grown so large that Edmond adopted it as the very identity of the city in its decision to market itself as "The Art of Oklahoma!"[71] Edmond thus provides a helpful proto view of how the sculptural life of mass murder memorials transform the commemorative landscapes they inhabit.

At the 1989 dedication of the Yellow Ribbon memorial, the local Edmond landscape was, for all intents and purposes, completely devoid of other memory sites or public art. A 1931 Works Progress Administration glass mural inside City Hall, a kitsch but iconic Blue Hippo nicknamed "Buddy" off Route 66, and a Statue of Liberty replica that gave "Liberty Park" its name were Edmond's only notable pieces of public artwork. Bill Wallo articulated the important relationship between art and memory in Edmond in his observation that "art is centered with the thought that you are seeking to retain something of a moment of experience and make it permanent, and therefore, by definition, memory is the most essential term to be applied to understanding art."[72] Locally speaking, what is clear is that the completion of the Yellow Ribbon created a

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Mediated Space. Three Cases from the Netherlands."; Grimes et al., *Ritual, Media, and Conflict*; Paul Post, "Fields of the Sacred: Reframing Identities of Sacred Places," in *Sacred Places in Modern Western Culture*, ed. Paul Post, Arie L. Molendijek, and Justin Kroesen (Leuven: Peeters, 2011); Post, Molendijek, and Kroesen, *Sacred Places in Modern Western Culture*.

[71] *Edmond Visitors Guide 2012: The Art of Oklahoma*, Edmond Convention and Visitors Bureau.

[72] Bill Wallo interview.

piece of public memorial artwork that had no significant parallel in the local suburban landscape.

The next memory site commissioned by the city of Edmond after the completion of the Yellow Ribbon involved two key individuals from that commemorative process and again addressed the issue of violence. Before the postal killings, Richard Muno had begun work on a project entitled “Peace,” which he put on hold to work on the Yellow Ribbon. The following year, Muno presented the project to Mayor Reherman who approved and subsequently dedicated “Peace” on the Fourth of July in 1991. Considering Edmond’s geographic location in the state that calls itself the “Heartland” of the Midwest, the dedication of “Peace” at the outset of the First Gulf War illustrates the magnitude of the Edmond community’s transformed view of violence. The memorial depicts a man standing above the Earth surrounded by an anvil with the inscription “They will beat their swords into plowshares and there will be no more wars…Dedicated to all the men and women from Edmond, Oklahoma who are serving or have served in the military.” The established personal connections and desire to aesthetically address violence motivated the first memory site constructed in Edmond after the Yellow Ribbon memorial.

No single individual, however, played a larger role in the expansion of Edmond’s ritualized assemblage than Randel Shadid, a man whose personal history on the day of the killings forever linked him to the town of Edmond. On the day of the postal killings, Mayor Reherman was out of town, and Shadid’s position as Head City Councilman thrust him into the pro tempore role of Mayor of Edmond. A lawyer by trade, upon hearing about the shooting Shadid immediately ran from his downtown office to the nearby post

office. His decision upon arriving to enter the post office, however, is a regret he lives with to this day. "I'm really sorry I did that. I always thought I was the John Wayne type, but I found out my psyche wasn't near that strong. It still affects me emotionally to talk about it."[73] Later that evening, Shadid joined a group of local ministers to tell all the local families that their loved ones had been murdered. Shadid later said simply, "It was the worst day of my life."[74] The experience of being thrust into the role of Mayor and the events that transpired that day forever connected Shadid, both personally and politically, to the town of Edmond.

Bill Wallo and Randel Shadid were both closely connected to the postal killings and the local artistic community; however, their differing opinions on the influence of the Yellow Ribbon highlight the limits of solely privileging human intention when analyzing the vibrant materiality of this new memorial form. In 1995, Shadid was elected Mayor of Edmond and within a year he initiated what would be his most enduringly legacy: the Edmond Public Art Program. Born of his personal love for public artwork, Shadid passed legislation designed to create "a true public art program with a funding mechanism so that [public money comes in] annually and you acquire [artwork] annually."[75] Shadid acknowledges the "historical and sentimental significance" of the Yellow Ribbon memorial, but maintains that it did directly influence the public art program. Bill Wallo, on the other hand, suggests that "the Yellow Ribbon memorial was quite literally a foundation from which public artwork generally, and Edmond's Public

[73] Randel Shadid, quoted in Ellie Sutter and Susan Parrott, "Memory of Edmond Massacre Still Vivid—Post Office Massacre: 10 Years Later," *The Oklahoman*, Sunday August 18, 1996.
[74] Ibid.
[75] Randel Shadid interview.

Art Program specifically, emerged."[76] While these two interpretations seem at odds, they highlight the need to look beyond human memory and intention alone because, as Jane Bennett writes, the influence of material things "are slow compared to the duration and velocity of the human bodies participating in them . . . this is because to live, humans need to interpret the world reductively as a series of fixed objects."[77] To investigate to what degree the Yellow Ribbon had a sculptural life, we need put an equal amount of effort into working to apprehend the aesthetic trends and spatial relationships that transformed the landscape and local identity of the city of Edmond over time.

One unique subset of memory sites created by the public art program that had no local precedent aside from The Yellow Ribbon was the emergence of memorials dedicated specifically to the death of citizens of Edmond. Two memorials built within a block of the Yellow Ribbon, entitled "Destiny" and "Jester," are both dedicated Edmond residents who were well known but died after long personal battles with cancer.[78] A similar memorial was constructed at North High School for a young girl who was killed by an automobile.[79] The most historically intriguing memory site built for a killed Edmond citizen during this period was a sculpture dedicated on the grounds of a utilitarian memorial building constructed six decades earlier in 1947. The "Dawn of Hope" memorial was dedicated in 2009 at Russell Dougherty Elementary School for the first Edmond citizen killed in WWII, after whom the school was named after.[80] No public memorial artwork existed in the Edmond community before the Yellow Ribbon,

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[76] Bill Wallo interview.
[77] Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things*. 58.
[78] "Destiny," by David Pearson, is located at 10 E. Campbell St. "Jester," by Victor Issa is located on the northwest corner of Hurd and Broadway.
[79] "Story Time for Three," by Rosalind Cook and dedicated to Jennifer Munholland is located west of the front parking lot of North High School.
[80] "Dawn of Hope: Russell Dougherty World War II Memorial," by Mary Lou Gresham, on the northeast corner of Russell Dougherty Elementary School on Boulevard.

but in the years afterward, aesthetic representations of deceased citizens became commonplace.

After the 1995 bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City, the city of Edmond became the first city in the United States to dedicate a permanent memorial, and the city's efforts ended up producing two different memorials. "The Oklahoma City Bombing Memorial," constructed in Mitch Park, was proudly claimed by Edmond to be the "first publically funded monument to the bombing."[81] The memorial consisted of a plaque and eighteen trees representing the eighteen members of the Edmond community who had died in the bombing. On the second anniversary of the bombing, The University of Central Oklahoma in Edmond dedicated the "Heartland Plaza" to the "approximately thirty alumni and relatives [who were murdered] in the bombing."[82] In creating the Yellow Ribbon just six years beforehand, the Edmond citizens' knowledge and acceptance of memorializing mass murder resulted in the community leading what became a nationwide rush to create permanent public memorials to the Oklahoma City Bombing.

The renaming of Liberty Park—which was considered as a location for the Yellow Ribbon memorial— to "Shannon Miller Park" in 2001 illustrates the long historical role that memory sites played in transforming the Edmond landscape.[83] The park was originally called "Classen's Grove," in honor of Anton H. Classen, "one of the

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[81] "Memorial to Victims Has Local Support," *Edmond Sun*, August 25, 1995.
[82] See footnote 26, Linenthal, *The Unfinished Bombing: Oklahoma City in American Memory*. 275.
[83] "The recommendation to build a monument at Lake Arcadia to remember the postal workers surprised the heck out of us. Why, we wondered, build it at Lake Arcadia? Is it to be a tourist attraction? Well, we hope not. Our views is the monument should be built one of two places—*either at the post office or in Liberty Park which is a short distance away*. The post office is our preference… Things of this magnitude should be remembered on site. The Gettysburg War Memorial wasn't built in Kansas! It's on site." Ed Livermore Jr., "The Memorial Should Be At Post Office," *Edmond Evening Sun,* January 13, 1987. My italics.

most important men in Edmond's early years."[84] In 1972, the park was renamed "Library Park" after the building of the Edmond Public Library, and renamed again as "Liberty Park" when the replica of the Statue of Liberty was relocated to the park in 1978.[85] In 1998, the Edmond City Council allotted $80,000 towards the construction of a bronze memorial in honor of the town's Olympic medal winning gymnast, Shannon Miller. Dedicated in 2001, the memorial itself became the impetus for renaming the park Shannon Miller Park.[86] Like the Statue of Liberty replica, the Shannon Miller memorial and the many other contemporarily constructed memorials collectively began to alter Edmond's landscape and communal identity.

Local controversies surrounding three Christian-themed memorials exemplified the increasing public investment in how the proliferating ritualized assemblage represented the identity and interests of the Edmond community. Two proposed memorials, "Moses" at the First Christian Church and "Sacred Heart" at the Catholic Gift shop, were quickly challenged by local community members opposed to the usage of any public funding for religiously themed memorials.[87] In both cases these public disputes were settled by private contributions that covered the money that would have been

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[84] "Classen's Grove" plaque, Shannon Miller Park.

[85] "Shannon Miller Park" plaque, Shannon Miller Park. The "Statue of Liberty" replica was moved and replace a number of times. "Originally located on the north side of the intersection of Boulevard and Second in 1951 - in the 1970s the statue was moved to Liberty Park. After undergoing restoration, the statue was moved back to its original location at Boulevard and Secon on July 4, 1991. [The same day that "Peace" was dedicated in Armory Park]. In 2007, after the recast was placed, the original was moved to the Edmond Historical Society Museum." *Edmond Visitors Guide 2012: The Art of Oklahoma*, Edmond Convention and Visitors Bureau.

[86] The park, known from early in Edmond history as Classen's Grove, was originally named after "one of the most important men in Edmond's early years," Anton H. Classen, for, amongst many other contributions, his donation of forty acres for what is today the University of Central Oklahoma campus. It was renamed "Library Park" in 1972 after the building of the Edmond Public Library, and renamed again as "Liberty Park" when the replica of the Statue of Liberty that had been originally constructed after World War II was relocated to the park in 1978. Quote from "Classen's Grove Placard," in Shannon Miller Park, Edmond, Oklahoma.

[87] Interestingly, the "St. Francis Statue" at the Angelican Church encountered no such public resistance.

provided by the Edmond Public Art Program fund.[88] Before 1989 in Edmond the notion of a memorial controversy was unheard of, yet the growing amount of memorial artwork in subsequent years inspired lively engagement in the politics of public commemoration.

Observing the changes in the landscape in the two decades after the dedication of the Yellow Ribbon illustrates not only its sculptural life, but help to explain the transformation of the identity of the city of Edmond itself. The Yellow Ribbon was constructed in a city largely devoid of public art; however, just over two decades later there were over 150 communally funded pieces of artwork, many of which were memorials of some sort. As a result, a walk in downtown Edmond or picnic in any of the local parks presented citizens with landscapes literally covered in public memorial art. The transformation of the landscape was so pronounced, that the 2012 Edmond Visitor's Guide boasted "one of the largest collections of outdoor public art in the country…the public art displayed throughout the community helps to make Edmond a city truly unmatched in the heartland" and proudly proclaimed on the cover that Edmond was "The Art of Oklahoma!"[89] At the foundation of this transformation was the Yellow Ribbon memorial, whose sculptural life was both the precedent and an active agent in the growth of the ritual assemblage that became central to Edmond's sense of communal identity in the twenty first century.

A Potent Harbinger of Things To Come

[88] First Christian Church and Randel Shadid, himself a member of the church, paid for the "Moses" memorial. The Knights of Columbus contributed the money to complete "Sacred Heart." Randel Shadid interview.
[89] *Edmond Visitors Guide 2012: The Art of Oklahoma*, Edmond Convention and Visitors Bureau, 24, 42, and front cover, respectively.

The Yellow Ribbon represented the onset of the proliferation of mass murder memorials across the country in the 1990s, yet the reality is that it would not play any known role in inspiring these other memory sites due to the simple fact that its existence was unknown outside of the city of Edmond. What it lacked in national aesthetic influence, however, it more than made up for as a potent harbinger of the two commemorative trends that would become the hallmarks of mass murder memorials built in the following years. The first trend was the adoption of the most well known symbol from the immediate aftermath memorials in the design of the permanent memorial. Second, mass murder memorials would, in one way or another, always come to be situated within a ritualized assemblage of other memory sites in the proximate landscape. The Yellow Ribbon is thus historically important as a telling foreshadow of the commemorative trends that would pervade the strategy and design of the coming mass murder memorial tradition.

The Edmond community's adoption of the yellow ribbon as the centerpiece of the design of the permanent memorial served a number of purposes. At its root, it was a aesthetic means of harnessing the emotive power represented materially in the immediate aftermath memorials built by a grieving and traumatized community. In Edmond this strategy worked because the community still resonated strongly with the symbol of the yellow ribbons that covered the community in the first year after the killings. This enabled the memorial committee to effectively overcome the preexisting commemorative sensibility of those who believe that marking mass murder permanently in the landscape was inappropriate. Moreover, in light of the growing literature on what Sarah Moore has

called “ribbon culture,”[90] it is clear that Edmond provides the earliest known example of the widespread and nationally syndicated use of yellow ribbon to remember the dead.[91]

The second commemorative precedent established in Edmond was the proclivity of domestic mass murders memorial to enter into, or play a role in inspiring the growth of, a ritualized assemblage. In the case of Edmond, The Yellow Ribbon memorial was knowingly constructed in a landscape that was largely devoid of any sculptural work as a means of inspiring the growth of public artwork. After 1989, the proliferation of public memorials and artwork resulted in growth of an artistic landscape that celebrated the history, success, and identity of the community, but also continued to aesthetically confront issues of violence and death. Just two decades later, a complex ritualized assemblage existed that was not only one of the largest per capita public art collections in the country, but was itself the spatial and material heart of the early twenty-first century communal identity of the city of Edmond.

Edmond straddled past and future American commemorative sensibilities about the appropriateness of permanently marking violence in the national landscape, and this resulted in a historically important memorial process known to only by those who took part for nearly thirty years. Yet, Edmond’s local commemorative process provides a vital

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[90] Moore, *Ribbon Culture: Charity, Compassion, and Public Awareness*.

[91] The place of Edmond in the history of the changing symbolic meaning of ribbons has, up to this point, been completely neglected in the literature. The following articles and books are some of the most important texts in the literature on ribbons, and not one of them covers the many different yellow ribbons of Edmond. Parsons, "Yellow Ribbon: Ties with Tradition."; George Mariscal, "In the Wake of the Gulf War: Untying the Yellow Ribbon," *Cultural Critique* Autumn, no. 19 (1991); Parsons, "How the Yellow Ribbon Became a National Folk Symbol."; Kenon Breazeale, "Bringing the War Back Home: Consuming Operation Desert Storm," *The Jouranl of American Culture* (1992); Jack Santino, "Yellow Ribbons and Seasonal Flags: The Folk Assemblage of War," *The Journal of American Folklore* 105, no. 415 (1992); Linda Pershing and Margaret R. Yocom, "The Yellow Ribboning of the USA: Contested Meanings in the Construction of a Political Symbol," *Western Folklore* 55, no. 1 (1996); Moore, *Ribbon Culture: Charity, Compassion, and Public Awareness*.

key for understanding how the new national tradition of constructing mass murder memorials emerged. As Bill Wallo reminisced two decades later

> memory sites provide us with an opportunity to be reminded contemporarily of the fact that there was an author and a motive, whatever the motive might be, but you often find out that the motive is quite intriguing. Memory is the essence of public art, or at least, a memory worth having in the most positive sense of the word is hopefully a really great conjunction between a piece of public art that should be remembered and that it should be remembered for strategic reasons.[92]

The Yellow Ribbon memorial was unique because its strategic goal was simple: to help heal and unify the community. In the 1990s, mass murders would shed their remaining cultural stigma as shameful events and quickly came to be viewed as strategic opportunities for an array of national political, institutional and social interests. But this did not happen in Edmond. Instead, the citizens of Edmond's decision to permanently mark the killings in the local landscape would ultimately result in a significant change of the public identity of this small town. Just six years later after the dedication of the Yellow Ribbon, however, the tradition of constructing mass murder memorials would become a strategic means of promoting a sense of national unity in the aftermath of the Cold War.

And it would begin in Oklahoma.

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[92] Bill Wallo interview.

Chapter 2 OKLAHOMA CITY - FROM SHADOWED GROUND TO SACRED SPACE: The Birth of a National Mass Murder Memorial Tradition, 1995-2001

At 9:02 a.m. on the morning of April 19, 1995, a massive bomb in a Ryder truck parked in front of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in downtown Oklahoma city exploded, killing 168 people and wounding nearly 1000 others, making it the most deadly mass murder in United States history. In the aftermath, two decisions were made that would come to have profound implications for American identity in the 21st century. The first was the local decision of Robert "Bob" Johnson, the Chair of the Oklahoma City Memorial Task Force, to take a small group of local civic leaders to the annual meeting of the National Assembly of Local Art Agencies in San Jose, California in June of 1995 in order "to glean what we could from that symposium and then come back with some thoughts" and ideas.[1] The group came away from the symposium with the two central tenets that would guide what became a six-year long commemorative process that came to be referred to as the "Oklahoma City Model." As Johnson recalled,

> there are two things that we learned [at the symposium]. First, most memorials are closed, exclusive processes without public participation; and second, a lot of memorials become plagued with political intervention such as Maya Lin's Vietnam Veterans Memorial, which she designed but then all the politicos came out and wanted to change it… Based on what we learned at San Jose, we decided that ours would be a very open, inclusive, public participatory process, oriented towards consensus-based decisions

[1] Bob Johnson, Interview with the Author, July 31, 2012.

> made by a very diverse cross section of our community. It's a plan that ultimately resulted in a 350-member task force.[2]

These two tenets became central to the Oklahoma City Model because, as Kari Watkins, the Executive Director of the Oklahoma City Memorial Foundation noted, the commemorative process sought to "keep the process [a] whole and pure" embodiment of the public participation that was untarnished by political intervention.[3]

The commemorative process did, however, have a distinctly political dimension due to President Bill Clinton's move to intimately involve himself—beyond the scope of the federal investigation and response—in publically framing the meaning of the bombing and actively lobbying for its inclusion in the national public memory of the United States. Just two weeks after the bombing, President Clinton gave the commencement address at Michigan State University that allowed him to reflect broadly on historical similarities between the turn 20th and 21st centuries. President Clinton explained to the assembled graduates and their parents that

> the last sitting President to address this assembly was Theodore Roosevelt in 1907… it was a time not unlike this time. We are on the edge of a new century; they had just begun a new century. We are on the edge of a new era; they had just begun the dawn of the industrial age… President Roosevelt and his generation of Americans were optimistic, aggressive in facing the challenges of the day, and determined to solve the problems before them. Today, we stand at the end of the cold war and the industrial age, at the onset of the global economy and the information age…Throughout all 219 years of our Republic, times of great change like this have unleashed forces of promise and threat, forces that uplift us and unsettle us. This time is not different… The dark possibilities of our age are visible now in the smoke, the horror, and the heart-break of Oklahoma City… that threat is not isolated. And you must not believe it is…My fellow Americans, we must respond to this threat in ways that preserve both our security and our freedoms…

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[2] Ibid.
[3] Kari Watkins, Interview with the Author, May 31, 2012.

> This is not and must never be a partisan issue. This is about America's future. It is about your future.[4]

For President Clinton, the Oklahoma City bombing was not a shameful event to be forgotten as quickly as possible as had been the historical norm for over two centuries. Instead, Clinton repeatedly stressed the importance of remembering what historian Edward Linenthal calls the "imagined bereaved community," the brief period in the aftermath of mass murder when "Americans can imagine themselves as being one, being 'together' with millions of others through expressions of mourning bypasses or transcends the many ways in which people are divided."[5] By actively framing the meaning and memory of the bombing, Clinton became the first President in United States history to involve himself, and the authority inherent in his office, in a project of framing mass murder as a nationally significant event that Americans should never forget.

In this chapter, I argue that the commemorative process that began after the Oklahoma City bombing established a new method for appropriating the imagined bereaved community after mass murder as an effective new means of creating a perception of national unity at the turn of the twenty-first century.[6] Throughout a majority of the twentieth century, U.S. involvement in international wars enabled the articulation of enemies who we were against as a means of creating a sense of national unity. Amidst the relative international peace in the aftermath of the Cold War, however, this rhetorical strategy was no longer available. The Oklahoma City bombing was thus quickly appropriated as a strategic opportunity to transform the national wave of mourning in the

[4] Bill Clinton, "Remarks at the Michigan State University Commencement Ceremony in East Lansing, Michigan, " May 5, 1995. *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States*, U.S. Government Printing Office, (hereafter referred to as PPPUS). Available online at: http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/browse/collection.action?collectionCode=PPP&browsePath=president-58&isCollapsed=true&leafLevelBrowse=false&ycord=0 Accessed June 4, 2013.
[5] Linenthal, *The Unfinished Bombing: Oklahoma City in American Memory*.
[6] Ibid. 109.

aftermath of a domestically perpetrated mass murder into a patriotic means of promoting as sense of national unity.

The Oklahoma City commemorative process normalized the marking of mass murder in the national psyche in two ways; one rhetorical and the other spatial. Rhetorically, President Clinton created a socio-political script that gave the bombing an initial patina of patriotic sacrifice that stressed remembering the brief period of collective national unity in the aftermath. In stark contrast to the process used in Edmond, Oklahoma City created the Oklahoma City Model as an inclusive public commemorative process centered around the families of the victims and the survivors. The Oklahoma City Model gave the memorial an aura of emotional authenticity, generated a sense of communal trust, and gave the entire commemorative process an air of moral unassailability. The initial memorial committee efforts were enshrined in the "Memorial Mission Statement," a commemorative blueprint that adopted many key themes of President Clinton's speeches and enabled Oklahoma City to transform their local shadowed ground into national sacred space.

The national attention on Oklahoma City resulted in the growth of a massive ritualized assemblage that rapidly manifest spatially throughout the national landscape. At the heart of the ritualized assemblage was the official "Memorial Complex" which juxtaposed two very different memorial narratives within its boundaries. The Outdoor Symbolic Memorial became a place of remembrance of those most intimately impacted by the bombing, and did so by conveying a strong aesthetic of serenity and tenderness. The Memorial Museum, on the other hand, presented a rigidly defined story of bombing that sought to burn an unforgettable memory into visitors' minds of a new post-Cold War

threat of terrorism by recreating the brutality of the bombing and its mass destruction. At the next geographic scale, hundreds of secondary memory sites were constructed in Oklahoma City and throughout the state that physically marked and actively sought to educate citizens that the public memory of the bombing was a vital component of the identity of all Oklahomans. At the furthest scale, the expansion of memory sites throughout the national landscape materially signaled the rapid transformation of mass murder into a strategic new means of defining American national identity at the turn of the twenty-first century.

THE OKLAHOMA CITY MODEL

2.1.1 The Rhetoric of the Socio-Political Script Created by President Clinton

In the two weeks following the Oklahoma City bombing, President Bill Clinton's decision to publicly involve himself in framing its meaning created a socio-political script that profoundly influenced the national public memory of the event. Because there was no commemorative precedent to follow, Clinton established four points of emphasis that he repeatedly tirelessly in the early and traumatic days after the bombing. From the outset, Clinton cast the event as a spiritual battle between good and evil in which the innocence and security of the United States had been lost and demanded national participation in rituals and practices of mourning. Secondly, President Clinton repeatedly stressed educating the children of United States about the bombing and its meaning. In addition, the President suggested that this education be delivered by emphasizing the importance of talking about the event. The final point which Clinton emphasized was

his suggestion to plant trees as a means of establishing the literal and metaphorical roots of the bombing firmly in national public memory. The socio-political script the President created illustrates how the memory of Oklahoma City would be framed: as a battle to ensure that upcoming generations were well versed in the reality of mass murder because they themselves had planted the memory of it—both physically and discursively—in American soil.

Historically speaking, President Clinton's response to the Oklahoma City bombing was something of a paradox. On the one hand, Clinton's responded predictably because as the head of the Federal Government, the bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building was an event over which he had ultimate jurisdiction and responsibility. In this role, President Clinton immediately activated and deployed every possible level of local, regional and federal authorities. He declared a state of emergency throughout Oklahoma City and quickly authorized "100 percent Federal funding" under the provisions of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster and Emergency Assistance Act.[7] Clinton also promised the security of all other federal buildings throughout the country and the deployment of "the worlds finest investigators" in order to "find the people who did this" so that justice would "be swift, certain, and severe."[8]

On the other hand, President Clinton's decision to lobby vigorously for the inclusion of the Oklahoma City bombing in the national public memory was without precedent. Prior to Oklahoma City, U.S. Presidents were conspicuously absent in lending their voice after events of domestic mass murder, which up until that point in American

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[7] Bill Clinton, ""Remarks on the Bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma"; "Letter to Governor Frank Keating on Disaster Assistance to Oklahoma City"; "Letter to Federal Emergency Management Agency [FEMA] Director James Lee Witt on Disaster Assistance to Oklahoma City" April 19, 1995 in PPPUS.

[8] Clinton, ""Remarks on the Bombing," in PPPUS.

history have been seen as shameful events that radiated "outwards to the community [and nation] at large."[9] In August of 1986 for, example, President Ronald Regan made no public comments or appearances in the aftermath of the Edmond Post Office killings, and in so doing, he followed in the footsteps of his predecessors.[10] That Clinton responded to the bombing of a federal building was to be expected, but the substance of how he addressed American citizens killing their fellow citizens in an act of mass murder made his statements, visits, and personal involvement wholly unprecedented.

From the outset, President Clinton framed the bombing as a battle between good and evil in which national innocence and security had been lost--a stance he maintained even after the perpetrators were identified as two white American males. On the day of the bombing, Clinton began his first public address to American citizens by stating bluntly "the bombing in Oklahoma City was an attack on innocent children and defenseless citizens. It was an act of cowardice, and it was evil."[11] The rhetoric of good versus evil resonated widely because, as historian Edward Linenthal explains, "there was immediate and widespread call to arms against Muslim terrorists …[and widespread] reckless and irresponsible journalistic accusations that satisfied the convictions of

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[9] Foote, *Shadowed Ground: America's Landscapes of Violence and Tragedy*. 26-27.

[10] On the day of the killings, August 20, 1986, President Regan made no public comments or official statements. The following day he made a statement about the signing of bill on a railroad labor dispute in Maine. On August 22, he issued a proclamation on the suspension of Cuban immigration. In his national radio address on August 23, Reagan made no mention of the killings, and instead focused his address on "tax reform." He made no official statements about the Edmond killings in the subsequent weeks and months. See "Statement of Signing a Bill Concerning a Dispute Between the Maine Central Railroad and the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees," August 21, 1986; "Proclamation 5517--Suspension of Cuban Immigration," August 22, 1986; "Radio Address to the Nation on Tax Reform," and "Statement on Signing the Congressional Reports Elimination Act of 1886," August 23, 1986. All of Reagan's papers available in the "The Public Papers of President Ronald Reagan," http://www.reagan.utexas.edu/archives/speeches/publicpapers.html See "August 1986" and "September" 1986," specifically. Accessed June 10, 2013.

[11] Clinton, "Remarks on the Bombing," in PPPUS.

[American] innocence."[12] After the perpetrators were caught and identified as white male members of a right-wing militia, Leslie Stahl challenged President Clinton on *60 Minutes* for suggesting that the perpetrators were, as the media often put it, "just a few bad apples." Stahl argued "despite what you say, we're talking about thousands and thousands of people in this country who are furious at the Federal Government for what you say is irrational, but they believe it."[13] Despite Stahl's sound argument, President Clinton continued to frame Oklahoma City as a battle of good versus evil by, as Linenthal observed, separating "[the perpetrators] from 'real' Americans," and portraying good Americans as the "survivors, family members [and] rescuers."[14]

President Clinton also proselytized American citizens in the aftermath of the bombing in his depictions of a spiritual battle for the future of the United States. Just two days after the bombing, Clinton declared "a national day of mourning" for the coming Oklahoma City memorial service that he and the First Lady would attend.[15] At the service, the President sent out a nationwide call

> To all my fellow Americans beyond this hall… [it is our] duty to purge ourselves of the dark forces which gave rise to this evil [because] there are forces that threaten our common peace, our freedom and our way of life… As St. Paul admonished us, let us not be overcome by evil but overcome evil with good.[16]

Clinton's personal message for the families of the victims and the survivors was that "though we share your grief, your pain is unimaginable, and we know that. We cannot

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[12] Linenthal, *The Unfinished Bombing: Oklahoma City in American Memory*. 17-18.
[13] Lesley Stahl, quoted in "Interview on CBS' '60 Minutes'," April 23, 1995. In PPPUS.
[14] Linenthal, *The Unfinished Bombing: Oklahoma City in American Memory*. 19-20.
[15] Bill Clinton, ""Remarks and Exchange With Reporters on the Oklahoma City Bombing," April 21, 1995. In PPPUS.
[16] Clinton, ""Remarks at the Memorial Service for the Bombing of Victims in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, " April 23, 1995. In PPPUS.

undo it. That is God's work."[17] This spiritual message reached a receptive local audience, because as *Oklahoma Gazette* reporter Phil Bacharach noted, half of Oklahoma's population "identifies as born-again Christian."[18] For the national audience, however, Clinton's framing of the bombing as a spiritual battle enabled him to declare that nation was now facing "the great security challenge for your future in the 21st century… appeasement of organized evil is not an option for the next century any more than it was in this century."[19] Rev. Billy Graham, who shared the stage with Clinton, drove the point home by proclaiming, "the spirit of this city and this nation will not be defeated."[20]

No single point of emphasis was stressed more by the President than the national importance of educating American children about the bombing. Clinton's second nationally televised address three days after the bombing was a staged "discussion" with children and the First Lady in the Oval Office which was directed to children throughout the country.[21] President Clinton began by expressing how he and Hillary "are especially concerned about how the children of America are reacting…and we're working hard to make sure that this makes sense to you."[22] In order to do this, the Clintons made two points. First, the President assured America's children that while the bombing was "very frightening," they had no reason to fear because "your parents understand it. Your

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[17] Ibid.
[18] Phil Bacharch, quoted in Linenthal, *The Unfinished Bombing: Oklahoma City in American Memory*. 55.
[19] Clinton, "Remarks at the Michigan State University Commencement," May 5, 1995. In PPPUS.
[20] Billy Graham, cited in *A Memorial Walking Tour: Commemorative Edition*, Oklahoma City National Memorial and Museum publication. Oklahoma City, OK.
[21] Joining the First Couple was a group of children of D.C. area Federal Government employees who were selected to be doubly representative of both regular children across the United States and of those children who had died in the bombing, most of whom's parents were Federal employees at the Murrah Building. The transcript in the event was recorded in the Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States as "Remarks by the President and Hillary Clinton to Children on the Oklahoma City Bombing," April 22, 1995.
[22] Bill & Hillary Clinton, "Remarks by the President and Hillary Clinton to Children on the Oklahoma City Bombing," April 22, 1995. In PPPUS.

teachers understand it. And we're all there for you."[23] Hillary Clinton followed her husband's comments by reassuring the children "that there are more good people in the world than bad and evil people."[24] By singling out American children as the target audience for attempting to "make sense" of the event, the Clintons emphasized the national importance of the bombing to the children poised to become the first generation of the 21st century.

Awareness alone, however, was deemed insufficient because the President and First Lady strongly encouraged all Americans to talk about the event exhaustively. Hillary Clinton shared the following message with American children,

> our family has spent a lot of time in the last few days talking about what happened in Oklahoma, sharing our own feelings, our anger, our tears, our sorrow. All of that has been very good for us. And I hope you are doing it at home as well. I want all of the children to talk to people. Talk to your parents. Talk to your grandparents. Talk to your teachers. Talk to those grownups who are around about how you are feeling inside.[25]

Until that point in United States history the cultural norm regarding mass murder had been for Americans to be publically silent, attempt to forget such events, and move on as quickly as possible. By counseling American citizens to talk exhaustively about the bombing, the Clintons did two things that were a striking break with cultural norms up to that point. First, the Clintons' active lobbying for a discussion of the bombing began a national discourse that lessened the longstanding historical stigmatization of mass murder.[26] Second, and most importantly, the timing of the Clintons promotion of a

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[23] Bill Clinton, Ibid.
[24] Hillary Clinton, Ibid.
[25] Ibid.
[26] While there is no way to know if this was intentional, the prevalence of a "national discussion" in all mass murders since illustrates, retrospectively, that these actions played a role in the invention of a new tradition. See Hobsbawm and Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition*. 9.

national dialogue in the traumatic aftermath of the bombing was a skillful means of creating an enduring national memory. As Nietzsche proclaimed, "if something is to stay in memory it must be burned in: only that which never ceases to hurt stays in the memory."[27] Promoting a national public memory of mass murder thus acted, as Hobsbwam and Ranger incisively note, as a means of "[establishing] or symbolizing social cohesion… [and of] legitimizing institutions, status or relations of authority."[28] By encouraging citizens to talk incessantly during their collective grief, the Clintons catalyzed the transformation of American commemorative sensibilities about the appropriateness of remembering mass murder.

That this new tradition was a means of legitimizing authority was laid bare when President Clinton sternly admonished American citizens to refrain from talking about violence directed at the Federal Government. After the anti-Muslim hysteria finally subsided days after the perpetrators had been identified, the rationale for the bombing quickly came to light. Bob Johnson, the Chair of the Memorial Task Force, later recounted that the perpetrators' motivation "was all triggered because of [their] hatred of the government…that arose out of [the] Waco, [Texas killings exactly a year beforehand]… I think [they] thought that [this] act might start up a revolution against the government."[29] Just two days after the bombing, when *60 Minutes* anchor Leslie Stalh asked President Clinton, "are we going to have to give up some of our liberties in order to better combat" violence of this sort, he responded tellingly.

> I don't think we have to give up our liberties, but I do think we have to have more discipline…we still will have freedom of speech. We'll have freedom of association. We'll have freedom of

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[27] Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals* 61.
[28] Hobsbawm and Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition*. 9.
[29] Bob Johnson interview.

> movement. But we may have to have some discipline in doing it… you know, we accepted a minor infringement on our freedom, I guess, when the airport metal detectors were put up, but they went a long way to stop airplane hijackings and the explosion of planes…we should all be careful about the kind of language we use and the kind of incendiary talk we have. We never know who's listening or what impact it might have. So we need to show some restraint and discipline here…it's the words spouting violence, giving sanction to violence, telling people how to practice violence that are sweeping all across the country. People should examine the consequences of what they say.[30]

The President's response offers two telling insights—one historical, and the other pertinent to the new discursive tradition itself. First, Clinton's usage of the example of airport metal detectors is intriguing because, as aviation historian David Gero has detailed, the national installation of these devices in airports was the direct result of the four domestic mass murders committed in airplane bombings between 1955-1963.[31] Clinton's example is thus an apt, if unintentional, reference to the historical precedent of mass murders being used as justification for the expansion of disciplinary apparatuses in the United States. The second insight that the President's warnings illustrate is his recognition that encouraging American citizens to talk about the Oklahoma City bombing was a double-edged sword. It was necessary insofar as establishing an enduring public memory of mass murder aided the State in promoting a sense of national unity, yet it always held the potential of backfiring if the these discussions turned to using violence against the government itself.

All four of President Clinton's points of emphasis found a powerful symbolic representation in the suggestion of a young girl that remembering could be facilitated

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[30] Clinton, "Interview on CBS' '60 Minutes'," April 23, 1995. In PPPUS.
[31] David Gero, *Flights of Terror: Aerial Hijack and Sabotage since 1930*, 2nd ed. (Somerset, UK: Haynes Pub., 2009).

nationally by planting trees. During the question and answer session held after the Clintons joint national message on April 22, a young girl in the staged audience responded to Hillary Clinton's question about how children could help. "At my brother's day care," the girl said, "when the school was closed, we planted trees to remember the kids that got hurt."[32] The Clintons' response to this idea was immediate. Hillary exclaimed, "that is a wonderful idea! Did you all hear what she said? They planted trees to remember the kids who got hurt. That's something that schools and day care centers could do all over the country."[33] The President followed up on his wife's support of the idea with an explicit call for a memory site, suggesting that "something should be done so that all of us remember those children in Oklahoma City, don't you? And all those [adult] people [who were killed too]."[34] President Clinton wasted no time in adopting trees as a national and spiritual symbol of the victims of the bombing, which he talked about publicly the following day at the memorial service in Oklahoma City.

> Yesterday Hillary and I had the privilege of speaking with some children of other Federal employees, children like those who were lost here. And one little girl said something we will never forget. She said we should all plant a tree in memory of the children. So this morning before we got on the plane to come here, at the White House, we planted that tree in honor of the children of Oklahoma. It was a dogwood with its wonderful spring flower and its deep, enduring roots. It embodies the lesson of the Psalms that the life of a good person is like a tree whose leaf does not wither. [35]

By heeding the suggestion of the little girl and planting a tree on the grounds of the White House itself, President Clinton initiated the physical memorialization of the Oklahoma City bombing in the most sacred space in the national landscape. Moreover, by

[32] Unidentified child, "Remarks…to Children on the Oklahoma City Bombing," April 22, 1995. In PPPUS.
[33] Ibid.
[34] Ibid.
[35] Clinton, "Remarks at the Memorial Service," April 23, 1995. In PPPUS.

broadcasting his actions, Clinton mobilized trees as a symbol of the new commemorative discourse that he himself actively established in the immediate aftermath of the bombing.

In the two weeks after the Oklahoma City bombing, Bill Clinton not only became the first U.S. President to involve himself in framing the meaning of a mass murder, he also established a new socio-political script articulating why such events should be incorporated into national public memory. At the conclusion of one of his early nationally televised addresses, President Clinton urged Americans to "reach out to one another and come together. We will triumph over those who would divide us. And we will overcome them by doing it together, putting our children first. God bless you all, and thanks for listening."[36] In these four simple sentences, the President touched upon the four main points that he reiterated continually in the days and weeks after the bombing. First, there was a battle being waged between good and evil, and on the line was the nation's sense of innocence and security. The battle, however, was also a spiritual struggle in which "good Americans" were increasingly represented explicitly by the victims, survivors, and rescuers who responded to the bombing. Central to the success of this battle was educating the children of America, who were to become the first generation of post-Cold War citizens. Lastly, this education would endure only if all American citizens talked exhaustively about the bombing, so long as such discussions were not about using violence against the government. The President tied the different strands of his script together by adopting trees as a metaphoric symbol for both life and the path that lay ahead. President Clinton explained this metaphor simply at the

[36] Bill Clinton, "Remarks…to Children on the Oklahoma City Bombing," April 22, 1995. In PPPUS.

conclusion of his memorial service eulogy. "My fellow Americans, a tree takes a long time to grow, and wounds take a long time to heal. But we must begin."[37]

2.1.2 Defining "Public" in the Public Commemorative Process

In the first year after the bombing, the Murrah Federal Building Memorial Task Force that was formed asked a simple question that came to have a profound impact on the entire commemorative process: "What do we mean by 'public?"[38] The Task Force's answer to this question created a concentrically arranged set of commemorative priorities that forwarded a definition of public centered on the "the families of the victims and survivors."[39] The inclusive, consensus-based pubic commemorative process the committee created came to be called the "Oklahoma City Model." By making the families and survivors the face of the process, the Oklahoma City Model gave the memorial an aura of emotional authenticity, generated a sense of communal trust, and gave the entire commemorative process an air of moral unassailability. The Oklahoma City Model's definition of public is important because, in its application, it became a highly effective means--especially coupled with the President's ongoing support--of convincing the American public of the appropriateness and legitimacy of permanently memorializing the bombing.

The actual story of the creation of the Oklahoma City Memorial Task Force, and the six years of work that went into dedicating the memory sites that it made possible, is an impressive tale of an entire community coming together to heal, rebuild and

[37] Clinton, "Remarks at the Memorial Service," April 23, 1995. In PPPUS.
[38] "Minutes," July 26, 1995. MTF. OKCMA.
[39] Ibid.

remember. That story has been told elsewhere.[40] The focus here will be to detail how the Task Force created the Oklahoma City Model and managed the public dissemination of information about the goals of the process. The Task Force did this by making an active effort to communicate the structure of the meetings, the progress of the committees, and to manage the access and information it provided to media outlets. Because of the magnitude of the Task Force's efforts, the decision was also made to archive, and thus permanently remember, the process itself. Each of these decisions in the first year came to frame the "public" dimension of the commemorative discourse that would be made permanent in the creation of the "Memorial Mission Statement" of March 1996.

Edward Linenthal notes that the widespread talk about the creation of a permanent memorial began to circulate "within days of the bombing."[41] Bob Johnson, a local lawyer who was later appointed Chair of the Task Force, explained that at a Red Cross meeting "ten or so days after the bombing" he shared with all the people in attendance that

> I had heard rumors of a number of different memorials being planned by various people, related to the bombing. I was hopeful that Governor Keating and Mayor Norick would consolidate the memorial efforts, into something that would be enduring, [and I shared that at the meeting].[42]

This idea was communicated to Oklahoma Governor Frank Keating's wife, Cathy Keating, who contacted Johnson directly and informed him that

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[40] The most comprehensive account of the commemorative process and the aftermath of the bombing more generally is Edward T. Linenthal, *The Unfinished Bombing: Oklahoma City in American Memory*. The Oklahoma City Memorial Foundation has also published a number of booklets and retrospective accounts of the process throughout the years, for example, *The First Decade*, *Memorial Museum Walking Tour* and *Memorial Walking Tour*. A more critical account of the cultural ramifications of commemoration of Oklahoma City and other killings and disasters at the turn of the twenty-first century can be found in Sturken, *Tourists of History: Memory, Kitsch, and Consumerism from Oklahoma City to Ground Zero*.
[41] Linenthal, *The Unfinished Bombing: Oklahoma City in American Memory*. 121.
[42] Bob Johnson interview.

> she and Governor Keating had talked about my comment and they wanted to know if I would consider leading the effort to create a memorial. I told her that I would be honored to organize the effort, but I had a full time business law practice and that I didn't know if I would have the time to chair it after it was organized.[43]

Johnson's first act as chair was to attend a scholarly symposium in San Jose on public art that resulted in the decision to create a commemorative process that emphasized public involvement while concurrently seeking to limit political intervention. After returning to Oklahoma City, Johnson quickly assembled a group of local leaders who were also "seven acquaintances whose judgment I really respected, to work with me to develop a process and organization plan for the memorial."[44] Despite Johnson's initial desire merely to assist in getting the process up and running, after drafting a plan he recalled that he "was sufficiently invested and I wanted to see [the memorial process] through. Governor [Keating] blessed the plan, [and then] the Task Force was appointed by Mayor [Norick]."[45] On July 26th, 1995, Bob Johnson's idea to unite all the disparate discussions about the creation of a memorial resulted in the first meeting of what would become the 350-person Murrah Federal Building Memorial Task Force.

No single decision had a more lasting effect on the Task Forces' structure, objectives, and outcomes than the initial decision to define the word "public" as the "concentric rings of impact [radiating outward] from the bombing,"[46] in which the

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[43] Ibid.
[44] Ibid. The seven civic leaders from the Oklahoma City community that Bob assembled were Bill Johnstone, President of the Oklahoma City Citibank; Tom McDaniel, Vice Chairman of Kerr McGee Corporation; Dr. Bill Thurman, Director of the Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation, Tim O'Conner, Executive Director of Catholic Charities; Jackie Jones, Executive Director of the Oklahoma City Arts Council; Cheryl Vaugh; and Karen Luke, a community volunteer at the time of the bombing who later became the Vice Chair of the Oklahoma City Memorial Foundation.
[45] Johnson interview.
[46] Minutes. "Orientation Meeting," July 26, 1995. MTF. OKCMA

families of the victims and the survivors became "the core of the process."[47] At the Task Force's orientation meeting the decision was made that the "hallmarks of the process" would be "listening and public participation," and that "the initial phase of the planning process will be on public outreach, i.e. soliciting the feelings and opinions of all interested members of the public" for what people wanted visitors "to feel and learn when visiting the memorial."[48] These decisions necessitated defining the word "public" in an explicitly commemorative sense in order to foster greater clarity and understanding of "who" would be the voice and face of the process.

The word that appears repeatedly in conversations that took place at the meeting was "impact," and during a telling exchange, the Task Force suggested that the public should be understood as "all the people…whose hearts were impacted by the bombing."[49] Putting emphasis on "the hearts that were impacted" led to the decision to use the concept of concentric circles—as opposed to a hierarchy—as an inclusive analogy for how the "public" would be understood. The Task Force designated the families of the victims and the survivors as the innermost circle whom were, importantly, framed as a single group and not as separate constituencies. The next circle consisted of "those who were directly involved in rescue and relief efforts" followed by the outermost circle of "all the people across our state, nation and throughout the world…who want to be heard."[50] This model resulted in the two core groups in the commemorative process: the "Families and Survivors" subcommittee, and for everyone else, the "Memorial Ideas and Input" subcommittee. By focusing on the "impact" of the bombing, that Task Force created a

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[47] Johnson interview.
[48] "Minutes," July 26, 1995. MTF. OKCMA.
[49] Ibid.
[50] Ibid.

unique definition of public that positioned the "families and survivors" as the heart and public face of the commemorative process.

The saturation level media coverage that persisted in the months and years after the bombing necessitated the Task Force's thoughtful management of both media requests for access, and the establishment its own identity rituals. As ritual studies scholar Ronald Grimes notes, "rituals and media are not necessarily two separate things… [but rather], are interacting, overlapping processes."[51] This insight proved enduringly true throughout the Task Force's work. Media interest in the memorial process was handled by the "Public Relations" subcommittee, which by the second meeting was already working to develop "a proposed structure/process for dealing with the media."[52] The nature of the trauma and grief of the people killed and maimed also resulted in the ritualization of the commemorative process itself. For example, Johnson established an air of sacredness by deciding to start the third meeting with a moment of silence and requested that all "other committee meetings be started in the same manner."[53] The decision was also made, Johnson recalled, that "the only part of the process that was closed to the media was the meetings with the family member and survivors."[54] The Task Force created a complex set of interrelated media channels and

[51] Grimes et al., *Ritual, Media, and Conflict*. 20.
[52] Jeannet Gamba speaking on behalf of subcommittee Chair Sam Armstrong Lopez, quoted in "Minutes," September 19, 1995. MTF. OKCMA; The Task Force sought to portray the media as having done "more than just coverage…[because they] provided a line of communication between the rescue and [the public]" after the bombing. Archives Subcommittee, "Plan for the Development of The Archives: Murrah Federal Memorial," February 6, 1996. Box B1, "Archives" Folder (hereafter, ARCH).
[53] Bob Johnson, quoted in "Minutes," November 14, 1995. MTF. OKCMA. For a discussion of how silence itself operates as a ritual, and has increasingly been used to create sacred space in urban spaces, see Jorien Holsappel-Brons, "Space for Silence: The Interplay between Space and Ritual in Rooms of Silence," in *Holy Ground: Re-Inventing Ritual Space in Modern Western Culture*, ed. Paul Post and Arie L. Molendijk, Liturgia Condenda (Leuven: Peeters, 2010).
[54] Bob Johnson interview.

organizational rituals that communicated its actions and concurrently heightened the sacred status of the families and survivors.

The Task Force creation of the “Archives” subcommittee illustrates the self-reflexivity of the group and the increasing framing of the commemorative process itself as a sacred and nationally important endeavor. Christina Sanchez-Carretero’s work on archiving the memory sites and rituals that emerge in the aftermath of events of violence and tragedy notes that these projects seek “to document and analyze these mourning rituals [and sites], and—by so doing—to participate in the construction of memory in times of crisis.”[55] Even before its first meeting, the Task Force outlined three goals and potential usages for the planned archive

> (1) [arranging] for properly preserving…memorabilia relating to the bombing… [which] might be incorporated into the Memorial…
> (2) considering the feasibility of assembling a traveling exhibit to serve as a temporary memorial, and
> (3) arranging for the documentation of the memorialization process.[56]

Due to the rapid proliferation of the immediate aftermath memory sites and the ongoing collection of what came to be referred to as “bombing artifacts,” the Archive subcommittee had to hit the ground running.[57] After six months of work, an archival mission statement was created in early 1996 that asserted “rather than passively accept what materials are donated for preservation, it is suggested that we actively seek the materials needed to document this event.”[58] The active role taken by the Archive

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[55] Sanchez-Carretero, "The Politics of Archiving Ephemera in Times of Crisis: The Case of the “Mourning Archive," a Research Project on the Mourning Rituals in the Aftermath of March 11th, 2004 Train Bombing in Madrid." 4.
[56] “Initial Tasks of Memorial Task Force Subcommittees,” July 17, 1995. MTF. OKCMA.
[57] With twelve documented meetings in the first two years, the Archive subcommittee meet over twice as many times as any other subcommittee. See ARCH.. OKCMA; the term “bombing artifacts” was used for the first time in “Memorial Task Force Plan of Action,” May 7, 1996. MTF. OCKMA.
[58] Archives Subcommittee, “Plan for the Development of The Archives,” ARCH. OCKMA.

subcommittee illustrates Sanchez-Carretero's insight that "more and more this material culture is considered as part of the cultural heritage and—as related to the local or the national and to identity politics in general—is being collected and preserved."[59]

In early 1996, after months of tireless work, the Task Force exemplified its commitment to the centrality of public participation by deciding to part ways with the foremost memorial competition facilitator of the era. Paul Spreiregen, a renowned architect and author, rose to international acclaim after his masterful handling of the most famous American design competition of the 20th century, the Vietnam Veteran's Memorial. At the third Task Force meeting in November of 1995, Design Solicitation subcommittee co-chair Beth Tolbert identified Spreiregen as the leading of five possible candidates, and Spreiregen was hired by the Task Force soon after to "make an onsite visit [and] write a report."[60] Spreiregen presented his 44-page report at the Task Force's fourth meeting in January 1996, which "proposed a highly structured process for the memorial," and elicited a number of questions about, as Bill Cleary stated, what "would be unique to Oklahoma City due to the desire to include our families of victims and survivors in the final selection process."[61] An initial vote to further retain Spreiregen's services passed at the end of the meeting, but a conversation with Bob Johnson later that evening changed everything.

When Spreiregen was first hired, Johnson had a meeting with him in Washington D.C. where he informed him that those "closest to the tragedy are going to be involved in the selection" process, and asked him, "can you live with that?" Spreiregen assured Johnson he could. However, after presenting at the meeting in Oklahoma City in January

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[59] Sanchez-Carretero, "The Politics of Archiving Ephemera," 12.
[60] "Minutes," November 14, 1995. MTF. OKCMA.
[61] Minutes," January 10, 1006. MFT. OKCMA.

and “[witnessing] up close and personal the level of raw emotions,” Spreiregen confided in Johnson

> You know you can't do what you’re planning, if you have family members and survivors on the design selection jury, you are not going to have credibility with the design community, and therefore, in my opinion, very few designs will be received.[62]

While Johnson appreciated Spreiregen’s honesty, he quickly

> told him that I had great respect for him and his professional ability, but I just didn't think his philosophy matched our process. The next morning I had breakfast with him before he left, and he said that he was surprised that as a lawyer that I wouldn't negotiate with him. And I said, ‘I simply won't negotiate away the integrity of our process.’[63]

Johnson attended the next meeting of the Families and Survivors subcommittee and “announced that I had decided to go a different route, that we were going to select another design competition advisor to uphold our commitment to the process” and “that announcement was met with a standing ovation, and that evening was a pivotal moment in which widespread trust was first established. That evening changed everything.”[64] After six months of painstaking and routinely emotional work, the Task Force’s defining moment was the decision to let go of an expert in order to create a new kind of commemorative process firmly committed to foregrounding public participation.

After parting ways with Spreiregen, the Task Force hired a three-person Design Competition Committee that facilitated the creation of the Oklahoma City Model--a radically inclusive, consensus-based process unlike anything previously attempted in the aftermath of a national tragedy. Comprised of Paul Morris, Don Stastny and Helen Fried, the new Design Committee was chosen by the Task Force because, as Johnson noted, the

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[62] Bob Johnson interview.
[63] Ibid.
[64] Ibid.

group "[shared] our belief that a community-based approach is essential to the development of the Memorial."[65] Paul Morris explained that his group facilitated a process in Oklahoma City where

> we had a 350 person Task Force that only made decisions by consensus. You want to know how we did it? They had to stand up, to affirm any decisions we made. So we would meet as a committee in cafeterias, community centers, auditoriums, and there was always a lot of awareness when a vote was coming up. The question would be called, and every single one of the Task Force members present would have to stand, and if every one of the members didn't stand, then we would take a step back and ask what we needed to do so that every single person was on the same page…[voting by standing up] was an attribute that we needed in order to have personal affirmation. We didn't want people to raise their hands--we literally wanted them to take a stand.[66]

In relation to traditional architectural design processes, Morris reflected that what was radically different about the Oklahoma City Model was that "we embraced the principles of high design, but abandoned the formulas. That's a very discomforting statement to architects, because they are trained around formulas [that suggest that design] principles are kind of floating in the ether."[67] At Oklahoma City, large rooms of family members of the murdered, survivors who were forever wounded, and community members who donated years of their time to help heal their community gathered in spaces that were highly emotionally charged and created a completely new kind of commemorative design process--The Oklahoma City Model.

The central role of families and survivors transformed the Task Force's work into a concurrent healing process, and in so doing, increasingly gave the commemorative process an air of moral unassailability. On the one hand, that the Task Force's work was

[65] Bob Johnson, "Letter to Murrah Federal Building Memorial Task Force," May 23, 1996. MFT. OKCMA
[66] Paul Morris, Interview with the author, October 21, 2013.
[67] Ibid.

able to help so many traumatized members of the Oklahoma City community to heal was an unquestionable cathartic benefit that other American communities that had previously experienced domestic mass murders had not had access to.[68] Kari Watkins, who was at that time charged with handling media relations, summed up the cathartic dynamic of the process nicely in her reflection, "I don't want to say [it was] 'a movement'—but is was a movement to bring people together from all walks of life and backgrounds and…to figure out a way to heal the community. And it was, it was a movement to heal."[69] Bob Johnson, who personally contacted Watkins about joining the Task Force, later articulated that "this was not just a process about selecting something to be built, it was about public participation, consensus, and buy in by the community towards the memorial, and most importantly, healing."[70] On the other hand, the positioning of the families and survivors as the public face of the memorial process came to frame the process and its tangible results as unquestionable benefits for both the community and the nation. Multiple times in his years of communications with the people of Oklahoma City, President Clinton suggested that all American citizens were there to help the community heal. "You have lost too much,' Clinton said, "but you have not lost everything. And you have certainly not lost America, for we will stand with you for as many tomorrows as it

[68] Many people close to the people killed and wounded in the 1966 University of Texas Tower killings, for example, expressed deep regret, anger and further trauma from having not had access to any public means of grieving. Claire Wilson, who's boyfriend had been killed and who had lost the child she was eight months pregnant with as the result of having been shot in the abdomen, "described how terrible it has been for her being unable to talk about the event in all these years. She was saddened that no one…ever expressed sympathy for her loss." See Terry Evers, "Dedication of the Tower Memorial Gardens: Listing of Potential Attendees (Victims or Family of Victims) and Other Contact with Victims: August, 1 1966," 1999. 1999 Folder. Tower Garden Memorial Archive, in the possession of Vice Provost Neal Armstrong.
[69] Kari Watkins interview.
[70] Bob Johnson interview.

takes."[71] The cathartic element of the Task Force's work helped many local people to heal. The healing of the families and survivors, however, was increasingly framed by the President as a national moral obligation, that was, itself, a justification for the appropriateness of the commemorative process.

What no one involved in the Task Force realized, however, was that in creating a new discourse of public commemoration, the national coverage of their commemorative process hastened the demise of the American commemorative sensibility that mass murders were shameful events that should be forgotten. Regarding the people in the Oklahoma City community and throughout the country that contacted the Task Force to communicate their view that memorialization was inappropriate, Bob Johnson remembers

> was there some sentiment that let's not memorialize something that is so horrific in the history of our city? Sure, there was. But it was not prominent, it was not widely publicized, but sure, there were some who felt that. But gradually that went away, and even those who thought along those lines initially came one board that this was the appropriate thing that we are doing.[72]

Kenneth Foote has suggested that a "shadowed past" has historically caused Americans to believe that "[sites of] major episodes of tragedy or violence remain unmarked because they conflict with or contradict…a heroic view of the national past."[73] In the case of Oklahoma City, however, the national broadcasting of the Task Force's cathartic and public commemorative process coupled with President Clinton's ongoing promotion of importance of incorporating the bombing into national public memory slowly but surely normalized the marking of mass murder in the national landscape.

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[71] This quote, and slight variations of it, were used repeatedly by the President for years after the bombing. Quotation from Clinton, "Remarks at the Memorial Service," April 23, 1995. For other usages of this quote, see "Letter to Oklahoma City Memorial Foundation," April 14, 1997; "Statement on the Oklahoma City Bombing Trials," December 23, 1997. All documents in PPPUS.
[72] Ibid.
[73] Foote, *Shadowed Ground: America's Landscapes of Violence and Tragedy*. 284.

2.1.3 Political Rhetoric and Public Process in the Memorial Mission Statement

Almost a year after the bombing, on March 26th 1996, the Task Force made The Oklahoma City Model tangible with its adoption of the "Memorial Mission Statement," which became "the cornerstone document in shaping the meaning and guiding the design and development of the Memorial."[74] The origins of the document, detailed in the Mission Statement itself, explain that

> after eight months of conducting public surveys, community meetings and small group discussion to gather ideas about what the Memorial should evoke, Task Force members found that the hopes of the general public mirrored almost identically those outlined by the Families/Survivors.[75]

Viewed in isolation of the Task Force's efforts, the "almost identical" agreement of all the different constituencies that made up the different "publics" who were impacted by the bombing was presented as an auspicious and organic emergence of the hopes of the community. However, viewed in light of President Clinton's nationally syndicated interventions in the weeks and months after the bombing, it becomes clear that a majority of the ideas "chosen" by the public were in fact core points of emphasis made repeatedly by the President. By the time the Task Force was created, people in the local community and around the country had already spent weeks listening to the President of the United States talk almost daily about the bombing, its meaning, and the importance of incorporating it into American public memory. Clinton's repeated emphasis about the centrality of the traumatic experiences of the families and survivors, the educating of citizens and children about the killings, the losses of life, innocence, and security, and the subsequent need for spiritual guidance all became the central themes that the public

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[74] Preface, "Memorial Missions Statement," Oklahoma City Memorial Foundation. Adopted March 26, 1996. (Hereafter, MMS).
[75] "Guidance: Themes," MMS.

adopted as the cornerstones of the Mission Statement. Yet in creating the document itself, a focus on these themes ushered in the appearance the important material and spatial concepts of a "Memorial Complex," the creation of a separate "educational center," and a drive to ensure that the site of the bombing was constructed as "sacred ground" that emphasized the national "spirit of unity" that manifest in the form of the imagined bereaved community after the bombing. The creation of the Mission Statement, and the commemorative discourse that it created, can therefore not be adequately understood in isolation of either public or political analyses. The Oklahoma City Model was thus the result of the intertwining of socio-political script created by President Clinton with the Task Force's public commemorative process.

In the weeks after the Task Force parted ways with Paul Spreiregen, the two subcommittees tasked with surveying the "public's" aspirations for what "the memorial should be or do," produced a final list of "ten recurring themes," nearly all of which were core points of emphasis by President Clinton in the two weeks after the bombing.[76] The results of the distributed surveys, which became the foundation for the writing of the Memorial Mission Statement, were narrowed down by the Families and Survivors Subcommittee from "20 things that were repeated in all the groups" to "the top ten

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[76] Family & Survivors Subcommittee, "Memorial Survey Results," March 1, 1996 and Memorial Ideas Subcommittee, "Memorial Survey Results," March 11, 1996. Both in MTF. OKCMA. Quote from Family & Survivors Subcommittee, "Final Report: Draft," February 29, 1996. In the Family & Survivor's Folder (hereafter F&S). MTF. OKCMA. A number of means of assessing the hopes of those all the publics who had been impacted by the bombing were used including group meeting, focus groups and personal communication, but as the final report of the Memorial Ideas Subcommittee—which was responsible for soliciting the ideas of all non-Family and Survivor publics—noted, "in most cases, the memorial survey turned out to be the instrument used." The survey was created at the first meeting of the Family and Survivors subcommittee on July, 24 1995, and the final draft adopted in November "was essentially the same as the first draft" that had been created by the "group which had been most deeply affected by the bombing."

recurring themes" of public input.[77] What is most striking about the final list is that seven of the ten themes selected were key points of emphasis for President Clinton, which are as follows:

-"Focus on victims and survivors"
-"Something special for the children"
-"Educational (study of non-violence)"
-"Hope, Spiritual"
-"Loss of innocence/security"
-"Sense of Pride" [in the response]
-"Never forget/always remember"[78]

Even the three themes that were not points of emphasis for the President, those being "[a] Universal Symbol," "Quiet, peaceful, serene, sacred," and "comforting," all have the common thread of being hopes for the aesthetic characteristics of the final memory site—a topic the President never addressed in the immediate aftermath.[79] The Memorial Mission Statement's wording presents the agreement of a diverse range of publics as auspicious sign that the themes were an organic result of untainted public participation.[80] Retrospection, however, suggests that the far more probable source of the agreement of the geographically disperse range of people impacted by the bombing, was the ubiquitous national media coverage of President Clinton in the traumatic and memorable weeks after the bombing. The Memorial Mission Statement is thus a document that, while wholly created by voluntary public participation, ultimately adopted the core themes emphasized by President Clinton's timely and unprecedented political interventions.

The spatial, educational, sacred and unifying visions for the permanent memorial resulted from the transformation of themes that were emphasized by the President and

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[77] Family & Survivors, "Final Report: Draft." F&S. MTF. OKCMA.
[78] Ibid.
[79] Ibid.
[80] I am referring here to the quote at the beginning of this subsection about the public aspirations mirroring those of the families and survivors.

adopted by the Task Force in the Memorial Mission Statement. Spatially, in working to detail how the victims and survivors would be remembered on site, the Task Force created the concept of a "Memorial Complex." The Task Force originally the term "Memorial Complex" to simply denote the geographic location of the memorial, but two decisions concerning victims and survivors resulted in a memory site that was not singular, but complex. First, in early 1996 it was brought to the attention of the Task Force by Bud Welch, a man whose daughter Julie was killed in the bombing, that an 80-year-old American Elm, "which was a forgotten survivor of the blast, was still living."[81] After contacting Mark Bays of the Oklahoma Department of Agriculture in order to save the badly damaged tree, it was quickly resolved that "one of the components of the Memorial must be the 'Survivor Tree.'"[82] The Task Force also decided that "the stories of the victims as told by the families and the survivors…be included" in the memorial.[83] Discussions about where exactly these stories would be located, however, resulted in the articulation of another component of the memorial: "the information center."[84] In navigating how to memorialize the victims and the survivors, the Task Force established requirements that divided and expanded the singularity of the memory site into what came to be referred to internally as the "Memorial Complex."

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[81] Family & Survivors, "Final Report: Draft." F&S. MTF. OKCMA. Bud Welch's role as the identifier of the Survivor Tree noted in Linenthal, *The Unfinished Bombing: Oklahoma City in American Memory*. 172.
[82] "January 16, 1996 Resolution: The Survivor Tree," in MMS. For information on saving the Survivor Tree, see Oklahoma City National Memorial and Museum and Oklahoma State Department of Education, "Survivor Tree: Witness to Tragedy, Symbol of Strength," copy in Memorial Packet and Advertisement Folder (hereafter MPAF). OKCMA. For an early discussion of the inclusion of this component of the memorial, see Family & Survivors, "Final Report: Draft."
[83] Family & Survivors, "Final Report: Draft." F&S. MTF. OKCMA. The same decision was included in the MMS, worded slightly differently, as a resolution, "November 14, 1995 Resolution: Stories and Photographs of Victims and Survivors."
[84] MMS.

Housing the narratives of the victims and survivors "as individuals with many roles" was the Task Force's initial vision for the "information center," but the use of the space was quickly expanded into being the site where visitors were educated about the national importance of the bombing.[85] The word "Learning" was chosen in the Mission Statement to denote that "the Memorial Complex should include an information center that records important facts and observations about the bombing that teaches visitors never to forget the event or the people it touched."[86] Echoing President Clinton's warning that certain kinds of talk were un-American, it also cautioned, "such a learning center … should instill an understanding of the senselessness of violence, especially as a means of effecting government change. It should convey the imperative to reject violence."[87] The Mission Statement then goes on to explicitly highlights that

> the Memorial Complex should include a special space for children… [it] should have a component designed to reach kids on 'their level,' both physically and cognitively… [it] should help children learn and feel something they can carry with them as they grow and should offer them assurance that the world holds far more good than bad.[88]

The President's early emphasis on making sense of the killings for children is developed in the Mission Statement's articulation that the memorial be intentionally designed to foster enduring memories for young children.[89] Clinton's also stressed the importance of

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[85] "Guidance: Themes, Remembrance," MMS.
[86] "Guidance: Themes, Learning," MMS.
[87] Ibid.
[88] "Guidance: Themes, Cherished Children," MMS.
[89] The Mission Statement's warning about using violence to effect government change and call to assure children that "the world holds far more good than bad" are nearly identical paraphrases of the words of President Clinton and the First Lady, respectively, from the immediate aftermath of the bombing. On warning against the use of violence against the government: "[to all] who believe that the greatest threat to freedom comes from the Government … if you say violence is an acceptable way to make change, you are wrong." Bill Clinton, "Remarks at the Michigan State University Commencement," May 5, 1995. PPPUS; On good and evil: "I want you to know that there are many more good people in the world than bad and evil people." Hillary Clinton, "Remarks to Children," April 22, 1995. PPPUS.

talking about, learning from, and making sense of the violence—for children especially—which became mandates in the Mission Statement that were given a tangible home in the vision of the "information center."

Transforming the site of the bombing into sacred ground was accomplished in the Mission Statement by mobilizing the tragedy of the losses of life, innocence, and security with the more affirming theme of spirituality. David Chidester and Edward Linenthal note that sacred spaces that come to manifest in

> built environments are more obviously constructed as cultural locations of religious meaning and significance . . . sacred meaning and significance, holy awe and desire, can coalesce in any place that becomes, even if only temporarily, a site for intensive interpretation. [90]

The Mission Statement first asserted that "the Memorial Complex, and especially where the Murrah Building stood, is 'sacred ground.'—a hallowed place deserving of respect and solemnity."[91] Prior to this period, however, sites of mass murder were not viewed as sacred ground but were, as Foote has shown, "shadowed ground" that was stigmatized by the violence perpetrated thereon and thus routinely avoided.[92] The Mission Statement also stressed that the final design of "the Memorial should be powerful, awe-inspiring and convey the deep sense of loss caused by the bombing."[93] The tragic nature of the losses is balanced by the requirement that the memorial "should speak of the spirituality of the community and the nation that was so evident in the wake of the attack."[94] By combining the themes of the tragedy of the losses with the spirituality of the response, the

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[90] Chidester and Linenthal, *American Sacred Space*. 13-14.
[91] "Guidance: Priorities," MMS.
[92] Foote, *Shadowed Ground: America's Landscapes of Violence and Tragedy*.
[93] "Guidance: Themes, Spirituality & Hope," MMS.
[94] Ibid.

Mission Statement outlined a commemorative means of transforming shadowed ground into sacred ground.

The "sense of pride" in the national response to the bombing was transformed in the Mission Statement into the commemorative discourse that promoted the imagined bereaved community as the heart of the memorial. Each of President Clinton's communications on the day of the bombing focused on mobilizing every possible local and national means of response.[95] A year later, the Families and Survivors Subcommittee, with the benefit of retrospection, submitted their recommendation to the Task Force that the memorial should detail "those involved in the rescue effort [because it] inspired a sense of pride in our state and fellow man."[96] The response and the sense of pride it later instilled, however, became the means by which the Mission Statement emphasized that the memorial "should include a tribute to those who helped…[and] should [also] honor the spirit of unity that characterized the response of the community and nation following the attack, and it should reflect the sense of pride such responses created."[97] The addition of the "spirit of unity" in the Mission Statement is important because never before had a mass murder resulted in, or been remembered as, a means of unifying the nation. The sense of pride in the response, while important in its own right, was used in the Mission Statement "as a testament to the sense of national unity" that increasingly came to be a central component of the official commemorative discourse of the memory of the bombing.[98]

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[95] Clinton, "Remarks on the Bombing"; "Letter to Governor Frank Keating"; "Letter to Federal Emergency Management Director." April 19 1995. In PPPUS.
[96] Family & Survivors, "Final Report: Draft." F&S. MTF. OKCMA.
[97] "Guidance: Themes, Recognition." MMS.
[98] "Context," MMS. See also "Guidance: Themes, Recognition."

The term “Oklahoma City Model” was used for the first time just months after the adoption of the Mission Statement, and is an apt designation for both the commemorative rhetoric and process developed in the aftermath of the bombing.[99] Paul Morris shared

> I can actually remember that there was a moment when [the Design Committee was] sitting at a table at a restaurant and we realized that something profoundly significant was unfolding in front of us and that we were a part of it. We understood that this wasn’t our idea…we saw it unfolding in front of us. What we were being asked to do was to conduct the process, which in a subtle kind of way, institutionalized the process for the first time.[100]

Explicitly, the Oklahoma City Model referred to the new inclusive, consensus-based and public commemorative process undertaken by the Task Force and formalized in the Memorial Mission Statement. The Oklahoma City Model, however, is equally appropriate as an implicit description of the socio-political script developed by President Clinton that normalized the importance of remembering mass murder in national public memory. The Oklahoma City Model--an aptly spatial reference--articulates both the commemorative rhetoric and process created after the bombing.

No single document in the Oklahoma City National Memorial Archive exemplifies the elements of rhetoric and process in the Oklahoma City Model more simply than an inconspicuous help sheet given to all the members of the Task Force after the group officially changed its name to the Oklahoma City Memorial Foundation on September 1, 1996. The help sheet, entitled “WHAT ARE WE TALKING ABOUT?” explained itself as a “list of phrases so we are all speaking the same language…we

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[99] At the eighth full Task Force meeting in June of 1996, Don Stastny, speaking on behalf of the Competition Committee, noted that he, Morris and Fried all believed that “in the future [the proposed Design Competition] will become known as the “OKLAHOMA [CITY] MODEL.” MFT. OKCMA; Task Force Meeting Minutes, June 19, 1996. MTF. OKCMA. Paul Morris clarified that the Design Committee referred to the “Oklahoma City Model,” not the “Oklahoma Model,” as and that the transcription in the document above suggests.. Morris interview.
[100] Morris interview.

wanted to make sure we were all speaking the same language. Making sure everyone understands what we are trying to do is important. These are a few of the key terms you hear a lot."[101] The document goes on to explain the names of fifteen novel concepts, organizations and spaces that had been created up to that point in the commemorative process. More importantly, however, the document offers a rare glimpse of the Memorial Foundation openly addressing the reality of the proliferation of a unique commemorative rhetoric and process that were the result of working to create a national public memory after an event of mass murder.

The Oklahoma City Model was developed in President Clinton's socio-political script, adopted and expanded upon by the Task Force, and synthesized into the Mission Statement--which Executive Director Kari Watkins referred to seventeen years later as "my memorial Bible."[102] The Oklahoma City Model incorporated the public memory of mass murder—like the memory of wars and Presidents throughout American history—into the realm of things deemed worthy of national commemoration. The Oklahoma City Model also enabled the spatial transformation of the site of the bombing into national sacred ground, and as Chidester and Linenthal note, "in America these constructed religious environments are inevitably positioned in relation to a patriotic landscape."[103]

THE MEMORIAL COMPLEX: Concentric Circles in the National Landscape

The rhetoric and process of the Oklahoma City Model were rapidly manifest spatially and produced a memorial complex that was constructed in concentric circles

[101] Oklahoma City Memorial Foundation, "WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?", Box B2, "Outdoor Symbolic Memorial Design & Process Selection," (hereafter OSM), "1 Process Selection" Folder. No date.
[102] Kari Watkin's interview.
[103] Chidester and Linenthal, *American Sacred Space*. 13-14.

which radiated from the site of the bombing out into the national landscape. The actual term "Memorial Complex," first used in the Mission Statement, denoted the geographic area of the Murrah Building and the surrounding areas that were heavily damaged by the bombing and were thus to be incorporated into the final memorial site. However, in articulating a geographically circumscribed area that would be composed of multiple separate but intimately related memory sites, the concept of a Memorial Complex was in fact the very definition of a ritualized assemblage. But whereas in Edmond the ritualized assemblage was composed of a group of memory sites limited spatially to the local landscape, the assemblage that grew in the aftermath of the Oklahoma City bombing manifest at three distinct geographic scales. The site of the bombing would become the official "Memorial Complex" and function as the inner circle, the heart of the national memorial complex that began to grow. Moreover, this local Memorial Complex bifurcated because the Mission Statement's mandate to mark the contrasting memories of brutality and tenderness ultimately resulted the construction of two very different memory sites. The intermediary ritualized assemblage was comprised of the memory sites built throughout Oklahoma City and expanding outwards across the entire state of Oklahoma. The statewide ritualized assemblage was constructed by independent organizations primarily at schools, churches and on governmental property and thus, like Edmond, influenced the identity of the entire state of Oklahoma. The outer ritualized assemblage consisted of memory sites built across the United States that, like the tree planted at the White House, took root in important locations in the national landscape. By the beginning of the twenty first century, the United States was literally covered with permanent sites marking the memory of the Oklahoma City bombing.

The collaborative efforts of the Memorial Foundation and the federal government to make the Oklahoma City Memorial Complex into national sacred ground was officially accomplished in October of 1997 with the designation of the Murrah Building site as a "National Memorial" over six months before construction began. First suggested at the second meeting of the Task Force, the Mission Statement later made it an official priority that "the Memorial and Memorial Complex…be designated as a National Monument to be operated and maintained by the National Parks Service."[104] President Clinton publically supported this goal by inviting a group of people involved with the memorial to the White House before the second Anniversary of the bombing, where he shared that "Congress is now considering legislation to make… the Oklahoma City Memorial a national monument… I strongly support this goal. The tragedy was a national one, and the memorial should be recognized and embraced and supported by the Nation."[105] Six months later, on October 9, the President signed the "Oklahoma City National Memorial Act of 1997" and emphasized that "the meaning an implications of this event for our Nation compel the establishment of this memorial as a visible and prominent national shrine."[106] Clinton stressed the meaning of the bombing for the nation at large.

> we know now that, in spite of everything, you did not lose America… I think there is not a citizen in our country that didn't identify with the people [of Oklahoma City] in that awful moment and in the days afterwards… you have helped our Nation, and for that we are grateful.[107]

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[104] "Guidance: Priorities," MMS; Tom McDaniel, as chair of the Government Liaison Subcommittee noted in the second meeting of the Task Force that the "committee will also seek further information regarding the advantages and disadvantages of possibly becoming a "National Monument" under the jurisdiction of the Federal Government." Task Force Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes, September 19, 1995. MTF. OKCMA.

[105] Bill Clinton, "Remarks in Support of the Oklahoma City Memorial," August 13, 1997. In PPPUS.

[106] Bill Clinton, "Statement on Signing the Oklahoma City National Memorial Act of 1997." In PPPUS.

[107] Clinton, "Remarks … Oklahoma City Memorial," August 13, 1997. In PPPUS.

Although the construction of the memorial had not even begun, the President presented the establishment of the Memorial Complex as a National Memorial as a means to remember the national unity in the days after the bombing.

The innermost ritualized assemblage and the central project of the Memorial Foundation—the "Memorial Complex" at the site of the bombing—bifurcated into two very different memory sites because of the ideological incompatibility of the mandates of the Mission Statement. A single line from the Statement, which Executive Director Kari Watkins calls "one of my favorite lines,"[108] illustrates the tension inherent in the commemorative aspirations of the Foundation.

> The Memorial Complex should …honor the spirit of unity that characterized the response of the community and nation… [but] such a tribute should in no way diminish the tragedy, but rather, that it offer an inspiring contrast between the brutality of evil and the tenderness of the response.[109]

The material reality of constructing this contrast in the landscape, however, necessitated the creation of two separate memory sites that were comprised of "three components to ensure that that criteria of the Mission Statement are met."[110] The first memory site was labeled the "Outdoor Symbolic Memorial" and was "dedicated to the victims and survivors of the bombing."[111] The symbolic Memorial was the early and primary objective of the public's participation in the Foundation, and an International Design Competition resulted in the selection of the design of Hans and Torrey Butzer on July 1, 1997. The second memory site was called the "Memorial Museum" and was to be "a

[108] Kari Watkins interview.
[109] "Guidance: Themes, Recognition,: MMS.
[110] Oklahoma City Memorial Foundation, "Oklahoma City Memorial Foundation Mission Description," (hereafter, OMF), copy in OKCMA.
[111] Ibid.

museum and visitors center that will tell the story of the bombing." Also housed within the Memorial Museum was the third component of the Memorial Complex, a tangible organization for educating the public called the "Oklahoma City Memorial Institute for the Prevention of Terrorism and Violence." The Memorial Museum and Institute were created only after the design for the symbolic Memorial had been selected, and were far more pragmatically oriented towards disseminating a singular, and often explicitly political, narrative of the meaning and memory of the bombing.

In fact, the exhortation to "always remember/never forget" was inscribed in the final Memorial Complex as having two very different meanings: to always remember the victims but to never forget the event and violence of the bombing. The result of this, as Bob Johnson noted simply, was "the outdoor [symbolic] memorial is more of a place of remembrance, but there was also a story to be told, so the [Memorial Museum] fills that gap."[112] The local Memorial Complex thus came be comprised of the outdoor memorial that the Butzer's design distinguished with an aesthetic of tenderness composed of ambiguous symbolism, thoughtful remembrance, and an serene ambiance. The Memorial Museum, on the other hand, presented an authoritative narrative that sought to burn an indelible memory in the mind of visitors by attempting to recreate an intense personal experience of the brutality of bombing. What both of these objectives had in common was that each provided a contrasting commemorative means for the larger Memorial Complex to position itself within the national patriotic landscape as a site that fostered a spirit of national unity.

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[112] Bob Johnson interview.

2.2.1 The Outdoor Symbolic Memorial

The Butzers' winning design for the Outdoor Symbolic Memorial was itself a ritualized assemblage composed of seven different memory sites that combined to form an aesthetic of tenderness. Hans Butzer recalled that in the design process he and Torrey had viewed the themes

> in the Mission Statement [as] all these constituents, or characters of a story that you have to somehow engage. And so the memorial design is really a forum that tries to establish, or develop, these relationships. These relationships don't exist in and of themselves.[113]

While the Butzers' design necessarily engaged all of the themes outlined in the Mission Statement, it is striking how the three themes that were not points of emphasis for President Clinton—a Universal Symbol; quite, peaceful serene, sacred; and comforting—came to define the aesthetic characteristics of the final memory site. As Bob Johnson pointed out, "one of the things that is so striking about the [outdoor symbolic] memorial is that it was the site of the most horrific violence ever experienced in Oklahoma City, but today if you go to that memorial, it is the most serene place in the city."[114] The Butzers' Symbolic Memorial created a unified "field of symbolism" that utilizes an aesthetic of tenderness to balance the commemorative mandates of remembering the victims with the spirit of local and national unity that emerged in the aftermath.[115]

The Symbolic Memorial is built around 5th Street—the actual site of the bombing— which acts as both a formal entryway and as the contemplative anchor for the sites comforting aesthetic. Closed permanently in October of 1996 by the Oklahoma City Council after the continued efforts of the Task Force, the incorporation of 5th Street had

[113] Butzer interview.
[114] Bob Johnson interview.
[115] Oklahoma City National Memorial & Museum, "A Memorial Walking Tour: Commemorative Edition."

been viewed from the outset as vital for "the establishment of the Memorial Complex."[116] The Butzers went a step further in their belief that "somehow 5th street had to be, for many different reasons, this fulcrum for our design. The grid of the city had been closed off, and yet…we intentionally developed our design [around it]."[117] Two different components were constructed on the traces of 5th Street: The Gates of Time and the Reflecting Pool. The Gates of Time, two massive portals standing 42 feet tall and composed of black granite and yellow bronze, are etched on the east and west gates respectively with the times "'9:01' and '9:03' [which] are allusions to historical contexts" of the bombing which occurred at 9:02.[118] While the gates were designed as the "formal thresholds" for what official brochures call "the calm of a green oasis…a garden surrounded by concrete," the Symbolic Memorial offers a plethora of other unofficial entryways that, importantly, allows each visitor to experience the site differently.[119] The Reflecting Pool, "a 318-foot long liquid mirror" lies between the two gates and covers the bulk of what used to be 5th St. The Pool's shape and meditative aesthetic "unifies the symbolic elements" of the outdoor memorial and evokes memories of its counterpart on the National Mall in Washington D.C. because of their obvious similarities.[120] These two memory sites built upon the traces of 5th St. provide a symmetry to the many

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[116] Paul Morris, Don Stastny, Helen Fried email to Robert Johnson, "5th Street Closure Recommendations," July 18, 1996.
[117] Butzer interview.
[118] Ibid. Information on the size, materials and construction in Oklahoma City National Memorial and Museum and Oklahoma State Department of Education, "Construction Elements from Near and Far…" MPAF. OKCMA.
[119] Ibid; "A Memorial Walking Tour." The importance of this fact lies in its contrast with the Memorial Museum which has only one entry point and controls the progression of the visitor from start to finish. There is no spatial control of the movements of visitors in the Outdoor Symbolic memorial, which is also publically accessible twenty four hours a day.
[120] "A Memorial Walking Tour."

juxtapositions of the Symbolic Memorial which Hans Butzer notes balance "life and death with 5th Street, the city, [and] the world as this mediating edge."[121]

To the south of the Reflecting Pool lies the footprint of the Murrah Building , which represents the violence and death of the bombing in a subtle fashion driven by the profundity of absence. The Field of Empty Chairs became "the core aspect" of the Butzers design and sought to "embody the memory of an individual who was killed… [in] the memorial space."[122] Hans Butzer explained that

> for us part of the Mission Statement on 'knowing the impact [of violence]' was very evident when you stand back and you see the absence of 168 people that is present in the chairs. The absence is present to us…you could say that it is subtle--on the one hand it's really in your face, and on the other, it's not really in your face, because if you're not looking at it and thinking about it, it's not really in your face.[123]

By requiring each visitor to individually contemplate the murder of 168 people represented in the Field of Empty Chairs, what is also absent from the Butzers' design is any narration or symbolism that forces a confrontation with an aesthetic of brutality. The Survivor Wall, built on the only remaining foundation wall from the Murrah Building, similarly eschews representing the brutality of the violence of the bombing by simply yet powerfully listing the names of the over 800 people the Memorial Foundation officially designated as survivors. The southern side of the outdoor memorial maintains an aesthetic of tenderness by forgoing brutal symbolism in favor of a commemorative ambiguity that forces each visitor to do their own memory work on the reality of the death and violence of the bombing.

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[121] Butzer interview.
[122] Ibid.
[123] Ibid.

The northern terraces of the outdoor memorial balance the violence and death depicted on the south side with what Hans Butzer called "occupyable space for the living" that highlights the unity of the response.[124] Comprised of the Children's Area, Rescuers' Grove and Survivor Tree, the north side of the memorial uses and emphasizes life to create a comforting natural environment. The Children's Area, comprised of hand painted tiles and oversized chalkboards on the ground, clearly draw inspiration from the Mission Statement's call "to reach kids at 'their level,' both physically and cognitively."[125] Designed as a space to "allow children to express their feelings about their memorial and their experience," the Children's Area also harkens back to President Clinton's first message to children just three days after the bombing.[126] The Rescuer's Grove and Survivor Tree populate the northern side of the outdoor memorial with what Hans Butzer called "the connective tissue" of the site that heeds the Mission Statement's call to "provide a quiet, peaceful setting where visitors have opportunity for reflection… to create a serene atmosphere."[127] The trees spread across the site are also symbolic support for the central message of the outdoor memorial inscribed on the wall surrounding the Survivor Tree that "the spirit of this city and this nation will not be defeated, our deeply seated faith sustains us." Taken collectively, the memorial components of the northern terrace foster a peaceful natural atmosphere that points to the intertwined lives of those who survived and responded as indicative of the unity of the community and the nation.

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[124] Butzer interview.
[125] "Guidance: Themes, Cherished Children," MMS.
[126] "A Memorial Walking Tour."
[127] Butzer interview; "Guidance: Themes, Peace," MMS.

A final component of the outdoor memorial, the Memory Fence, was not designed by the Butzers, but was the immediate aftermath memorial that--like the Yellow Ribbon in Edmond--so powerfully resonated with the local community that the fence itself mandated its own inclusion in the permanent memorial. At the public display of over 400 of submitted designs in the downtown Bricktown district in the spring of 1997, news anchor Charles Gibson commented to Bob Johnson, "I think one of your greatest challenges will be to pick a design that adequately replaces the fence."[128] Originally installed to protect the Murrah Building during the rescue and after its demolition, the chain link fence quickly became the site that visitors and responders attached personal mementos such as "t-shirts, teddy bears, license [plates], key chains, [and] jewelry."[129] By the time of the groundbreaking of the Symbolic Memorial on October 25, 1998, the fence had become so integral to the Oklahoma City community's memory that a ceremony was held the following day where family members, survivors, responders and Memorial Foundation members moved over two hundred feet of the fence to its now-permanent location on the western edge of the site. Like the Edmond community, the people of Oklahoma City associated so strongly with this particular immediate aftermath memorial that its inclusion in the Outdoor Symbolic Memorial was deemed essential. Moreover, like the rest of the outdoor memorial, the national significance of the ceremonial moving of the Memory Fence was later interpreted by the Memorial Foundation as having been "symbolic of giving this site to the nation."[130]

The Butzers explained that for them "the design is very much like a novel," and President Clinton forever inscribed the bombing in the book of American history with his

[128] Bob Johnson interview.
[129] "A Memorial Walking Tour."
[130] Oklahoma City National Memorial, "The First Decade: 1995-2005, A Decade of Hope."

speech at the dedication of the Outdoor Symbolic Memorial on the fifth anniversary of the bombing.[131] After five years of ongoing involvement and support for the creation of a National Memorial, Clinton saved his most historically profound allusions for the dedication ceremony. There, the President forcefully proclaimed

> I think you should all know that it was on this exact day 225 years ago that the American Revolution began. What a 225 years it has been. The brave Americans we lost here 220 years later were not fighting a war, but they were patriots in service to their fellow citizens…this was an attack on all America and every American… there are places in our national landscape so scarred by freedom's sacrifice that they shape forever the soul of America—Valley Forge, Gettysburg, Selma. This place is such sacred ground.[132]

The President's choice of events deemed equivalent to the Oklahoma City bombing reveal the magnitude of the impact of the Oklahoma City Model on American identity at the turn of the twenty-first century. President Clinton's words placed the Oklahoma City bombing into the grand narrative of the history of the United States by linking it to the Revolutionary and Civil War explicitly, war generally, and the recent civil rights movement. Like the Bunker Hill Monument, the Gettysburg National Soldiers Cemetery, the Iwo Jima Memorial and the Civil Rights Memorial--which, importantly, was designed by Maya Lin and dedicated just five months earlier on November 5, 1989--the Oklahoma City National Memorial Complex was dedicated as sacred ground in the literal Heartland of the patriotic landscape.[133] On April 19, 2000, mass murder became a hallmark of twenty-first century American national identity.

The spatial transformation of the site of the bombing from shadowed ground into national sacred ground in the form of the Outdoor Symbolic Memorial was accomplished

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[131] Butzer interview.

[132] Bill Clinton, "Remarks at the Oklahoma City National Memorial Dedication Ceremony in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma," April 19, 2000. In PPPUS.

[133] Literal, in the sense that Oklahomans proudly refer to their state as "The Heartland."

by the Butzers design's embodiment of an aesthetic of tenderness. On the one hand, the memorial was designed as an open site that could be navigated freely and which required a significant amount of personal contemplation of the meaning of its many symbolic components. On the other hand, by the time of the dedication the national spirit of unity that had existed in the short period after the bombing had become so fundamental to the national memorial discourse that it was materially manifest in the Symbolic Memorial itself. From the ambiguous representation of unity exemplified in the balanced connection of its different symbolic components, to the more explicit inscription of the resilience of the nation on the wall around the Survivor Tree, the Symbolic Memorial aesthetically mobilized tenderness as the means of situating itself in the patriotic landscape. President Clinton concluded his dedication speech by asking all Americans to always "keep your light shining on this place of hope, where memories of the lost and the meaning of America will live forever. May God bless you, and God bless America."[134]

3.2.2 The Memorial Museum

Unlike the Symbolic Memorial, a small group of Memorial Foundation members guided the creation and design process of the Memorial Museum with a clearly defined narrative that utilized the brutality of the bombing as a means of burning the threat of terrorism into national public memory. Bob Johnson explained that he and seven other community members "created a ten chapter storyline for the museum before we contacted any museum professionals. And only after we decided what our storyline should be did we [have a design competition that was won by the] people involved in the Holocaust

[134] Ibid.

Museum."[135] The Memorial Foundation solicited a closed competition in which only four design teams were solicited to develop a concept for the museum. The museum design selected by the Foundation had a pathway that required each visitor to follow the same narrative journey through the Memorial Museum. The final design materially manifest the "Learning" section of the Mission Statement which called for the creation of an

> "information center" that "teaches visitors never to forget the event…tells visitors about the loss of a sense of innocence and security… and should instill an understanding of the senselessness of violence, especially as a means of effecting government change."[136]

In stark contrast with the symbolic, serene and open design of the Outdoor Memorial, the Memorial Museum presented a far more controlled narrative that uses the brutality of the bombing to ensure that visitors never forget the threat of terrorism.

The linear design of the Memorial Museum presents a story in which the purported threat of terrorism is magnified exponentially by a multi-sensual effort to recreate the experience of the chaos and trauma of the bombing and its aftermath. Visitors begin the tour in a long hallway which immediately physically juxtaposes a room detailing the threat of terrorism against a large mural of the Oklahoma City skyline before the bombing with the words "a day like any other." The first display encountered is titled "What is Terrorism" which provides a " statutory definition" that "the term 'terrorism' means premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against non-combatant targets by sub-national groups or clandestine agents, usually intended to influence an

[135] Bob Johnson interview.
[136] "Guidance: Themes, Learning," MMS.

audience."[137] In the center of this oval-shaped room a video called "Background of Terrorism" plays a three minute loop of President Clinton speaking about the threat of terrorism. The short clip alludes to Clinton's speech on the first anniversary in which he historically contextualized the bombing by stating

> we are all more vulnerable than we used to be to terrorism…the generation that preceded us won World War II and then won the Cold War. What we have to do now is to fight back these organized forces of destruction so all the opportunities that await you young people will be there and so you can pursue them without fear.[138]

Visitors then enter into a dark room in which a recording of a hearing at the Water Resources just across the street from the Murrah building is interrupted just over a minute in by the deafening explosion of the bombing itself. Doors automatically open from this darkness to a room where loud sirens, flashing lights and multiple large screens replay the early footage of all the main US television networks. From this point forward, as noted in the Memorial Foundation's 10th anniversary publication, visitors encounter "a room filled with personal artifacts [of those killed and maimed, before] they wound their way through [many more rooms of] displays [and] video presentations of stunning emotional impact."[139] All of these rooms were "chapters" of the official Memorial Museum storyline and each room was given a name such as "Confusion," "Chaos," "Survivor Experience," "Funerals & Mourning," and "Impact." One room in particular, the "Gallery of Honor," is a circular room encountered partway through the museum which houses small cubbies with pictures of all of the 168 people killed and one personal item chosen by each family. While the final room of the Museum is entitled "Hope," the

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[137] Oklahoma City Memorial Museum, "What is Terrorism," Chapter One: Background on Terrorism.
[138] Bill Clinton, "Remarks at the University of Central Oklahoma in Edmond, Oklahoma," April 05, 1996. In PPPUS.
[139] Oklahoma City National Memorial , "The First Decade."

intensity of the destruction and violence presented forcefully to visitors in the previous nine rooms brings into question to what degree this final room is able to successfully transform the museums multi-sensory emphasis on brutality towards that Mission Statement themes of tenderness, comfort or serenity.

Despite the Symbolic Memorial having been the focus of the initial commemorative efforts of the community, the Memorial Museum has become the site more representative of the Memorial Foundation's long-term goals of educating the American public about the new post-Cold War threat of terrorism and of the dangers of the use of violence against the government. Bob Johnson shared that "the most important thing we do is the educational outreach, it's trying to teach the importance of community involvement, solid core values… [and] participation in our government through the avenues that are available to us."[140] For the younger generation, the Memorial Museum is an educational destination visited by "several thousands of schools from all fifty states."[141] The Foundation itself has an active outreach program that includes an annual essay contest and an array of educational programs, conferences and publications.[142] The efforts of the Memorial Foundation also resulted in Oklahoma House Bill 2750 which mandates that "courses of instruction in Oklahoma History incorporate information about the April 19th, 1995 bombing… and the role it plays in the history of Oklahoma and the

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[140] Bob Johnson interview.
[141] Ibid.
[142] Quote ibid; some of the most notable outreach programs are *Called 2 Change* a program that was "designed for middle schools, helps students to understand the impact of violence and terrorism;" *The HOPE Trunk,* "a resource for teaching" designed to "help student understand the impact of violence, the meaning of community and the importance of making good decisions;" a professional development program at the Memorial Museum that offers "workshops for educators, administrators, and counselors to enhance their understanding of the story of the bombing and its implications;" as student essay contest and a variety of distance learning programs and webcasts. See Oklahoma City National Memorial and Museum, "Educational Programs and Resources," Memorial Packets & Advertisements Folder, in OKCMA. See also "Education" section of http://www.oklahomacitynationalmemorial.org/

nation."[143] For military service members, the Memorial Museum has also become a site visited regularly that Johnson notes,

> has become a universal symbol of a world wide resolve to reject the forces of terrorism [and] I think that message sounds loud and clear to our military personnel… as a representation of the unity of the American people…it sends a message [to military personnel] that they are fighting against something that is deep in the heart of everybody in the United States.[144]

The importance of the Memorial Museum's presentation of an educational narrative aimed at strengthening as sense of national and communal unity has become so central to the mission of the Memorial Foundation that Executive Director Kari Watkins believes that "when visitors come here and only experience the [Outdoor Symbolic Memorial], they have cheated themselves out of the most remarkable part of the story."[145]

President George W. Bush's speech at the dedication of the Memorial Museum on President's Day, February 21 2001, was a historic speech that etched the Museum into the national patriotic landscape. In his first official trip and national speech as President of the United States, George Bush declared at the dedication ceremony

> here, we remember one act of malice… but by 9:03 that morning a new and hopeful story was being written… it began with the rescue… it is recorded in this museum… your memorial belongs to all America… Oklahoma City will always be one of those places in our national memory.[146]

While Bush's speech focused—like President Clinton before him—on the national meaning and memory of the bombing, the quote from his speech that would be inscribed permanently at the museum's exit was "Americans will come here and be better people

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[143] See Oklahoma City National Memorial and Museum, "Educational Programs and Resources," Memorial Packets & Advertisements Folder, in OKCMA.
[144] Bob Johnson interview.
[145] Kari Watkins interview.
[146] George W. Bush, "Remarks at the Dedication of the National Memorial Museum Museum in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma," February 19, 2001. In PPPUS.

for having walked through the Memorial Museum."[147] In singling out the "Memorial Museum," President Bush's quote acknowledged by default that the Outdoor Symbolic Memorial was not a memory site that was endowed with the specific sacred capital necessary to actively construct better Americans. Both of the memory sites in the Memorial Complex aesthetically represented the national spirit of unity that emerged briefly after the bombing, but it would be the Memorial Foundation's storyline in the Memorial Museum alone that was designed to use the brutality of the bombing to actively produce a new post-Cold War patriotic identity for American citizens.

2.2.3 The Oklahoma City Religious Ritualized Assemblage

The Memorial Complex was the official memorial of the bombing; however, a ritualized assemblage of local churches with secondary memory sites to the bombing ensconces the Complex north of downtown Oklahoma City. In accessing the secondary memorials in the area, Kari Watkins noted that "the [Oklahoma City National Memorial] is framed by churches,"[148] by which she was referring to four specific church memorial spaces that surround the Memorial Complex. Across the street to the west at St. Joseph's Old Cathedral the "And Jesus Wept" memorial was built upon site of a parish house destroyed in the bombing. One of the two plaques at the memorial explains the historical nature of the site as "hallowed ground where people have been publically worshiping … in the last century and … will continue to worship … into the new millennium."[149] Mirroring this memorial across the street to the east and constructed using granite from

[147] Ibid. It is noteworthy that President Bush's actual quote, which was apparently edited for clarification, was "A lot of Americans are going to come and be better people for having walked through this Center."
[148] Kari Watkins interview.
[149] Northwest plaque, "And Jesus Wept," St. Joseph's Old Cathedral, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

the Murrah building is the outdoor “Heartland Chapel,” which is dedicated to both “the nineteen little boys and girls killed in the OKC bombing” and to first responders.[150]

A block northwest of the Memorial Complex is St. Paul’s Cathedral, which invited the Butzer’s to design the “East Garden” memorial space because the church had sustained significant damage during the bombing. The Butzer’s explained that “a lot of the details at [St. Luke’s East Garden] are the continuation of the details that we started at [the Symbolic Outdoor Memorial]… the gate to the garden was the direct reference to [the bombing] in the iron work… it says “April 19th” at the top of the gate [and] these sun rays… about the morning sun of April 19th,” which was a similar inspiration for the Gates of Time.[151] As Hans Butzer commented about the East Garden specifically, the church memorials collectively form a “circle and overlapping circles, relationships…very much a sacred space” that is proximate and complementary, but reaches beyond the borders of the Memorial Complex.[152]

Ten blocks north of the Memorial Complex and its proximate churches is St. Luke’s Methodist Church, which served as a response site for months after the bombing and became the meeting place for the Memorial Task Force’s meetings in the years afterwards, has three different memory sites on its grounds. Rev. Linda Brinkworth recalled that after the bombing, a national memorial campaign based upon Richard Paul Evan’s book *The Christmas Box*, donated an “Angel of Hope” statue in memory of the

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[150] Northern sidewalk paque, “Heartland Chapel,” Heartland Church, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

[151] Butzer interview. The Butzer’s explained the role in the sun’s rays in the design of the Gates of Time in the following way, “the "9:01" and "9:03" are illusory to historical contexts. 9:01 being morning sun, the moment before, and 9:03, setting sun, towards the west—for us these are very, very important issues that we're trying to engage through our design…And another trace back…”

[152] Butzer interview. While not a religious memory site, it is worth noting that the Federal Credit Union, which was one of the federal agencies housed in the Murrah Building, relocated just a block away to the corner of 6th and Robinson. They, like many of the other federal agencies, built a memorial on their premises (Yellow “Government Memorial” in Figure 2 & 3)

children killed to the local Red Cross. The organization bequeathed the memorial to the church for having served as a staging ground for rescue workers for months after the bombing.[153] While not marked in any official way, Room 204 was the headquarters of Bob Johnson's Task Force Chairs meetings for nearly five years, and is a memory site that long time church members know represents the unique connection of St. Luke's to the commemorative process. In fact, the Memorial Foundation gave the church its third memory site--a piece of the Murrah Building concrete that now resides in the private archive of the church. The three memory sites at St. Luke's coupled with the churches that surround the Memorial Complex form a thirty square block ritualized assemblage whose memorial components are all located on the sacred ground of religious institutions.

2.2.4 The Downtown Oklahoma City & Governmental Ritualized Assemblages

A ritualized assemblage of memory sites at important cultural, educational and political spaces was constructed by a wide array of different constituencies in the heart of downtown Oklahoma City. Covering over 250 square blocks, this diamond shaped assemblage extended from south of 1st Street to 28th Street, and east to west from Hudson Avenue to Stonewall Avenue. On the south end of the downtown assemblage is a memorial constructed in the Bricktown Flagpole Plaza. Bricktown, the new social and cultural epicenter of downtown Oklahoma City, is home to the state's only professional sports team--the Oklahoma Thunder basketball team. A ritualized relationship connects the Thunder to the bombing as Sam Presti, the General Manager of the team, requires all new players to tour the Oklahoma City National Memorial each year as a rite of passage

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[153] Linda Brinkworth and David Kelly, interview with the author, May 31, 2012. For more information on the "Angel of Hope" memorial campaign, see [http://www.richardpaulevans.com/angel-statues]

to develop each player's understanding of their position as a role model in Oklahoma.[154] To the west lies the religious assemblage, and to the east is a memorial built at the Health Science Center on the Oklahoma University campus. In the center of the downtown assemblage is a memory site consisting of 168 donated Crape Myrtle tree planted on all four corners of the overpass of I-235 and 6th Street, which is a major intersection for downtown Oklahoma.

At the north end of the downtown assemblage is the Oklahoma State Capitol grounds, which is itself the center of a political assemblage of memory sites built on local, federal and military government property in the city and extending into nearby cities. The Heartland Grove was constructed on the Capitol grounds and is the most significant Oklahoma City bombing memory site aside from the Memorial Complex. Donated by the state of Iowa, the Grove is comprised of Littleleaf Linden trees for adult victims, and Flowering Crabapple trees for the murdered children. Dedicated exactly six months after the bombing, the central marker in the grove the people of Oklahoma and all the caring people of the nation united in spirit to emerge stronger, to move on, to move ahead, yet, never to lose the memory."[155] Spatially speaking, the Grove sits on the opposite end of the Oklahoma Mall from the State Capitol, in the same location that the Lincoln Memorial relative to the United States Capitol in the National Mall in Washington D.C.

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[154] Johnson interview. Johnson commented in detail about the important relationships between the Memorial Complex, the Thunder, and the NBA. "The General Manager of the Oklahoma Thunder, Sam Presti, requires all the new players to come to the memorial to give them insight as to the background of the city and the character of the people of the city. During the NBA Finals [2012]…Charles Barkley… reported on the pregame show, a day after he visited the memorial, about how impacted he was. He said that he was more impacted by that visit than anything he had ever done [in his life]."

[155] "Oklahoma City Memorial Grove" plaque, Oklahoma State Capitol mall, Oklahoma City.

The precarity of the many tree memorials created throughout the country after the bombing was laid bare in 2012 when natural disease and the passage of time illustrated the deterioration of public memory at the Heartland Grove. On a research trip to the Grove in 2012, I encountered a state employee cutting down dozens of the Linden trees in the memorial grove, which were then loaded into a truck by two Oklahoma City Jail work release prisoners whom he was supervising. When I asked the state worker what he was doing he told me "some of these trees are diseased, some of them are dying, so we are just clearing them out." I asked, "are you going to replant them?" to which he responded, "I haven't heard anything about replanting."[156] As the crew felled each tree before dragging to the truck, it was clear that they had no idea that each one of these trees represented the body of one of the 168 victims of the bombing. The dozens of freshly cut stumps covered with mounds of sawdust, including two of the nineteen crabapple trees dedicated to the murdered children, testified to time's ability to deteriorate public memory even on the sacred ground of a bombing memorial on the State Mall at the Oklahoma Capitol.

Dozens of other memorials on government property were constructed across Oklahoma City and in nearby towns. As Memorial Foundation Executive Director Watkins noted, "most of the other [federal government] agencies that were in the [Murrah] Building have some kind of memorial in their [new] buildings."[157] Two other memory sites were constructed near the State Capitol at the Governor's mansion, as well

[156] Personal interaction with Oklahoma State employee, name unknown. May 30, 2012. Quotes taken from my retelling of the story to Hans and Torrey Butzer the following day in our interview, May 31, 2012.
[157] Kari Watkins interview, Oklahoma City Bombing Memorial Archives, "Mini-Memorials Resulting From April 19, 1995," unfiled. Copy in personal collection of the author. No comprehensive list of the Federal Government buildings with memorials currently exists.

as another memorial at the Department of Agriculture building.[158] To the southeast of Oklahoma City, a memorial was built on Tinker Air Force Base, which is the largest international logistics center in the Air Force Material Command (AFMC). To the west of Oklahoma City, the town of Yukon constructed a memorial at one of their local governmental buildings, the Centennial Building. The government ritualized assemblage of memory sites on local, federal and military property covers Oklahoma City and extends into city's nearby suburbs.

2.2.5 The Oklahoma State & Regional Ritualized Assemblages

Across the state, the mass proliferation of memorials physically marked the bombing as a vital part of the Oklahoma public memory and identity. In an exchange with Oklahoma Governor Keating, one citizen suggested that the statewide popularity of tree memorials was inspired by the suggestion of "the young girl at [President Clinton's] talk."[159] A collaboration between the Memorial Foundation and the American Forests Historic Tree Program cultivated saplings of the Survivor Tree that were planted "all over Oklahoma…in public and private places."[160] A third grove of 168 trees, the "Murrah Tree Memorial," was planted along I-44 outside of Tulsa.[161] Hundreds of Survivor Tree saplings were planted at K-12 schools around the state, which resulted in memory sites

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[158] On the grounds of the Governor's Mansion is a memorial grove of Red Bud trees and a group of states. "Mini-Memorials Resulting From April 19, 1995."
[159] Linenthal, *The Unfinished Bombing: Oklahoma City in American Memory*. 132. For Linenthal's full discussion of the nationwide "tree plantings," see 131-133.
[160] Oklahoma City National Memorial & Museum and Oklahoma State Department of Education, "Survivor Tree: Witness to Tragedy, Symbol of Strength," MPAF.
[161] The other two 168 tree memorial groves being the Crape Myrtle tree memorial on the overpass at I-235 and 6th Street and the Heartland Memorial Grove on the State Mall at the Oklahoma Capitol.

on these campuses where future generations of young Oklahomans are educated.[162] The ritualized assemblage constructed by countless individual citizens and organizations at public, educational and political locations across the state physically marked the bombing as a vital component of the identity of all Oklahomans.[163]

A regional ritualized assemblage was constructed in five of the states that border Oklahoma. The federal agencies housed in the Richard Bolling Federal Building in Kansas City, Missouri purchased a memorial statue sculpted by the Jim Brothers and installed on the grounds of the facility. Directly south of Oklahoma City on I-35, a suburban community of nearby Dallas, Texas constructed a memorial at the Richardson Public Library. In Colorado, a statue was built in a public park along the shores of Loveland Lake, in the city of Loveland. Two memorials were constructed in Kansas, "On Eagles Wings" a carved statue in city of Clay Center, and a tree memorial in El Dorado. Two memory sites were also funded by local communities in New Mexico, a tree memorial at the Ponce de Leon Retirement Center in Santa Fe, and a memorial garden in the Plaza de Espanola Park in nearby Espanola. The memory of the bombing reverberated strongly in nearby states and resulted in a regional assemblage that encircles Oklahoma.

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[162] This point cannot be overemphasized. It is not a stretch to say that if these memory sites were marked in Figure 5 that the entire state of Oklahoma, with its unique panhandle shape, would be a part of the state ritualized assemblage. The widespread planting of Survivor Tree saplings at Oklahoma K-12 schools was mentioned to me by nearly everyone I interviewed, including Kari Watkins, the Butzers, and the archivists in the Oklahoma City National Memorial Archive, Helen Stiefmiller and Pam Bell. There is currently no comprehensive list of the schools that planted these trees.

[163] Other non-tree memorials were created at the Holy City Church near Lawton, OK; a memorial called "Angel Statue" in Chadick Memorial Park in McAlester, OK; the "Murrah Tree Memorial" and a granite marker and trees created by the Silver Oaks Civic Association in Tulsa, OK; see the Edmond Oklahoma Chapter for more details on the memorial at Edmond Summit Middle School and in Edmond Park. "Mini-Memorials Resulting From April 19, 1995."

2.2.6 The United States' Oklahoma City Bombing Ritualized Assemblage

The most geographically expansive ritualized assemblage extends across the United States and materially illustrates the appropriation of the public memory of the bombing as a new commemorative means of bolstering the perception of national unity at the turn of the twenty first century. President Clinton himself championed this practice by planting not one, but two different trees on the grounds of the White House. Clinton planted the first tree in the days after the bombing, and the second was a sapling of the Survivor Tree presented by the Oklahoma City Memorial Foundation to the President, who commented that he would plant it

> alongside the dogwood on the White House lawn [as] a great gift to the American people… [a] tree that will always remind us of [Oklahoma City]…I think there is not a citizen in our country that didn't identify with the people [of Oklahoma] in that awful moment and in the days afterwards…Oklahoma City was an attack not just on the people, the city, the State but the Nation and…on what we stand for, how we govern ourselves, and the values we live by.[164]

President Clinton and the First Lady had adopted and promoted trees as a symbol of the national public memory of the bombing, and over two years later they reaffirmed their commitment by planting a Survivor Tree sapling on the grounds of the White House.

Memory sites that embodied the discourse of the Oklahoma City Model quickly sprung up in every corner of the United States: the Topsham Police Department in Maine planted a crabapple tree and erected a marker; Aiken Elementary School in South Carolina followed suit, only with a redbud tree; the Allied Gardens Women's Club in San Diego, California planted an entire tree grove with a memorial marker in Cleveland National Forest; the Odd Fellow Lodge #20 in Ellensburg, Washington planted a

[164] Clinton, "Remarks at the Memorial Service," April 23, 1995 and "Remarks in Support of the Oklahoma City Memorial," August 13, 1997. Both in PPPUS.

flowering plumb tree and erected a granite marker.[165] The precedent of constructing memorials at governmental buildings also took root with the erection of memorials on the grounds of the Arizona and Kentucky state Capitol buildings and at Federal buildings in Kansas City, Missouri and St. Paul, Minnesota.[166] The countless public and private memory sites constructed across United States illustrate the effectiveness of President Clinton's appeal just days after the bombing to American citizens that "we should all plant a tree."[167] The memory of the Oklahoma City bombing was constructed spatially in the concentric circles of ritualized assemblages that materially signaled the transformation of mass murder from a phenomenon historically seen as shameful, into an effective new means of defining American national identity at the turn of the twenty first century.

Political and Public Memories of National Unity

The Oklahoma City bombing was not the first mass murder that resulted in a physical memorial. It did, however, result in the creation of the rhetoric and process of the Oklahoma City Model which transformed the shadowed ground of the site of the bombing into sacred ground in the nation's patriotic landscape. A number of factors contributed to the emergence of this new commemorative sensibility. The first was President Clinton's role not merely as a mediator of the national emergency response, but as an active framer of the meaning and memory of the bombing. The national syndication of the President's ongoing encouragement that all Americans begin "talking

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[165] "Mini-Memorials Resulting From April 19, 1995."
[166] Ibid.
[167] Clinton, "Remarks at the Memorial Service," April 23, 1995. In PPPUS.

about what happened in Oklahoma" in the days, months, and years afterwards rapidly normalized a national discourse about mass murder that had historically been seen as shameful and thus inappropriate for public discussion.[168] The Memorial Task Force, which later became the Oklahoma City Memorial Foundation, took up the President's call and worked tirelessly for six years to create both the Outdoor Symbolic Memorial and the Memorial Museum. Yet the establishment of the Oklahoma City National Memorial was but the core of what became countless memory sites constructed in the city and state of Oklahoma and throughout the United States. Taken collectively, these sites became material manifestations of the socio-political script created by the President that appropriated the memory of the imagined bereaved community after mass murders as a new post-Cold War means of promoting an enduring narrative of national unity.

Central to the creation of this new commemorative sensibility was the Oklahoma City Model, a rhetoric and process borne in an ongoing interplay of timely political interventions and an emphasis on public participation. In the immediate aftermath of the bombing, President Clinton articulated a new socio-political script that framed the importance of creating a national public memory of the Oklahoma City bombing. In the days, weeks and months that followed, saturation level media coverage replayed the President's script which increasingly emphasized that despite the tragedy of the murder of 168 human beings, the response of the bombing was something worth remembering because it exemplified local and national unity. After two weeks, the President quietly stepped down from the bully pulpit, at approximately the same time that members of the Oklahoma City community coalesced into what became the Memorial Task Force. In the

[168] Clinton, "Remarks…to Children on the Oklahoma City Bombing," April 22, 1995. In PPPUS.

year that followed, the Task Force evolved into a complex yet fluid organization that created a new commemorative process and discourse for emphasizing public participation that was free from political intervention. While the Task Force made a concerted effort to involve as many voices as possible, it was decided from early in the process that the families and survivors in concert with a subcommittee that surveyed public opinion would ultimately be responsible for selecting the core themes of what became the Memorial Mission Statement. After seven months of deliberation, both groups submitted their final list of themes only to discover, as was detailed in the Mission Statement itself, "that the hopes of the general public mirrored almost identically those outlined by the Families/Survivors."[169] Yet with the exception of the three themes that focused on the aesthetic "feel" of the final memorial, all of the themes adopted in the Mission Statement had been prominent topics that the President repeated tirelessly in the days after the bombing. The rhetoric and process of the Oklahoma City Model thus emerged through the timely intervention of political figures coupled with ongoing public participation, and reciprocally established that the memory of the United States largest mass murder should emphasize the local and national unity that emerged briefly after the bombing.

The influence of the Oklahoma City Model was illustrated materially in the growth of concentric circles of ritualized assemblages that rapidly extended across the United States. At the heart of all these memory sites was the Memorial Complex at the site of the bombing which was comprised of two memorials that used very different means to foster a commemorative spirit of unity. The outdoor Symbolic Memorial was itself a ritualized assemblage comprised of eight different memorial elements that collectively fostered an aesthetic of tenderness focused on remembrance. The Memorial

[169] "Guidance: Themes," MMS.

Museum, on the other hand, utilized and emphasized the brutality of the bombing in order to establish a singular storyline focused on ensuring that visitors never forget the threat of terrorism. Encircling the Memorial Complex were a number of memorials constructed on the grounds of nearby churches that present spiritual interpretations of the bombing. Further afield, memorials were constructed at schools, public parks and governmental buildings throughout the state of Oklahoma—most notably the Heartland Grove at the State Capitol—and jointly emphasized the centrality of the bombing to the identity of all Oklahomans. The trend of creating memorials at schools, government facilities and public parks extended throughout the national landscape as well. No single type of memorial was more popular than the planting of trees, which was itself an appropriate metaphor for the growth of the new national commemorative sensibility that domestic mass murders should be included in national public memory.

The Oklahoma City Model became a new component of what Linenthal calls "the memorial vocabulary of American culture," but its end result was the appropriation of mass murder as an effective new means of fostering a sense of national unity.[170] As President Clinton proclaimed three weeks after the bombing

> let me close by reminding you once again that you live in a very great country. When we are united by our humanity and our civic virtue, nothing can stop us…but we must not give in to fear or use the frustrations of the moment as an excuse to walk away from the obligations of citizenship….seize your moment. Build a better future. And redeem once again the promise of America.[171]

For most of the twentieth century, the memory of fallen soldiers had served as the traditional rallying point for establishing a sense of national affiliation. In the aftermath

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[170] The subtitle of Chapter Four in Linenthal, *The Unfinished Bombing: Oklahoma City in American Memory*. 109.
[171] Clinton, "Remarks at the Michigan State University Commencement," May 5, 1995. In PPPUS.

of the Cold War, however, the President and an array of other political and public groups saw the bombing as not merely a tragedy, but as a strategic opportunity during a period of relative international peace to convincingly illustrate national unity using a wholly new commemorative subject: the victims of domestic mass murder. The local, regional and national ritualized assemblages that quickly covered the American landscape attest materially to the rapid national adoption of this new commemorative sensibility. Five months after the bombing, President Clinton articulated this point vividly when he encouraged Americans to understand the event as an opportunity in which

> we learned something about ourselves when it did happen that we should never forget… we ought to remember how all of us were in the aftermath of Oklahoma City and how that magnificent spirit made everyone a little more human, a little more alive, and a lot more proud to just have the opportunity to help our fellow human beings and our fellow Americans who needed it. If we can remember that, then that lasting tragedy will always have changed America for the better.[172]

The Oklahoma City Model was far more than just a public method of creating memorials—it marked the onset of a new national commemorative tradition that could transform domestic mass murders from events that had historically been seen as shameful into strategic opportunities for creating the national identity of the United States of America at the dawn of the 21st century.

[172] Bill Clinton, "Remarks to Oklahoma City 'Thank You America' Participants," September 27, 1995. In PPPUS.

Chapter 3 COLUMBINE - CROSSES ON REBEL HILL: Christian Rhetoric and Commemorative Conflict, 1999-2007

On the morning of Tuesday April 27, 1999, the still traumatized community of Columbine, Colorado awoke to find Rebel Hill, the namesake of Columbine High School, covered with fifteen crosses that Sylvia Grider described as "silhouetted against the sky atop this hill, eerily reminiscent of depictions of the crucifixion of Christ."[1] The symbolism of crosses resonated with the predominantly Christian local community, which evangelical leaders quickly seized as an opportunity to argue that Columbine was indicative of declining Christian faith in the United States. More significant, however, was the decision of President Clinton and his administration to fashion their own memorial message in similar religious terms. Just two days earlier, Vice President Al Gore gave a nationally televised speech at the public memorial ceremony, where he urged American citizens that

> if our spiritual courage can match the eternal moment, we can make manifest in our lives the truth of the prophesy that sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us…all adults in this nation must take on the challenge of creating in all of God's children, a clean heart and a right spirit within…in the words of [Jesus]…I yearn that we may come through this dark passage a stronger and more caring people. For I believe with all my heart that earth has no sorrow that heaven cannot heal.[2]

While the President had used religious allusions in his speeches at Oklahoma City, these musings were secondary or tertiary to his primary emphasis on national unity. After

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[1] Grider, "Public Grief and the Politics of Memorial: Contesting the Memory of 'the Shooters' at Columbine High School." 5.

[2] Al Gore, Public Columbine Memorial Speech, Robert F. Clement Park, April 27, 1999. Transcribed by author.

Columbine, however, the President and his staff increasingly joined religious leaders in framing the meaning and memory of Columbine in explicitly Christian, and often evangelical, terms.

The crosses also quickly came to symbolize the many social divisions that existed in the Columbine community's struggle to determine how, and who, to remember. Within the local Christian community, a heated debate raged about whether memorial efforts should emphasize Christian forgiveness. At the heart of this debate was a contentious issue that emerged publicly at Columbine: how to deal, commemoratively, with perpetrators who were themselves members of the community. Amidst the struggles within the Christian community, many non-Christian, non-evangelical Christian and non-white members of the community--including family members of the victims--found themselves limited or outright excluded from having a voice in public commemorative processes. All of these often overlapping social divisions influenced the design of the many permanent memory sites that were constructed.

In this chapter, I argue that Christian faith was integrated into the socio-political script that was replicated at Columbine and effectively transformed the script into a nationally accepted Myth of the Slaughtered Citizen. President Clinton's repetition of the script he had created after the Oklahoma City bombing at Columbine solidified widespread acceptance of the new commemorative sensibility and culturally repositioned mass murder as a kind of event that American citizens should never forget. The cultural dominance of the local evangelical community, however, also inspired counter narratives of resistance that were subtly and powerfully inscribed by excluded community members into the many permanent memorials. As a result, the memorial symbol of the cross

quickly dominated the local landscape at Columbine and was used variously to mark the victims, Christian faith, resistances against local evangelical dominance, and even the contentious issue of forgiveness for the perpetrators. Nationally, Columbine normalized the memorialization of mass murder, while locally a commemorative battle was waged over the appropriate use of religion in the memorials that were constructed.

To support this argument, I will analyze how the national public response in the immediate aftermath of the killings influenced both the early commemorative efforts of the community and the later move to create an "official" public memorial. First, I examine how, in the days after the killings, President Bill Clinton again promoted a patriotic sense of unity, but did so using far more of the Christian rhetoric that was circulating nationally in the aftermath. Second, I analyze how "the 15/13 debate" about the memory of the perpetrators divided the commemorative aspirations of the community, which manifested materially in the rapid proliferation of different memory sites in the months after the killings. Third, I will detail that while the eight year long effort to create an official memorial faced many obstacles, none was more significant than the lack of an established sense of community in Columbine. Finally, I will analyze the spatial and aesthetic meaning of the completed Columbine Memorial and illustrate the many memorial resistances inscribed just below the surface of the official memory site that now resides at the base of Rebel Hill.

3.1 OF PRESIDENTS AND PASTORS: National Unity Merges with Christian Faith

In the immediate aftermath of the April 20, 1999 killings at Columbine High School, President Bill Clinton repeated the rhetoric of the Oklahoma City Model and

framed Columbine as a nationally significant event that American citizens should never forget. What was different this time was that leaders of the American evangelical Christian community joined the President at the bully pulpit, and in so doing, sparked a rhetorical conflict over Columbine's spiritual and public meaning. At Columbine, the theme of unity was used not only by the President, but also by nearly everyone who spoke about the memory of the killings. An emphasis on Christian faith, however, was central to the memory narratives of people who spoke publicly in the aftermath. More pointedly, it was repeatedly suggested by political and religious figures alike that the violence was the result of a lack of the Christian faith being taught in public schools. Benedict Anderson writes, "if the nationalist imaginings is so concerned [with death and immortality], this suggests a strong affinity with religious imaginings…this affinity is by no means fortuitous… the cultural roots of nationalism [begin] with death."[3] The intertwined rhetoric of unity and faith enabled public memorial services to take on an air of patriotic nationalism that echoed the ritual observances of fallen soldiers throughout American history. Columbine utilized the rhetoric of the Oklahoma City Model, but also transformed it by suggesting that a national understanding of Christian faith was central to what American citizens should learn and promote in memory of those killed at Columbine.

To understand the widespread local support that this hybrid rhetoric of unity and faith had, it is important to first understand the demographics of the Columbine community. Authors Ralph Larkin and Rebecka Bingham analyze a range of demographic information in the 2000 United States Census, and note three striking differences between Columbine and the rest of the United States. First, Columbine is a

[3] Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. 10.

very wealthy community. For example, the poverty rate is less than half the national average (6% compared to 12.4%), while "the median value of houses in Columbine is twice the national average ($232,625 compared to $115,012)."[4] Racially speaking, 91.8% of the Columbine community is white, which is nearly 20 percentage points more than the national average of 75%.[5] Lastly, and most importantly, Larkin notes that we can say that

> Columbine is God's country…because it is literally viewed that way by the many evangelical Christians who live in the area. Columbine is openly and sometimes aggressively religious. It has one of the largest concentrations of Christian evangelicals in the country.[6]

The commemorative rhetoric of national unity and Christian faith found fertile soil in Columbine because, as Larkin explains, "few communities in America are as culturally homogenous as Columbine…it is a solidly white, affluent suburb that takes…pride in its political and cultural conservatism."[7]

The demographic realities of Columbine belie President Clinton's claims in the aftermath of the killings that the importance of Columbine resided in its similarity to the rest of the United States. At 7:48pm on the evening of the Columbine killings, President Clinton again addressed the American people, just as he had in the immediate aftermath of the Oklahoma City bombing. Clinton noted on two different occasions in this first press conference "if it can happen here [in a place like Columbine], then surely people will recognize that they have to be alive to the possibility that it could occur in any

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[4] Rebecka D. Bingham, "Planning School Memorials: Feedback from the Columbine Memorial Planning Committee" (Brigham Young University, 2008). 45; Ralph W. Larkin, *Comprehending Columbine* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2007). 20.
[5] *Comprehending Columbine*; Bingham, "Planning School Memorials: Feedback from the Columbine Memorial Planning Committee." Ibid; Larkin, *Comprehending Columbine*. 21.
[6] *Comprehending Columbine*. 17.
[7] Ibid. 25.

community in America."[8] The demographic data show that Columbine is not, as President Clinton and his advisers knew, an average American community. Yet in the months and years after the killings, Clinton continually proclaimed "when America looks a [Columbine] many of us see a community not very different from our own."[9]

It is impossible to know the President's intentions, but the historical reality of that time period suggests that Columbine provided Clinton with a strategic means of reaching the one demographic he was most disconnected from: conservative voters. Clinton had become wildly popular due to the economic prosperity of the 1990s, but as the end of his tenure approached, the religious right and political conservatives remained one segment of the U.S. population still not enamored with the President. After Oklahoma City, Clinton had focused his rhetorical efforts on national unity but largely passed on emphasizing Christian faith despite being in the heartland of the Midwest. After Columbine, however, the nearly homogenous local population coupled with the influx of national evangelical figures provided Clinton with the unique opportunity, which he noted at a nationally broadcast memorial service, to "reach across all the political and religious and cultural lines that divide us."[10] The timing and demographics of Columbine

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[8] Bill Clinton, "Remarks on the Attack at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado, and an Exchange With Reporters," April 20, 1999. Earlier in the his speech, Clinton noted "perhaps now America would wake up to the dimension of this challenge if it could happen in a place like Littleton." In *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States*, U.S. Government Printing Office, (hereafter referred to as PPPUS). Available online at: http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/browse/collection.action?collectionCode=PPP . Accessed, February 1, 2012.

[9] Bill Clinton, "Remarks to the Columbine High School Community in Littleton," May 20, 1999. In PPPUS.

[10] Clinton, Pep Rally on the One-Month Anniversary of the Columbine Killings," Dakota Ridge High School, May 20, 1990. Author's transcription.

provided a chance for Clinton to further expanding his base of support and solidify his legacy as a President who united the nation.[11]

In his second public talk, the President again stressed the importance of young Americans talking with others about their feelings about the killings. A staged "discussion" with students, like the discussion with children in the days after the Oklahoma City bombing, was arranged for the President at T.C. Williams High School in Alexandria, Virginia. The President began by thanking the school district officials for hosting him, as they had in the past, for "important educational announcements."[12] Clinton then turned his attention to the students and shared

> I think it's important that all over America students and teachers have a chance to discuss their feelings about this…and it's especially important for younger children, who might be a quite traumatized and wonder whether they are, in fact, safe a school. So I want to talk a little about all of that.[13]

The discussion was nationally broadcast to "several million students through various media outlets," which enabled the President to again stress to children and young Americans the importance of talking about the event and their feelings in the traumatic aftermath of the killings.[14]

The discussion with students was also the first of many times that President Clinton repeated the commemorative script he had created at Oklahoma City which highlighted the unity of the nation. The President said to the gathered students and people watching around the nation

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[11] After Columbine, the President repeatedly acknowledged that the previous years had been marked with numerous killings at schools, but would always quickly clarify that "[Columbine] is the worst example of school violence we've seen." Bill Clinton, "Remarks in a Roundtable Discussion with Students on Violence in Schools at T.C. Williams High School in Alexandria, Virginia," April 22, 1999. In PPPUS.
[12] Bill Clinton, "Remarks in a Roundtable Discussion With Students on Violence in Schools at T.C. Williams High School in Alexandria, Virginia." April 22, 1999. In PPPUS.
[13] Ibid.
[14] Ibid.

> its worth reminding everyone that in spite of these horrible instances, our country is still fundamentally a good and decent place…as horrible as this is, we have seen [in the Columbine community's response] once again what is basically decent and good about America.[15]

Two days later on his national radio address, Clinton reiterated this point again. "It's striking that these violent assaults on human life often illuminate the best of the human spirit…at a moment of such terrible, terrible violence, [people in Columbine] didn't turn away, and we [Americans] can't either."[16] The killings at Columbine were an awful tragedy, but despite this fact, what President Clinton wanted people to understand was how the killings had unified the Columbine community and the nation.

Educational leaders in the Columbine community joined the President in publicly stressing the link between local and national unity. At a memorial service for the members of Columbine High School, Frank DeAngelis, the Principal of Columbine, shared two significant quotes—one from Ernest Hemingway and one his own—that would be used repeatedly throughout the coming memorialization process. Quoting *A Farewell to Arms*, DeAngelis reflected "the world breaks everyone, and then we are stronger in broken places,"[17] before going on to elucidate for those assembled that

> the memories of those who died will make us stronger in broken places, and forge an even stronger bond with those who survived…we survived, we will prevail, we have hope to carry on because we were Columbine, we are still Columbine, and we will be an even stronger Columbine from this day forward.[18]

[15] Ibid.
[16] Bill Clinton, "The President's Radio Address," April 24, 1999. In PPPUS.
[17] Frank DeAngelis quoting Ernest Hemingway, *A Farewell to Arms* (New York1929). "Pep Rally on the One-Month Anniversary of the Columbine Killings," Dakota Ridge High School, May 20, 1990. Author's transcription.
[18] DeAngelis, "Pep Rally," May 20, 1999.

Jane Hammond, the Superintendent of the Jefferson County School District, also spoke at the service and told those assembled that "we have been a symbol, of the worst nightmare you could imagine…we will also be a symbol for the nation of strength, of dedication, of commitment and of resilience, as we pull together as a community."[19] Oklahoma City established a precedent, and after Columbine, the President and many local figures framed local healing as fundamental to strengthening and uniting the entire country.

The rhetoric of the Oklahoma City Model, however, was quickly transformed because of local and national religious figures interpretation of the meaning of Columbine as being intimately tied to Christian faith. No single episode was more important in framing this interpretation than the martyr story of Cassie Bernal and Rachel Scott. The story, replayed countless times by the national media in the days and months after the killings, was that Bernal and Scott had become Christian martyrs by asserting their faith in God before being executed by the perpetrators. Justin Watson writes in *The Martyrs of Columbine: Faith and The Politics of Tragedy* that

> Within days of their deaths, Cassie and Rachel were being hailed as modern-day martyrs and were seen by some, especially within the American evangelical community, as the sparks for a potential religious revival…useful symbols in a broader struggle over the meaning of the massacre and the state of American culture.[20]

Rev. George Kirsten, who presided over the congregation of Scott's family church, was candid in detailing the evangelical community's appropriation of the memory of these dead young women. Rev. Kirsten told *Denver Post* reporter Dave Cullen that he saw "the girl's murder as an opportunity to save more souls. 'Pack the ark with as many as

[19] Jane Hammond, "Pep Rally on the One-Month Anniversary of the Columbine Killings," Dakota Ridge High School, May 20, 1990. Author's transcription.
[20] Justin Watson, *The Martyrs of Columbine: Faith and the Politics of Tragedy* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002). 6.

possible,'" Kirsten said.[21] Wendy Murray Zoba, a staff writer for *Christianity Today* and author of *Day of Reckoning: Columbine and the Search for America's Soul,* articulated the devout belief of the larger evangelical community simply: "Columbine, at its heart, was a religious story."[22] The investigative journalism of Cullen disproved the factual validity of the martyr stories five months later in September 1999, but in the immediate aftermath of the killings, many public figures and organizations seized the memory of these murdered students to advance political and religious agendas.[23] Reflecting on the many ways that the memory of Bernal and Scott were used in the months and years afterwards, Watson writes, "one is reminded of ardent spectators at a football game cheering opposing teams. What seems to matter to either side are not the facts, but the temporary advantage the use of the stories will yield."[24]

It was not the President, but instead Vice President Al Gore, who gave the public speech that best illustrates the merging of the rhetorics of national unity and Christian faith after Columbine. Gore exemplified his Southern Baptist upbringing with a natural ability to preach that Cullen writes, exemplified "the instinct of…politicians to grab a

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[21] Rev. George Kirsten quoted in Dave Cullen, ""I Smell the Presence of Satan": Is Littleton's Evangelical Subculture a Solution to the Youth Alienation That Played a Role in the Columbine Killings, or a Reflection of It?," *Salon*, May 15, 1999.
[22] Wendy Murray Zoba, *Day of Reckoning: Columbine and the Search for America's Soul* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2000). 13.
[23] Cullen published an article in September of 1999 that debunked the martyr stories, which the *Jefferson County Sherriff's Office Report*, *Columbine High School Shootings* later confirmed. See, Dave Cullen, "Inside the Columbine High Investigation: Everything You Know About the Littleton Killings Is Wrong," *Salon.com*, September 23 1999.; Jefferson County, Colorado, Sherrif's Office. *The Jefferson County Sherriff's Office Report, Columbine High School Shootings*, *April 20, 1999* (Golden, CO, 2000), CD-ROM. See also, Sylvia Grider, "Memorializing Shooter with Their Victims: Columbine, Virgnia Tech, Northern Illinois University," in *Grassroots Memorials: The Politics of Memorializing Traumatic Death*, ed. Peter Jan Margry and Christiana Sanchez-Carretero (New York: Berghahn Books, 2012). 113.
[24] Watson, *The Martyrs of Columbine: Faith and the Politics of Tragedy*. 151.

hold of God with both hands while the grabbing seemed good…[Gore quoted Biblical] Scripture more than any clergy on the [stage]."[25] The Vice President began his jeremiad

> we remember Cassie Bernall, whose final words as she stared death in the face were "Yes, I do believe in God." Those who suffer for righteousness [know] that theirs is the kingdom of God. Now as we are brought to our knees in the shock of this moment: WHAT SAY WE? [dramatic pause] What say we into the open muzzle of this tragedy, opened and aimed at our hearts? If our spiritual courage can match the eternal moment, we can make manifest in our lives the truth of the prophesy that sufferings of this present time are not worth to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us. All of us must change our lives to honor these children. [loud] More than ever I realize that every one of us is responsible for all the children. There are children today hungering for their parents…to fill the spiritual void in their lives…all adults in this nation must take on the challenge of creating in all of God's children, a clean heart and a right spirit within.[26]

The over 60,000 people who gathered at the memorial service afforded the Vice President a unique opportunity to speak extensively about Christian faith, and to suggest to a receptive local audience that Columbine exemplified a spiritual void in the lives of many American children.

In his keynote, Gore also recited, almost verbatim, the commemorative script used by the President just three days beforehand that stressed national unity.[27]

> One of the hidden truths of the human condition is that suffering binds us together…America is a good and decent place and goodness is light for all the nations of the world. We have seen in this community so much of that goodness, so much of what is best in our country.[28]

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[25] Cullen, ""I Smell the Presence of Satan": Is Littleton's Evangelical Subculture a Solution to the Youth Alienation That Played a Role in the Columbine Killings, or a Reflection of It?."
[26] Al Gore, Speech at the Columbine Public Memorial Service, Robert F. Clement Park, Jefferson County, Colorado, April 25, 1999. Author's transcription.
[27] The quote, used above, from Clinton, "Remarks in…Discussion With Students," April 22, 1999.
[28] Gore, Public Columbine Memorial Speech

In the midst of the profound emotional suffering in Columbine and around the nation, the Vice President and President again used the national bereaved community as an opportunity to promote the perception of national unity. Only this time, from the public memorial service onward, the President and his administration framed the meaning and memory of the killings by integrating national unity with religious rhetoric that stressed the importance of Christian faith.

The emphasis on religion in Gore's speech at the nationally broadcast public memorial service was notable, but it was tame in comparison to proselytizing of evangelical figures with whom he shared the stage. Local evangelical pastor Bill Oudemolen later said "that [memorial] service was very openly evangelistic and evangelical. It wasn't a revival meeting, but it was close…I was comfortable with that, but some mainline denominational people were not. It was a hard sell; it was in your face"[29] Pastor Jerry Nelson of New Southern Gables Free Church gave a sermon about two severely battered and dying women in a Nazi concentration camp. Near death, one woman whose name was Betsy said to the other "I only know wish you knew my Jesus." Nelson then interpreted the moral of the story, "what Betsy was saying is this: there is only one rational way to live without despair in a world of such pain, and that way is know the son of God, Jesus Christ."[30] Nelson pleaded to the audience, "we, your pastors urge you, seek Jesus. [Jesus] said, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life.'"[31] Pastor Nelson established the evangelical tone of the public memorial service by giving a sermon that

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[29] Bill Oudemolen quoted in Wendy Murray Zoba, "Church, State, and Columbine: Since the infamous massacre, America has been rethinking the role of religion in the public square," *Christianity Today*, April 2, 2001.
[30] Jerry Nelson, Speech at the Columbine Public Memorial Service, Robert F. Clement Park, Jefferson County, Colorado, April 25, 1999.
[31] Ibid.

emphasized conversion to Christian faith far more than memorializing those who were murdered.

The featured sermon at the service was delivered by national evangelical icon Rev. Franklin Graham, who went a step further and argued that the absence of Christian faith from American public education led to the killings at Columbine.[32] Rev. Graham began his speech by admonishing all those watching that "it is time for this nation to recognize that when we empty the public schools of the moral teachings and the standards of a holy God, they are indeed very dangerous places."[33] Graham followed this reprimand with the assurance that "with God's help we can overcome this tragedy."[34] At first glance it is reasonable to assume that the "tragedy" that Graham is referred to was the killings at Columbine, but the remainder of his speech highlights that he was deftly using the word in a way that enabled a dual interpretation. For Graham, the tragedy to be overcome was not murder of thirteen human beings at Columbine, but instead the separation of Christian faith from the American public education system. The zealous evangelical framing of the meaning of Columbine was so pronounced that Rev. Don Marxhausen, a pastor a local Protestant church told the *Denver Post* after the public memorial service that "[he] felt offended [and] hit over the head with Jesus."[35] Cullen

[32] Reverend Billy Graham had joined President Clinton at the public memorial service following the Oklahoma City bombing, and so the decision to feature Graham's son Reverend Franklin Graham as the primary religious figure at the Columbien public memorial services is another important continuity in the commemorative processes of these two mass murders.
[33] Franklin Graham, Speech at the Columbine Public Memorial Service, Robert F. Clement Park, Jefferson County, Colorado, April 25, 1999.
[34] Ibid.
[35] Quoted in Cullen, ""I Smell the Presence of Satan": Is Littleton's Evangelical Subculture a Solution to the Youth Alienation That Played a Role in the Columbine Killings, or a Reflection of It?."

writes that the leaders of the national evangelical community viewed Columbine "as a God-given marketing opportunity, a chance to save souls."[36]

The fervent religious environment, however, was beneficial for the first usage of Columbine High School's football chant, an established sporting ritual for uniting the local community. Columbine student Amber Burgess, whose family had attended Columbine since the opening of the high school, took the stage and said "one thing that wasn't known before this tragedy is how strong our community is, and that we will triumph. So everybody help me out here." Burgess then led the entire crowd of over 60,000 people in three rounds of the call-and-response chant "We are…COLUMBINE!" The chant resonated so deeply that when President Clinton later spoke at the service for Columbine students, he began by his speech by saying "do that cheer again," which resulted in the entire auditorium erupting in six impassioned rounds of the chant. First Lady Hilary Clinton also spoke at the service, and began her speech

> The chant, 'We Are…Columbine'…to me it more than that, it was a real statement, about who you are, and indeed who we all are. Because in a very real way, what happened here at Columbine has so deeply affected the rest of our country, that we are all Columbine.[37]

The high school's football chant was used many times in the commemorative events that took place after the killings, and became a ritual means by which the local community came together locally, and inspired unity nationally.

The talk of unity, religious fervor and sporting rituals created an atmosphere that helps to understand the displays of patriotic nationalism in the public memorial service reminiscent of national ceremonies for fallen soldiers.

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[36] Ibid.

[37] Hillary Clinton, "Pep Rally on the One-Month Anniversary of the Columbine Killings," Dakota Ridge High School, May 20, 1990. Author's transcription.

Throughout the service, television cameras repeatedly cut to close-ups of a guest of honor on the stage: retired General Colin Powell. Gen. Powell never spoke, but the presence of the Commander of the Armed Forces in the United States' last major war—the First Gulf War—at a ceremony for civilians killed by other civilians suggests an emerging cultural equivalence of the deaths of those killed in domestic mass murders with the historical role played by fallen soldiers throughout American history. The parallels with both military ceremony and American sporting culture were laid bare when a flyover of four F-16 fighter jets elicited loud cheers from the crowd and marked the end the memorial service. The military presence and spectacle at Columbine's public memorial service illuminates how displays of patriotic nationalism were deployed as a means of unifying the nation in the name of mass murder victims, much like the commemorative role historically played by fallen soldiers.

In President Clinton's speech to the students of Columbine one month after the killings, he articulated the merging of the rhetoric of Christian faith with national unity in the commemorative script he created in Oklahoma. The President told the assembled students

> I think that what has impressed me most is the way, in the midst of this, you have held on to your faith…in the Scriptures, Saint Paul says that all of us in this life see through a glass darkly. So we must walk by faith, not by sight. We cannot lean on our own wisdom. None of this can be fully, satisfactorily explained to any of you. But you cannot lose your faith…what happened to you has pierced the soul of America. And it gives you a chance to be heard in a way no one else can be heard: by the President and by ordinary people in every community in this country. You can help us to build a better future for all our children…a future where schools

> and houses of worship are literally connected to all our children… because of what you have endured, you can help us build that kind of future in a way that no one else can. You can reach across all the political and religious and cultural lines that divide us. You have already touched our hearts…[now] you can give us a culture of [Christian] values instead of a culture of violence…you've got to help us here—take care of yourselves and your families first, take care of the school next, but remember you can help America heal, and in so doing, you will speed the process of healing for yourselves.[38]

President Clinton needed Columbine. Personally, Clinton needed to ensure that his leadership in framing the meaning and memory of Columbine solidified his legacy as unifier of the nation at the curtain call of his presidency. Politically, the President needed the Columbine community to adopt his commemorative message so that he would have support of an influential epicenter of the national evangelical and conservative community. Most importantly, President Clinton needed to normalize the emerging tradition that he played a major role in establishing at Oklahoma City--the framing of mass murder as a fundamental component of national pubic memory. At Columbine, the President, with the help of evangelical leaders, accomplished these tasks by merging Christian faith with the rhetoric of national unity. Clinton closed his speech by reiterating

> this is a very great country, it is embodied in this very great community…I see here today that you have decided not to give your mind and your heart away, [and] I ask you to share it with all your fellow Americans. We love you and we need you. Thank you, and God Bless You.[39]

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[38] Bill Clinton, "Pep Rally on the One-Month Anniversary of the Columbine Killings," Dakota Ridge High School, May 20, 1990. Author's transcription.
[39] Ibid.

3.2 THE 15/13 DEBATE: Forgiveness, Conflict & Assemblages of Crosses

Two of the fifteen crosses installed on Rebel Hill a week after the killings represented the perpetrators and initiated a public debate about Christian forgiveness that had profound impact on the early permanent memory sites that were constructed. The "15/13 debate," a term coined by Wendy Zoba, ensued after the crosses were erected and dealt with the sensitive issue of how to remember a mass murder when the perpetrators were themselves members of the community.[40] At the center of this controversy were two Christian men: Brian Rohrbough, whose son Daniel was murdered, and Greg Zanis, who built and installed the crosses. Many people in the community took the position advocated by Rohrbough and most evangelical leaders that the perpetrators were evil and deserved no understanding or forgiveness. There were, however, also people in the community who wanted to acknowledge, in some way, the reality that the perpetrators had been a part of the community. National media coverage of a number of public confrontations that occurred, but the 15/13 debate's most enduring legacy was the ritualized assemblage that began to grow and inscribe the new tradition in the local landscape. Moreover, almost all the early memory sites constructed used the symbol of the cross that had initiated the debate, and which increasingly represented the memory of "Columbine."

The immediate aftermath memorials constructed by community members at the school and in Clement Park had a potent evangelical tone and experienced rapid growth in both their size and the media attention they received. Erica Doss noted a tacit overlap with the religious tenor of the initial public memorial ceremony and these memorials.

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[40] Zoba, *Day of Reckoning: Columbine and the Search for America's Soul*. 196; more generally, 195-198.

> Columbine's [immediate aftermath] memorial was similarly [to the public memorial service] marked by evangelical Christian art and rituals… candlelight vigils, worship services, and scripture readings (many of them televised) were constant… more than a few placards and posters urged [visitors] to accept Christ as their personal savior.[41]

The memory sites elicited similar material offerings and became an area of intense media attention. Sylvia Grider explains

> local people began to bring flowers, candles, notes and other mementos—often in grouping of 13 matching items, one for each murder victim…the shrines quickly became the focus of almost constant press and broadcast media coverage, resulting in a steady pilgrimage of [thousands] of mourners… [which soon became] a national tourist attraction. People came by the busload.[42]

Bob Easton, then the Executive Director of the Foothill Parks and Recreation and later the chair of the Columbine Memorial Committee, recalled that the immediate aftermath memorials "grew exponentially by the day…it was pretty clear within the first twenty-four hours that there was no way we were going to control what was happening…[within days] about four and a half acres of the park were totally encompassed by that memorial."[43] Ongoing media coverage, a steady stream of visitors and the rapid growth of the immediate aftermath memorials conveyed the evangelical tone of commemoration at Columbine to a national audience.

The two crosses for the perpetrators became a site where the controversy, rhetoric and performance of the 15/13 debate began. People wrote messages in marker on all the crosses, but Grider notes that comments on the perpetrator's crosses ranged from positive

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[41] Doss, "Spontaneous Memorials and Contemporary Modes of Mourning in America." 309-310.
[42] Grider, "Public Grief and the Politics of Memorial: Contesting the Memory of 'the Shooters' at Columbine High School." 4.
[43] Bob Easton, Interview with the Author in Clement Park, July 9, 2013. In terms of pure volume, Bob noted that when they finally cleared the park over a month later, "It took about 12 full sized semi trucks to get it all out of here, and that was after we had pulled all the flowers and paper products out. The flower and paper pile [was about 10 feet high and approximately the size of a basketball court]."

("Forgive them Father, for they know not what they do") to self-referential ("How can anyone forgive you?") to conciliatory ("I'm sorry we failed you. May God have mercy on your soul") to the most common response, hate messages ("Murderers burn in hell").[44] The written messages illustrate that the issue of forgiveness framed in Christian rhetoric was the core of the initial public debate. The perpetrator crosses also became spaces where people preformed the debate. *Washington Post* reporter Lorraine Adam writes "some put black plastic bags over the crosses…others took the bags down. Some place obscene letters on the killings crosses [others] removed them at night."[45] The debate became violent on one occasion when a visitor angered by a young girl who was sympathetic to the perpetrator's crosses shoved her down a muddy Rebel Hill.[46] The two perpetrator crosses not only initiated the 15/13 debate, they also became the first stage where the controversy was recorded materially and performed publicly.

The debate erupted into the national spotlight three days after the crosses were installed when the father of a victim who began his public campaign to defend the belief of many in the community that the perpetrators deserved no understanding or forgiveness. When Brian Rohrbough first heard about Zanis' cross memorial he contacted the park district requesting that the two crosses be removed. After no action was taken, he called CNN on April 30 and told them to meet him at the crosses. With camera's rolling, Rohrbough explained "we don't build a monument to Adolf Hitler and put it in a Holocaust museum—and it's not going to happen here." He proceeded to cut

[44] Grider, "Public Grief and the Politics of Memorial: Contesting the Memory of 'the Shooters' at Columbine High School." 6.
[45] Quoted in ibid. Lorraine Adam, "Columbine crosses can't bear weight of discord," *Washington Post,* May 3, 1999.
[46] Zoba, *Day of Reckoning: Columbine and the Search for America's Soul*.

down the two crosses before he "cut them into pieces and threw them in a dumpster."[47] Four months later, West Bowles Community Church--which was Cassie Bernall's family's church--planted fifteen trees "to honor the families of those who had died."[48] Rohrbough quickly organized a group of fifty people that included his son's step father Richard Petrone, and Al Velasquez, the father of slain Kyle Velasquez. The group protested at the church before proceeding to cut down the trees, which elicited enthusiastic cheers from the other members of the group.[49] Brian Rohrbough's actions positioned him as the face of a highly publicized local evangelical movement that repeatedly sought to block any representations of understanding or forgiveness.

Those in the Columbine community who sought to understand and forgive rarely received public attention, but the speech delivered by the Archbishop of Denver at the public memorial service is an important exception. While the atmosphere of the memorial service was fervently evangelical, Archbishop Charles Chaput delivered a message unlike any of the speakers that day. Chaput, who spoke first, cautioned those assembled and American citizens watching at home on television that

> in the midst of this confusion, I find my heart turning again and again to the scripture passage that says that 'Love is stronger than death.' I believe that. Love is stronger than death…perhaps beyond all this suffering, something really good will be achieved. Perhaps we will begin to recover the vocation for which all of us were made—the vocation to love each other, no matter what the cost.[50]

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[47] Ibid. 49.
[48] Ibid.
[49] Ibid. 13, 198-200; Stephanie Jean Stillman, "Remembering the Cruelest Month: Network, Labor, and Haunting of the Memories of Columbine" (Dissertation, University of California Santa Barbara, 2008). 9; Doss, "Spontaneous Memorials and Contemporary Modes of Mourning in America." 312.
[50] Charles Chaput, Public Columbine Memorial Speech, Robert F. Clement Park, April 27, 1999. Transcribed by author.

Unlike Vice President Gore or the evangelical leaders who spoke at the service, Archbishop Chaput's Biblical interpretation of Columbine stressed Christian forgiveness. The 15/13 debate began with the installation of the Zanis' crosses, but an array of people in the Columbine community worked to forgive and chose not to exclude the perpetrators from their memory.

Greg Zanis' fifteen crosses catalyzed the 15/13 debate and became a symbol that powerfully and materially manifest the Archbishop's message of understanding and Christian forgiveness.[51] In the public firestorm that ensued, Zoba notes that Zanis tried to explain that the two crosses "was his way of extending love to all of the grieving families and friends in the midst of their heartache, despite the circumstances of the tragedy."[52] As Zanis himself said, "It's very simple: Jesus' arms are open for you and he loves you… He cares about you. That's the point."[53] A woman who visited the memorial and wrote to Zanis expressed and the sentiment of many of those compelled by the representation of fifteen that "your beautiful cross memorial has helped so many with forgiveness and healing."[54]

The removal of the remaining thirteen crosses from Rebel Hill initiated the rapid proliferation of other cross memorials in the local landscape and led to the creation of the first permanent Columbine memorials.[55] When Zanis heard about the destruction of the

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[51] It is unlikely because Zanis was on a vacation for most of the week after the killings quickly began work on the crosses when he returned home. See Zoba, *Day of Reckoning: Columbine and the Search for America's Soul*.
[52] Ibid. 45.
[53] Ibid.
[54] Ibid. 47.
[55] It bears mentioning that in my attempt to create a chronology of the emergence of cross memorials at Columbine, I have noticed that both media articles and scholarly works have routinely mislabeled, misunderstood and outright gotten details of the order of the emergence of these crosses completely wrong. This point is important because it illustrates how rapidly subsequent sets of crosses were constructed and how blurred memories of those who were investigating and constructing these memorials. Having

two perpetrators' crosses, he immediately drove back to Colorado and removed the remaining crosses "to remove the controversy. This is not what I put them up for. We put them up for closure…not for people to find a target."[56] Upon arriving back home in Illinois, Zanis was inundated with "telephone calls by the hundreds asking him to return the crosses,"[57] including a call from "the mother of one of the victims" who told Zanis that "she wanted to see her daughter's cross and never got the opportunity."[58] Zanis quickly acceded and constructed a new set of crosses that he drove back across the country only to discover that demand had outpaced him. Will Ambrose, a local mortgage broker, had commissioned a new set of thirteen crosses, which Zanis set up his larger crosses directly behind.[59] Foothill's Parks and Recreation removed these second and third sets of thirteen crosses in the summer of 1999 along with thousands of other aftermath memorials in Clemet Park. Unlike many of the aftermath memorials, however, the two sets of crosses were saved and became some of the first pieces of the Columbine Archive that was designed and constructed in a collaboration between the Littleton Historical Museum and the Colorado Historic Society.[60]

The fourth and fifth sets of crosses became the first permanent memory sites constructed after the killings and are historically important because their dedication on Memorial Day 1999--exactly ten years after the completion of Edmond's Yellow Ribbon memorial. Many people in the Columbine community wanted the crosses returned to

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consulted all of these sources and done interviews with many of the people who were intimately involved, I believe that this is the most accurate chronology of the cross memorial phenomenon currently available despite these blurred memories. I also hope that this chronology will inspire its own revision if other memories emerge in the future.

[56] Zoba, *Day of Reckoning: Columbine and the Search for America's Soul*. 49.

[57] Larkin, *Comprehending Columbine*. 51.

[58] Zoba, *Day of Reckoning: Columbine and the Search for America's Soul*. 50.

[59] Larkin, *Comprehending Columbine*. 52; Stillman, "Remembering the Cruelest Month: Network, Labor, and Haunting of the Memories of Columbine." 10.

[60] The Columbine archive is, indeed, an important memory site in need of further study.

Rebel Hill permanently, but the park district made it clear for legal reasons of the separation of church and state and issues of liability, that this was not possible.[61] The rejection of this request led local real estate developer Steve Schweitzberger to raise $1.6 million dollars (with widespread support) to buy Rebel Hill, whereas another local man, Ron Aigner, sought to trade a half an acre of his private property in nearby Roxborough State Park, a forested nature preserve twelve miles south of the High School.[62] Neither attempt was successful, but these efforts led Aigner to invite Zanis to erect a fourth set of wooden crosses on his property in Roxborough, which was dedicated on Memorial Day 1999. A massive fourteenth cross designed to symbolize Jesus watching over the victims was later added to the Roxborough Park Columbine memorial.[63]

The fifth set of wooden crosses on the grounds of Olinger Cemetery was soon transformed into the first permanent stone memorial inside the city of Littleton. In mid-May, the staff of Olinger contacted Zanis and requested that he bring a set of crosses to their property to serve as the heart of their planned Columbine Memorial Garden.[64] With the help of Rachel Scott's family, Zanis erected thirteen wooden crosses in a half circle with a previously placed statue of Jesus residing behind them.[65] At an informal dedication of the Columbine Memorial Garden, Chapel Hill manager David Martinez read a prepared statement explaining

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[61] Bob Easton interview. See also, "Off Limits: Crossing the line on Rebel Hill…", *Westword*, Thursday August 19, 1999.

[62] Larkin, *Comprehending Columbine*. 51-52; Renata Robey, "Columbine crosses find new home," *Denver Post,* June 1, 1999; Carla Crowder, "A day for lone buglers and memories: Fort Logan National Cemetery Draws Hundreds for annual Memorial Day observances," *Rocky Mountain News*, June 1, 1999; "Off Limits: Crossing the line on Rebel Hill…", *Westword*, Thursday August 19, 1999.

[63] Kieran Nicholson, "Carpenter's project: 60-foot cross," *Denver Post*, April 13, 2011.

[64] Linda Acorn, "Privileged to Serve," *International Cemetery & Funeral Management*, p.16-20, n.d.

[65] Peter G. Chronis, "Crosses find permanent home: Carpenter, families honor Columbine," *Denver Post*, May 29, 1999; Manny Gonzales, "Columbine crosses come to rest: Carpenter places set of 13 in cemetery to honor victims," *Rocky Mountain News*, May 29, 1999. It is important to note that this is same spatial arrangement of the Roxborough State Park Columbine Memorial.

> these crosses shall stand as a permanent memorial where our community and nation can come, remember, and heal. We trust that the day may come where we can see these crosses as a plus sign, signifying that we are reaching up and reaching out as portrayed in the Christ sculpture behind the crosses.[66]

Donations poured in from throughout the community and Zanis' wooden crosses were later replaced by black marble crosses and more extensive masonry and landscaping. The completed Columbine Memorial Garden quickly became a site of local and national pilgrimage.

A donation of trees from a school in New York to Olinger illuminates two important trends in the emerging mass murder memorial tradition. Media coverage of the Memorial Garden inspired Orchard Park High School to send thirteen trees that were planted in a half circle mirroring the crosses and forming a circle. Orchard Park sent a letter "to Columbine High School…In our hopes, an 'Avenue of Trees' could not replace, but help to remember…we are forced to offer only prayers and inadequate condolences and sympathies, but from a school in a town not unlike yours."[67] The donation of the number of trees equal to those murdered replicated the precedent promoted by President Clinton after Oklahoma City that resulted in numerous memorial groves and countless tree memorials. Second, and perhaps more importantly, in asserting that Orchard Park, New York was "a town not unlike yours," the school replicated verbatim the words used by President Clinton only a few weeks beforehand. Orchard Park's donation and letter

[66] Chapel Hill Mortuary and Cemetery, "David Martinez's dedication speech," May 27, 1999. CMGD. Zanis, the Scott's and other people who installed the crosses held a small dedication ceremony after the completion of their work on May 27, 1999. Public observances of the new memorial took place four days later on Memorial Day, May 31, 1999.
[67] "Orchard Park High School letter to Columbine High School," on display in the lobby at Olinger-Chapel Hill Cemetery and Mortuary, Littleton, Colorado.

express materially, rhetorically and commemoratively the Oklahoma City Model's focus on national unity that was used at Columbine.

What the Columbine Memorial Garden did that had no precedent, however, was to incorporate the some of the bodies of those who died into its design, and the spatial location of these bodies tell a story. At the center of the circle formed by the thirteen crosses and thirteen trees lie the bodies of Rachel Scott and Corey DePooter.[68] While these two graves were marked temporarily at the time of their burial, they are now unmarked but remain in the local public memory of many in the Columbine community. Only the bodies of the children killed are included within the boundaries of the circle, and they lay at the center of it—the murdered children are literally the central element of the memorial. The family of the sole teacher killed, Dave Sanders, buried him nearby but outside of the circle. The relationship of the three buried bodies is represented in the crosses as well, with Scott and DePooter's crosses flanking Sanders' cross. The central placement of Sanders' cross is thus also literally "standing over" Scott and DePooter's bodies which are buried directly in front of his cross' eternal watch. Dave Sanders is positioned as the guardian of the children, but his body's location outside of the circle spatially illustrates that he is not one of them.

What few people know, however, is that like Sanders body, the body of Dylan Klebold, one of the two perpetrators, is also buried near the Garden in an unmarked grave.[69] The location of Sander's body outside the circle is not to be mistaken to imply any congruence with the perpetrator because his body's location is tempered by the fact that he is represented with the middle cross in the memorial circle itself, with six student

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[68] Chronis, "Crosses find permanent home." *Denver Post*, May 29, 1999.
[69] Zoba, *Day of Reckoning: Columbine and the Search for America's Soul*. 211, 55-57, 77.

crosses on either side of him. The perpetrator, on the other hand, lies forever outside the circle but also has an undeniable relationship to it—he is forever connected. Indeed, this spatial relationship sheds significant light on the mother of Rachel Scott, Beth Nimmo's enigmatic comment at the dedication ceremony, "I hope people understand that there is a lot of forgiveness here."[70] The story told materially by the memorial is fundamentally about murdered children, but also recognizes the teacher as the guardian nearby and expresses both the inescapable connection yet perpetual separation of the perpetrator. Indeed, in this way, the Columbine Memorial Garden is a ritualized assemblage that tells the story of the memory of Columbine itself.

In his multi-volume *The Hermeneutics of Sacred Architecture*, Lindsey Jones articulates the importance of the absence or presence of bodies of the dead in memorials. Jones writes that many memorials for the dead either

> honor and memorialize the dead, variously conceived, without, however, relying on the placement or display of actual bodily remains… [or, other memorials actually] (re)embody or (re)actualize the dead, again, largely irrespective of physical remains . . . in some important sense, [the memorials] *are* the dead.[71]

Before the creation of the Columbine Memorial Garden, the memory sites constructed in Edmond and Oklahoma City incorporated these commemorative tactics. In the Oklahoma City National Memorial the Field of Chairs (re)embodies the murdered through absence, whereas in Edmond, the bodies are (re)actualized in the fourteen fountains that use water as a vital representation of life in the heat of the Midwest. In the case of the Columbine Memorial Garden, however, we see a third tactic, what Jones calls

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[70] Gonzales, "Columbine crosses come to rest," *Rocky Mountain News*, May 29, 1999.
[71] Lindsay Jones, *The Hermeneutics of Sacred Architecture: Experience, Interpretation, Comparison*, Volume Two Hermeneutical Calisthenics: A Morphology of Ritual-Architectural Priorities (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 2000). 155. Italics used by author.

"explicitly funerary architectural practices" which he notes "depend heavily on the . . . strategic location of bones and body parts."[72] The bodies of the Sanders, Scott, DePooter and the perpetrator tell a story about the violence and relationships in the Columbine killings. Jones' work on the configuration of dead bodies and/or their representation in memory sites illuminates the importance of applying spatial analysis as a means of better understanding the strategy of commemoration and design in the construction of mass murder memorials.

The Columbine community's commitment to integrating the symbols and rhetoric of Christian faith into their memorials was displayed powerfully in a memory site in the high school that resulted in a lawsuit appealed all the way to the United States Supreme Court. The Jefferson County School district originally invited community members to create 4-inch square tiles, and received over 4,000 tiles that were placed above the lockers throughout the hallways of the school.[73] Eighty of these tiles were subsequently removed in order to "avoid divisiveness and religious debate," and because "the tiles would violate the separation of church and state."[74] Brian Rohrbough and the family of Kelly Fleming filed a lawsuit to require "the school to display religiously themed tiles created as part of a memorial and renovation project" because "school officials initially said the tiles could not depict religious symbols, then changed their minds, only to change their minds again."[75] A federal judge originally ruled in favor of Rohrbough and the

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[72] Ibid.
[73] Associated Press, "High court refuses to consider fight over Columbine memorial," http://www.freedomforum.org/templates/document.asp?documentID=17453 January 14, 2003. Accessed February 18, 2011. See also, Linda Greenhouse, "Justices, in surprise, Forgo a Sentencing Issue," *New York Times*, A22, January 14, 2003.
[74] Greenhouse, "Justices, in Surprise"; Associated Press, "Colorado: Columbine at Odds Over Memorial," *New York Times,* A29, November 14, 2002.
[75] AP, "Colorado: Columbine at Odds"; AP "Columbine Lawsuit Filed," *New York Times,* A18, October 5, 1999.

other plaintiffs, but the 10th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals overturned that ruling and the U.S. Supreme Court upheld that verdict in its decision to not hear the final appeal.[76] By appealing the blocking of religiously themes from the high schools tile memorial, the Columbine community exemplified its strong determination to mark Christian faith in their memorials.

Zanis' fifteen crosses and Rorhbough's lawsuit illuminates an important agreement on both sides of the 15/13 debates that was absent from the public discussion and controversy surrounding these memorials: President Clintons' administration's repeated endorsement of religious commemorative aspirations. At the public memorial service, Al Gore implored "all adults in this nation must take on the challenge of creating in all of God's children a clean heart and right spirit."[77] President Clinton followed suit in his speech to the Columbine community. "You can help us to build a better future…where schools and houses of worship are literally connected to all our children…you can give us a culture of [Christian] values instead of a culture of violence…you've got to help us here."[78] Zanis and Rorhbough were figureheads in the 15/13 debate, but what each side agreed upon despite their differing opinions about forgiveness was that memorials to the killings should emphasize Christian faith. What each side failed to utilize in their arguments for incorporating the symbols and rhetoric of Christianity in these memorials was that the President himself had, on multiple occasions, encouraged them to do exactly that.

The inability of the community to overcome the social divisions created in the 15/13 debate were exemplified by the failure of Zanis and Rorhborogh to make amends

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[76] AP, "High court refuses to consider fight over Columbine memorial."
[77] Gore, "Columbine Public Memorial Service," April 25, 1999.
[78] Bill Clinton, "Pep Rally on the One-Month Anniversary of the Columbine Killings," May 20, 1990.

despite both men's devout commitment to Christianity. After the initial controversy of the fifteen crosses, Zanis wanted to resolve the conflict and arranged a meeting at a local Denny's with Rohrbough. The discussion began with Rohrbough screaming so angrily that Zanis "was sure he was going to hit me."[79] Zanis remained quiet except for repeatedly asking Rohrbough for forgiveness. After begin rebuffed repeatedly, Zanis finally said, "listen, I've asked you as a Christian brother to forgive me and you haven't. I'm tired of you yelling at me…I want to ask you one last time, are you or are you not a Christian brother? And are you or are you not going to forgive me?" Zanis' request caused Rohrbough to "[break] down and we hugged and cried together."[80] The reconciliation was short-lived. While Zanis kept his promise to only use thirteen crosses in Colorado, it was not long before he began traveling the country and displaying the original crosses with two smaller crosses for the perpetrators. Zanis' decision infuriated Rohrbough. The inability of these devoutly Christian men to reconcile their personal forgiveness was indicative of the seeds of communal division that were planted early on and affected the many memorialization processes at Columbine.

The one point of agreement that the early commemorative processes did firmly establish was the cross as the symbol that locally and nationally represented the public memory of Columbine. Zanis' first set of crosses had initiated the 15/13 debate, but despite local opinions about forgiveness, crosses were central to nearly every memory site constructed. One particular episode illustrates how the symbol of the cross became increasingly national in its scope. A few weeks after the killings, a semi truck arrived in Clemet Park and Bob Easton later recounted that it had been sent by a

[79] Zoba, *Day of Reckoning: Columbine and the Search for America's Soul*. 50.
[80] Ibid. 50-51.

> steel foundry in Illinois… two guys unload this cross made with steel I-beams that probably weighed 400-500 pounds. It was signed by everyone at the foundry and then sent to be a part of the spontaneous memorial, and potentially the real memorial. And I was like, 'okay, what do we do with a 400 pound steel cross?'"[81]

Columbine changed the Oklahoma City Model by integrating the rhetorics of Christian faith and national unity, a transformation represented materially in Columbine's crosses.

The spread of the Columbine crosses created a ritualized assemblage inscribed deeply with the 15/13 debate. At the first anniversary gathering in Clement Park in April 2000, Zanis reinstalled thirteen crosses in the "First Amendment Zone." Prayer circles were formed around every cross individually, and the last cross people gathered around was Daniel Rohrbough's, where, as Zoba recounts

> twenty or more people had joined the circle…someone said, 'It's wonderful that we're praying. I think we owe a prayer for the other two who died. We need to create a circle of prayer for them.' She was crying…more than one prayer went up for the [perpetrators] families, and I did not miss the irony that these prayers spontaneously arose from the circle around the cross of Dan Rohrbough, whose [father] had been the most proactive in disowning 'anything related to the number fifteen.'[82]

The community's expression of forgiveness during its first anniversary mourning ritual around Rohrbough's cross exemplifies how the many perspectives in the 15/13 debate became irrevocably intertwined in the Columbine memorial crosses. And the proliferation of these crosses created a ritualized assemblage that prepared the ground for the final and most important of all the memory sites: the official "Columbine Memorial."

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[81] Bob Easton interview.
[82] Zoba, *Day of Reckoning: Columbine and the Search for America's Soul*. 205.

3.3 Memorializing Mass Murder Without Established Communal Bonds

Commemorative priorities and financial hardships played significant roles in delaying the Columbine Memorial Committee's (CMC) tireless efforts to create an "official" memorial for over eight years. Established days after the killings, for the first two years of the CMC's existence the local focus on fundraising for the HOPE Columbine project to renovate the high school hindered any significant progress on the memorial. During this time Paul Morris was hired by the CMC, which importantly established the first known connection between different commemorative processes of constructing mass murder memorials. Work towards a design began in the third year, but the final design was not unveiled until five years after the killings, at which point the committee quickly faced the difficulty of fundraising after national public attention had moved on to other issues. It was only after the return of then ex-President Bill Clinton as a fundraiser and advocate for the national importance of memorial that it was finally completed in 2007

Yet no single issue hindered the completion of the Columbine Memorial more than the absence of an established sense of community. Columbine was a new and affluent suburban development where shopping malls and high school football games were the closest thing the young community had to a city center or local gathering tradition. The cultural dominance of evangelical Christianity further exacerbated the lack of communal bonds by alienating many non-evangelical families and survivors from feeling accepted in the commemorative process that ensued. Paul Morris' most significant contribution at Columbine was helping the CMC to adopt a "pyramid model" of commemorative priorities. The many divisions in the Columbine community,

however, made the radical consensus-based process used by the Oklahoma City Task Force unfeasible for the CMC, and resulted in the adoption of a number of more traditional design and memorialization approaches. In the end, a combination of demographic, religious, geographic and economic factors hindered the completion of the official Columbine Memorial, and illuminated the lack of established communal bonds in the suburban community.

Local political maneuvering in the days after the killing resulted in the establishment of the Columbine Memorial Committee. Bob Easton recalls that people in the command post at the Columbine Library got word that

> [Colorado] Governor [Bill] Owens was thinking about appointing his wife to oversee a memorial process, and the local folks weren't too excited about that. There was a fairly strong feeling that it ought to be locally run and as a result I was approached and asked to [head the CMC].[83]

Easton called the decision four days after the killings to form the committee with him as the head, "kind of like a preemptive strike… that would buy time because [the media began to] publicly state that there was a [memorial committee]."[84] The first order of business for Easton and the newly formed CMC was working with local politicians and school board members to coordinate the two public memorial ceremonies involving the Vice President and the President. Easton later reflected, "most of the initial discussions were political in nature…until we had the first [committee] meeting and really got the ball rolling, all of the discussion up to that point had been behind the scenes—I hate to

[83] Bob Easton interview.
[84] Ibid. Easton's appointment as Chair thrust him into the often thankless double job of heading the CMC while concurrently maintaining his full time day job as the Executive Director of Foothill's Parks and Recreation for the entire memorialization process that ended up taking over eight years to complete.

use the term but—[involving] the people in power, the people of influence in the community."[85]

The ability of the CMC to work towards creating a memorial was severely limited in the first two years by the local community directly all of its fundraising efforts towards renovating the high school. Bob Easton explained

> we battled throughout the process a completely different project that restored the physical damage to, [and renovation of], the high school [by] HOPE Columbine (*Healing of People Everywhere*) …[our] two processes ran parallel and independent of each other for the most part. All of the families in the community for the first two years, no doubt about it, focused their fundraising efforts on rebuilding the high school.[86]

HOPE's goal was to secure "the necessary funding to remove the existing [second story] library floor [where most of the victims were murdered, and] convert this space into an open atrium."[87] National attention on Columbine resulted in $3.1 million in donations in six months, and in August 2000, artist Virginia Wright-Frierson's "The Atrium," a forest canopy mural made of twenty different paintings suspended from the ceiling, was dedicated.[88] The obliteration of the old library necessitated the construction of what became the "HOPE Columbine Memorial Library," a 13,900 square-foot expansion to the southwest corner of the school that was dedicated on June 9, 2001 and represented "the culmination of the efforts of HOPE."[89] The Atrium and the HOPE Columbine Memorial

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[85] Ibid.
[86] Ibid.
[87] HOPE Columbine Homepage, http://hopecolumbine.org/ Accessed March 26, 2011.
[88] Dawn Anna, who's daughter Laura Townsend was killed in the library, explained at the dedication ceremony, "We wanted heads to be lifted, not hung, wondering 'where did that child die?'" HOPE Columbine Atrium page, http://hopecolumbine.org/pictures.html Accessed March 26, 2011.
[89] HOPE Columbine Memorial Library, http://hopecolumbine.org/hopeexisting.html Accessed March 26, 2011.

Library were two new memory sites in the high school, but the process that created them stalled the progress of the CMC for nearly two years.[90]

It was during this two-year lull, however, that something historic happened: the Oklahoma City Model process arrived at Columbine. Bob Easton quickly discovered the complexity of the memorial process after arranging the first public meeting of the CMC in June of 1999.

> We had 85 people [at the first meeting], and by the time we went through the whole process and actually got to the formal dedication, we had 15 people. Those were the ones who stuck it out through the good times and the bad. All of those 15 people were at the first meeting…we spent the first few months trying to identify what our purpose and goals were as a committee…most of the people involved at that time, including myself, didn't have a clue.[91]

After nearly a year of working to develop a memorial process, the CMC reached out to Bob Johnson, the Chair of the Oklahoma City Memorial Foundation, and as Easton recalls, "we got Paul [Morris'] name and… he helped us set up the process… Paul was the first expenditure that the committee had."[92] The hiring and commemorative guidance of Paul Morris, who with Helene Friend and Don Stansky had served as the Design Competition Committee in Oklahoma City, made Columbine the first American

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[90] It is notable that Hope Columbine's goal was to the newly created space would "become an area of respect to the victims without becoming a memorial." But these two desires were not mutually exclusive and point to the lack of control that any group, regardless of the content of their intentions, has over dictating the future designations of redesigned sites of violence. For example, before the completion of the redesign, the space where the library had been is always referred to as by HOPE Columbine as "the" or "an atrium." When the project was finished a subtle yet important change took place: all post-completion references to the space are referred to as "the Atrium." HOPE Columbine's discourse suggests that they were aware, whether they recognized it at the time or not, that a change had taken place—that a new memory site called "The Atrium" had been created. HOPE Columbine, "Why Replace the Library?" http://www.hopecolumbine.org/hopewhy.html. Accessed March 26, 2011.

[91] Bob Easton interview.

[92] Bob Johnson remembered the phone call from the CMC, but did not remember who had called him. Bob Easton remembered that the CMC had contacted the Oklahoma City Memorial Foundation, but did not remember who on the committee made the call, although he noted it was likely him. Bob Johnson, Interview with the Author, July 31, 2012; quote from Bob Easton interview.

community to draw from the commemorative experience of another community instead of developing its own process in isolation. Morris brought his knowledge of the Oklahoma City Model with him to Columbine and, in his time there, worked to help Easton and the CMC institute the model in its own memorialization process.

Upon arriving at Columbine, Morris came face to face with a memorialization process that was still struggling to orient itself to the task that lay ahead. Morris met privately with Easton in his park district office on their first meeting, and worked to compile a list of the "technical questions" Easton had about the process,

> and somewhere in the course of the conversation, it became obvious to me that this was going to be a big list for [Easton]. I remember asking him, 'are you sure you want to do this?' He looked at me quizzically and said, 'Why would you ask that?' I said, 'because once you're in, you're all in and you're going to become the figurehead [of the process]…was he ready for… everybody to challenge him of his own conviction and commitment and to question his motives?' I explained to him that I could help him, but that this wasn't going to be my project.[93]

Morris finished by explaining that applying the Oklahoma City Model would require each member of the committee be willing to open themselves up in order "to come together in a sense of purpose that was so cohesive that it gelled."[94] Bob Easton was initially taken aback, but he quickly realized the importance of addressing these issues of unity and shared purpose and invited Morris back to present these questions and challenges to the entire committee.

Morris arrived at his first committee meeting nearly a year after the killings, but he quickly realized that the social cohesion he had witnesses in Oklahoma City was largely missing at Columbine. Morris explained

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[93] Ibid.
[94] Ibid.

> Bob [asked me to do with the committee what I did with him alone] when I met him in his office…[He] was very clear that when I stepped into that room, he wanted me to be very open and transparent with them, to have a very defenseless posture and to just lay out on the landscape for them everything that they had gone through and everything that they would be going through, and ask them if they were prepared to go down that path.[95]

Morris understood the importance of his first meeting with the committee and worked to emotionally prepare himself. However, upon entering the room, he immediately noticed

> a lot of the consequences of the Columbine atrocity was still almost present in all of their faces…they were all, understandably, in wildly different places around what had happened...they were overwhelmed with the conversation that Bob asked me to have with them… I don't think that they had ever really understood that they had to [genuinely] come together in a sense of purpose…so they were very vulnerable and felt lost. There was, at one level [a sense of] 'we are all in this together, and we all want to work together towards something,' but there was not that sense of cohesion that had existed in Oklahoma City.[96]

In the days and weeks after the first meeting, Morris made a concerted effort to meet individually with all the members of the committee because "my usefulness was tied in part to their confidence in my credibility to respect their personal feelings about this [process]."[97] Morris hoped to help create a foundation for group cohesion he witnessed in Oklahoma City, but discovered a traumatized committee that had not yet come together with any cohesive sense of purpose or vision.

While Paul Morris had Bob Easton's support, he was still an outsider in the community, and this made his meeting of the man he came to refer to as his "mentor"—Bob Curnow—an important moment in the application and transformation of the Oklahoma City Model at Columbine. Curnow's son Steve was murdered at Columbine.

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[95] Ibid.
[96] Ibid.
[97] Ibid.

As the liaison for the family members who served on the CMC for the entirety of the process, Paul Morris remembered that Curnow reached out to him immediately and "became a 'mentor,' by which I mean a relationship of affection and respect. A person who is very personally impacted and involved and who chose to take me under their wing and protect me as I hung myself out there."[98] Morris instantly noticed Curnow's unique character, which he described as "somebody who had this unexplainable personal awareness of their surroundings and who had kind of distanced themselves from what had happened to them and saw the power in what they believed my role was to help, and they weren't going to let me get damaged."[99] In the midst of the ongoing commemorative debates in Columbine, the close connection these two men developed provided Morris with the local credibility and support he needed to share what he had learned in Oklahoma City.

Morris' concurrent role as a design consultant for another high school killing memorial process while concurrently working in Columbine gave him a unique comparative perspective on the communal cohesion of each community. After the Thurston High School killings in Springfield, Oregon that occurred on May 21, 1998, the community hired Morris, who explained

> At Thurston, with their memorial, you had a 125 year old pioneer community, at Columbine you had kind of [pause] *a no there, there*—you had these beautiful subdivisions and shopping centers…[but] a lot of people gathered at the big shopping center three miles from the high school for the [memorial] events, because that was the closest thing to a town hall that existed. So there was this unexpected kind of phenomenon [at Columbine], we were trying to pull the community in Columbine together to advance and create the memorial—and I was doing the same thing in Thurston—but I found this complete dichotomy of experiences.

[98] Ibid.
[99] Ibid.

> It took me a while to realize, and it harkened back to Oklahoma City, that there was no community in Columbine. A lot of the families of the kids who were killed didn't even know each other. There was no place outside of the high school gym that people had ever gathered.[100]

On the one hand, as Ralph Larkin notes, Columbine "is the embodiment of the American dream: spacious suburban homes, strip malls, schools, large recreational areas, and churches."[101] On the other hand, what became increasingly apparent in the aftermath of the Columbine killings was that the suburban sprawl contributed to the struggle that local people had in trying to genuinely come together due to a lack of established communal bonds.

Compounding this issue was the fact that while the spirituality of the community could have been a unifying influence, the cultural dominance of evangelical community further divided people and made reaching consensus in the memorialization process difficult. Morris explained that he

> made no judgment on the [evangelic influence on the committee], I just observed that it was a lightning rod, not a gathering point. People jumped to extremes—the [evangelicals interpreted the killings] as though it was God's purpose, and the secular community attacked that it had nothing to do with God. So while [the spirituality of the Columbine community] could have helped, it was actually like pouring vinegar on an open wound. It actually pushed people farther apart…it felt like at times it was holding people back from being able to process through their problems. It actually didn't help them, it seemed to compartmentalize things in a way that they just slid [their personal trauma] to the side, and [evangelical views] somehow replaced it. And that really confused a lot of the conversation [we were trying to have in the memorial committee]. [102]

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[100] Ibid.
[101] Larkin, *Comprehending Columbine*. 26.
[102] Paul Morris interview.

Bob Easton acknowledged that in the committee there was "a strong understanding of the connection [between religion and the memorial]," and pointed to the controversy about the factual truth of the martyr story of Rachel Scott and Cassie Bernal as one of the major public disputes "that really spilled over into the memorial committee process."[103] Morris also acknowledged that despite the near-hegemony of evangelical views in the community, there was by no means a consensus within the committee itself.

> There were several families of kids who were killed who weren't [evangelical] at all, and they had a bitter amount of distaste for the amount of influence that [evangelical views] were having over the [memorial] process. There were families that broke up over this issue, there were literally some families who moved away who had been involved but left town and didn't want to have anything to do with [the memorial]. It was an incredibly influential part of the process…[and] appears to have done more harm than good, overall.[104]

While the memorial committee led by Easton persevered impressively through an eight-year long process, the local dominance of evangelicals significantly disrupted the Columbine community's ability to genuinely come together.

Paul Morris' second meeting with the CMC was an important moment in which he finally shared the details of the Oklahoma City Model process with the assembled members, which resulted in the adoption of "the pyramid" model of memorial priorities. Morris explained about the pyramid model that in "Oklahoma City we learned that everybody is important, but not everybody is equal…a recognition that the families who lost somebody were more equal than those who didn't…it wasn't to say that those who

[103] Bob Easton interview.
[104] Paul Morris interview.

survived did not suffer loss, because everyone suffered loss."[105] Bob Easton explains that from his perspective

> the biggest thing that came out of that process [with Paul Morris] was that we established and made a public statement about the priorities of the committee and we actually put together a pyramid…at the top of the pyramid was a focus on the families of the deceased—they were our number one priority. Number two priority was the injured victims and their families. Number three priority was the high school staff and the first responders. The fourth priority was the remaining students at the school and their families. The fifth priority was the Columbine community in general. As a result of the pyramid, we started to refer to the injured as either 'physically injured' or 'community injured.' That was just an internal distinction…[but] that distinction seemed important.[106]

The "pyramid model" developed in Oklahoma City was well suited for Columbine for two reasons. First, for a community that had experienced a great deal of turmoil regarding how the killings should be remembered, the pyramid model provided clear guidelines for whose voice mattered most and why. Second, amidst the tensions inside and outside the CMC, components of the Oklahoma City Model that required a genuine willingness to collaborate--such as requiring 100% consensus for all committee decisions, for example--were often not possible at Columbine. The pyramid model became the central feature of the Oklahoma City Model adopted by the CMC, and it was from this foundation that they began their own unique commemorative process.

The CMC's decision to not have a public design competition and instead pursue a more traditional design firm-led process was a major deviation from the community-led philosophy of the Oklahoma City Model. Moreover, this decision, after a period of transition, resulted in Morris stepping down as a design consultant. Easton recalled "we

[105] Ibid.
[106] Bob Easton interview.

decided that we were not going to have a public competition for the design process, so we literally sent out a request for proposals to landscape architecture firms [in the region]."[107] In his role as memorial design consultant, Morris warned against this decision because "I felt like they needed to have control of the [memorialization] process and not be colored by the influence of the design team driving things. [I knew from experience] that it would be awkward, through the process, to have it structured that way."[108] In the end, a local Denver firm, DHM Design—with Bob Smith as lead architect, Tamara Delaplane as landscape architect, and Tad Savinar as community consultant and environmental artist—were given the contract to design the Columbine Memorial. Morris worked with the DHM design team to orient them to the process that he had helped the CMC create, but then stepped away "because the [standard design] process that they had decided to go [with left] no personal feeling of utility [for me anymore], and I didn't want to keep spending [the CMC's] money for me to just keep showing up at the meetings. Bob [Easton] appreciated that."[109] In his later reflections on the final stages of the process, Easton recognized Morris' warnings had been valid because after his departure "we [were] in this world of design-speak, if you will, with the committee and the designers. [Years later] we put it in neutral and reevaluated and really put our focus back on the pyramid and the family members."[110] Paul Morris helped the CMC to establish their structure and goals, but stepped away when the committee decided to pursue a more traditional design firm-led memorial process.

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[107] Ibid. Easton noted that the design team finalists were from Colorado and Nebraska.
[108] Paul Morris interview.
[109] Ibid.
[110] Bob Easton interview.

The CMC's first order of business was to select a location for the official memorial, but the stated reasons for selecting Rebel Hill neglect the important commemorative history of the hill as the original home of Zanis' first set of crosses.[111] Easton notes that the three reasons why the CMC chose Rebel Hill was "because when I started with this group, I was also the Executive Director of Foothills Parks and Recreation and there was an awful lot of activity here [in the park] with [spontaneous] memorials… [and] simply because of its proximity to the high school and making use of the hills."[112] These pragmatic rationales, however, miss the affective dimension that Zanis' crosses had on local public memory, an event which literally started the move toward the creation of permanent memory sites at Columbine. The crosses transformed Rebel Hill, the official memorial would transform it again, but a panoramic perspective on all of Columbine's commemorative processes illuminates that these two transformations were always fundamentally interconnected.

A year later in summer of 2001, the CMC hosted a public meeting in the hopes of finally shifting public attention to the memorial, only to be told by the families that they were exhausted and they needed a break—a break which lasted nearly two more years. The completion of the HOPE Columbine Memorial Library on June 9, 2001 occurred at the same time that the CMC and DHM Designs were ready to publicly display their design concepts for the memorial. Easton explained that

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[111] Local opinions about Rebel Hill as the location for the memorial in the first year fluctuated dramatically. Months after the killings the Denver Post reported that "if the permanent memorial…is placed in Clement Park, it won't be on Rebel Hill or within view of the school campus [because] students and faculty members say they don't want a memorial in plain sight everyday." It wasn't until after the first anniversary that the public announcement was made that "the permanent Columbine memorial in Clement Park will be nestled in a valley below Rebel Hill and within sight of the school." See, respectively, Kieran Nicholson, "Memorial wanted away from view of campus," *The Denver Post*, A14, June 24, 1999; Kieran Nicholson, "Memorial location chosen," *The Denver Post*, B1, May 12, 2000.
[112] Bob Easton Interview.

> at that point in our process we were able to [share our three] designs. We had a meeting and a press conference and a number of the families showed up at that meeting and the result was a very strong message from the families that they were worn out from the process [of renovating] the high school, and they weren't ready to look at a memorial yet. The needed to take a breather and they thought we were pushing too fast, and we said, 'okay, fine,' and we put the entire memorial project on hold for about eighteen months…until the beginning of 2003.[113]

Input received at that meeting did enable the CMC to "back up a little on the design [and] combine the three concepts based on the feedback we received…we spent a good part of the eighteen months with Tad Savinar and Tamara Delaplane of DHM Designs taking the lead in consulting with the families."[114] As a result of the delay, the CMC's sustained public engagement did not begin in earnest until nearly four years after the killings.

The public unveiling of the $2.5 million dollar memorial plan in December of 2003 was followed quickly with the CMC realizing the difficulty of fundraising so long after a tragedy, which led to a subsequent cost-cutting redesign of the memorial. In the immediate aftermath of the killings, Easton notes "we had a lot of money come in at the outset out of sympathy…and then it really slowed down as we went through the design process, especially because of the HOPE Columbine [renovations]."[115] In April of 2004, only "25 percent of the [cost] had been raised,"[116] and a year later in April of 2005 "fundraising [had] stalled to build a permanent memorial… memorial funds have leveled off at 28 percent of the…project goal."[117] Due to the stalling of the project, in September of 2005 the CMC told the *Denver Post* that it "has directed the [DMH] design team to

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[113] Ibid.
[114] Ibid.
[115] Ibid.
[116] Regional Notes, "Littleton: Columbine fund to get $20,000," *The Denver Post*, B5, May 4, 2004.
[117] Regional Notes, "Littleton: Columbine fund to get $20,000,"; Ann Schrader and Kieran Nicholson, "A Quiet Day for Columbine," *The Denver Post*, B1, April 5, 2005.

revise its scope in light of slow fundraising. The original plan cost $2.5 million. The new version will cost $1.5 million."[118] In an interview with newspaper, Bob Easton cited "the passage of time, the local economy and other world events (9/11 and [the 2004 Indian Ocean] tsunami relief)" as factors that the articles authors said were "distracting dollars away from the memorial."[119] After years of tireless effort and limited local support, Bob Easton and the CMC were confronted with the reality that national public sympathy and philanthropy quickly moves on to the next major publicized tragedy.

Locally, one fundraising project did something unique in establishing, years after the killings, a new symbol of the memorialization process: a ribbon engraved with the words "Never Forgotten." The parents of Kyle Velasquez created the ribbons as a way of fundraising for the memorial after its public unveiling.[120] Bob Easton explained that

> one of phrases that came up a lot during the process was 'the unrealized potential' of the 13 people [who were murdered]…a major concern amongst the family members [and] the genesis of that 'Never Forgotten' ribbon that was [created] by the Velasquez family…[was that they] were extremely concerned that twenty years from now, no one would remember Kyle other than their family…[the Velasquez's] designed and sold several thousand of the 'Never Forgotten' pins for the fundraiser.[121]

While ribbons had been one of the hundreds of components of the immediate aftermath memorials that were constructed after the killings, they became a public symbol of Columbine only years later as the result of the Velasquez's fundraising campaign.

The story behind the "Never Forgotten" ribbons illuminates an important commemorative change that the Columbine community adopted in its intentional decision to not tell the story of the killings in or near the memorial. For the Oklahoma

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[118] Ann Schrader, "Shrines cost, scope reduced," *The Denver Post*, A1, September 8, 2005.
[119] Schrader and Nicholson, "A Quiet Day for Columbine."
[120] Kyle Velasquez placard, Columbine Memorial at Rebel Hill, Jefferson County, Colorado.
[121] Bob Easton interview.

City Memorial Foundation, the importance of creating a storyline of the 1995 bombing had been so vital that they created the Memorial Center for exactly that purpose. Yet only four years later, the Columbine community decided to go the opposite direction. The reason for this was rooted the CMC's uncertainty about whether or not people in the near future would be able to distinguish between the increasingly regular phenomenon of mass murder, and thus chose to focus all of their commemorative efforts on the memory of the people who were murdered. Bob Easton explained

> there was certainly a feeling amongst the committee and the people involved with the design that we really didn't want to focus on commemorating what had happened. If you go through the memorial there is no reference to what happened, not even an explanation…this is one of several violent acts that have become a part of our culture. Do we just walk away from that and say 'well, it happened here too, let's just put up a little plaque?' That was not the feeling here…literally, that theme of kids from the high school growing up and bringing their kids [to the memorial] and explaining it to them twenty years from now was more important from a memory and remembrance standpoint than all the unfortunate details about what happened. It was a conscious decision [not to tell the story] and perhaps it ties into that religious environment of the community…in the context of [mass murder becoming] such a common thing anymore, [the committee questioned whether] people are going to be able to make a distinction [between different mass murders in the future]?[122]

The 'Never Forgotten' ribbon became a symbol of the CMC's conviction to not explain the killings so that they could focus all of their efforts on the memory of the murdered. The 'Never Forgotten' ribbon resonated so strongly with the community that in the final design stage, it was incorporated into the center of the memorial itself.

What finally turned the tide on the fundraising woes of the CMC was the return of the single most influential individual in Columbine's many commemorations: the now ex-President Bill Clinton. After months of local media coverage of the fundraising

[122] Ibid.

difficulties for the memorial, Bob Easton received a call from a man who he referred to simply as "Clinton's Denver Guy," who

> worked for a securities investment firm that had their corporate offices in Chicago and had a connection with the Clinton administration for general fundraising purposes. He said 'I have access to Bill Clinton, would you be interested in talking to him?' It was explained to me at that point that Clinton has a strong interest in this memorial.[123]

Easton happily accepted the offer, and plans were quickly arranged for Clinton to host a private fundraising dinner in the Adam's Mark Hotel in downtown Denver on July 20 as part of his national book signing tour.[124] Addressing over 400 attendees at the $250-a-plate gala, Clinton pledged to put his full support behind the final fundraising push after the dedication of his presidential library in November. Later in his speech, Clinton again referenced the response of the local community. "Columbine, for so many of us Americans, still [embodying] the triumph of passion and love with common sense."[125] President Clinton's return raised $400,000 for the memorial and brought full-circle a memorial process that he had been instrumental in promoting five years earlier.

Extenuating circumstances delayed Clinton's return to Columbine, and as a result, the fundraising goal was only achieved two years later after a significant contribution from an anonymous donor.[126] The CMC had made a commitment early on that it would

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[123] Ibid.
[124] Kieran Nicholson, "Clinton to aid Columbine Memorial Goals," *The Denver Post*, A12, June 23, 2004.
[125] Bill Clinton, quoted in Kevin Simpson and Mike McPhee, "Drive for Columbine memorial receives a high-profile boost," *The Denver Post*, A1, July 21, 2004.
[126] Less than two months after his fundraising dinner, Clinton's checked into New York-Presbyterian Hospital after experiencing chest pains and on September 6, 2004, had a quadruple bypass heart surgery. In early 2005, after having sufficiently recovered, Clinton was appointed the special envoy of the United Nation's Asian Tsunami relief effort, and in September he and former President George H. W. Bush created the Bush-Clinton [Hurricane] Katrina Fund, which he worked on into 2006. See, respectively, John King and Sam Feist, "Clinton 'recovering normally' after bypass," *CNN.com,* September 6, 2004. http://www.cnn.com/2004/ALLPOLITICS/09/06/clinton.bypass/ (Accessed June 2, 2012); Warren Hoge, "Annan chooses Clinton as Tsunami Relief envoy," *The New York Times*, February 3, 2005; Phillip

not hold a groundbreaking ceremony before it reached eighty percent of its donations so that "we didn't want to get started on it and then [have to] stop."[127] President Clinton's absence again slowed fundraising efforts, and the CMC increasingly faced public questioning of why it was taking so long.[128] Bob Easton recounts that in early 2006

> what finally pushed us over the hill was that some anonymous donor called [CMC member] Laura Knowlton and said, 'I'm tired of reading this stuff in the newspaper [about the memorial not being completed], you folks need to get on with this. If I'm reading correctly, you're still $150,000 short? If you will agree to move forward on the project now, I'll write you a check for $150,000. [The next day] it came in an electronic funds transfer into [the memorial] account.[129]

The anonymous donation put the CMC over its goal of eighty percent of the $1.5 million dollar cost of the redesigned memorial, and after negotiating President Clinton's schedule so he could attend, the groundbreaking was set for June 16, 2006.[130]

Two local evangelical figures that gained national fame in the aftermath of the killings opened the groundbreaking ceremony with speeches that highlighted Christian faith and national unity as central to the memory of Columbine. Local pastor Gino Geraci connected with Rev. Franklin Graham after the initial Columbine memorial service and was later invited by President Bush to offer the prayer at his famous Ground Zero speech after 9/11. Geraci's speech at the Columbine groundbreaking sought to transform the theme of "Never Forgotten" into a religious imperative. "Our heavenly father, we gather here to keep a promise to never forget…We pray that you will place

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Shenon, "Clinton Levels Sharp Criticism at the President's Relief Effort," *The New York Times*, September 2005.

[127] Bob Easton interview.

[128] For example, Editorial, "Build a memorial for Columbine now," *The Denver Post*, A34, April 9, 2005; Ann Schrader, "Shrines cost, scope reduced," *The Denver Post*, A1, September 8, 2005.

[129] Bob Easton interview.

[130] Ann Schrader, "Columbine event draws Clinton," *The Denver Post,* B5, April 21, 2006; An Schrader, "Dedicated to Columbine: Embracing a long-awaited memorial," C1, April 30, 2006.

stones, stones of remembrance deep in our souls…We pray we would speak the words, 'never forgotten,' like a sacred vow, a holy pledge."[131] Dawn Anna, whose daughter Laura Townsend was murdered at Columbine, gained national notoriety in 2006 after the Lifetime Television channel released a movie about her life titled *Dawn Anna*.[132] Anna delivered a heartfelt speech that touched personally on the lives of those who were murdered, which began with her asking, "they are here; can you feel them? Our angels."[133] Reflecting on the memory of the killings later in the speech, Anna recalled "memorials, memories, April 20, 1999. Remember the love? Remember the Unity? Not just in this community, but in the nation and throughout the world?"[134] Geraci and Anna's groundbreaking speeches used the intertwined rhetoric of Christian faith and national unity established in the aftermath of the killings.

President Clinton was the final speaker at the groundbreaking and stressed the national importance of completing the memorial because, he asserted, Columbine was a "momentous event in the history of the country."[135] Clinton began by reiterating that national and religious significance of the memory of Columbine . "I am here today because, millions of Americans were changed by Columbine… you have kept faith with what I challenged you to do."[136] President Clinton then delivered his most succinct assessment of why Columbine was nationally significant.

> This was a momentous event in the history of the country… because of what you did and how you've lived, the way this communities kept together…you remind us that even in the midst

[131] Gino Geraci, "Columbine Groundbreaking Ceremony," Robert J. Clement Park, Jefferson County, Colorado, June 16, 2006. Author's transcription. (hereafter, referred to as "Columbine Groundbreaking Ceremony.")
[132] *Dawn Anna*, http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0406695/?ref_=nv_sr_2
[133] Dawn Anna, "Columbine Groundbreaking Ceremony."
[134] Ibid.
[135] Bill Clinton, "Columbine Groundbreaking Ceremony."
[136] Ibid.

> of tragedy, we see the very best, the best there is to see about our nation and about human nature.[137]

For Clinton, the completion of the Columbine Memorial was essential because, like Oklahoma City, it was an event that he himself had helped to transform into a means of exemplifying national unity. Clinton exemplified his commitment to this goal by announcing, to wild applause, that he would personally donate $50,000 to match the offer of the nearby Raccoon Creek Golf Club. Despite his delayed promise to help to finish the memorial, President Clinton again returned to Columbine to ensure the completion of a memorial that he was central in framing as nationally significant.

The September 21, 2007 dedication of the "official" Columbine Memorial was a testament to Bob Easton's leadership and the tireless work of the Columbine Memorial Committee after eight long years and many commemorative challenges. The community's early focus on the renovation of the high school and the difficulty of fundraising long after the killings were major obstacles overcome only after President Clinton's returned to ensure the completion of the memorial that he was so deeply vested in. However, the social divisions that first appeared publicly in the 15/13 debate were further exposed by the continued evangelical dominance of the commemorative process and the absence of established communal bonds in the suburban community. The CMC's decision to hire Paul Morris led to their adoption of the pyramid model and illustrates an early precedent of communication between contemporary mass murder memorial processes. The final push to complete the memorial resulted in a new commemorative symbol, the "Never Forgotten" ribbon, which embodied the community's focus on the victims and conviction that mass murder was increasingly a part of contemporary

[137] Ibid.

American culture. Lee Andres, a teacher at the high school and CMC member suggested that the dedication was "part of closure on an important event in our lives, although you don't totally close the door on it."[138] The dedication of the Columbine Memorial closed one door. Its public unveiling opened another.

3.4 Narrative Remembrances & Memorial Resistances in the Columbine Memorial

More than any mass murder memorial that preceded it, the completed Columbine Memorial made publicly visible, for the first time in eight years, the many social divisions and subjugated memories of the commemorative process. In a *Denver Post* article published the day of the dedication, anthropologist Elizabeth Greenspan commented "the challenge is often bringing individual memories into some institutionalized story that every one agrees upon. That's where conflict arises…there are choices, things left out or not included."[139] On the surface of the Columbine Memorial, the commemorative rhetoric of Christian faith and national unity dominate the memorial and its many plaques and symbols. Just below the surface, however, the memorial was marked with subtle and obvious resistances that Michel Foucault calls a "rediscovery of struggles and the raw memory of fights"[140] While only a single cross was used in the Columbine memorial, the circumstances of its placement connects the history of the public debates that persisted throughout the commemorative process. Understanding the

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[138] Ann Schrader, "A Tribute etched in stone: Columbine Dedication Today," *The Denver Post*, A1, September 21, 2007

[139] Elizabeth Greenspan, quoted in Kevin Simpson, "A Tribute Etched in Stone: Communities once tucked away all signs of tragic events. But shrines can offer an outlet for families," *Denver Post,* September 21, 2007.

[140] Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended: Lectures at the Collège De France, 1975-76*. 8.

meaning of the Columbine memorial requires a brief survey of its aesthetic design and a close analysis of the many different discourses carved into its stone walls.

The final design of the Columbine Memorial combined elements from all three of DHM Designs original concepts into a sacred space encircled by a transformed Rebel Hill. Like the Vietnam Veteran's Memorial, the entrance into the Columbine Memorial was "a short gentle decline as you cross the threshold into the memorial [that] emphasizes the solemnity of the creating a quiet, respectful demeanor."[141] There is only one entrance into the memorial due to the transformation of Rebel Hill—which at the time of the killings had been two distinct hills—into a single and increasingly elevated, 330 degree, semicircular berm that surrounds all of the memorial's features. The early concern that the memorial would be "a constant physical reminder," was addressed by the reshaping of Rebel Hill to completely block the memorial from view at the high school.[142] A cascading water feature that early community surveys overwhelmingly requested was built at the north end of the memorial, although its scale was dramatically reduced as a result of the fundraising problems. The heart of the memorial design consists of two concentric circles. The outer circle is the "Wall of Healing" which is "dedicated to those who were injured…and to all who were touched."[143] The inner circle is the "Ring of Remembrance" which features thirteen large stone plaques dedicated to those who were murdered and engraved with the two hundred words chosen by each family as "narrative remembrances."[144] On the ground in the center of the Ring of Remembrance is the

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[141] Overview, Columbine Memorial website, http://www.columbinememorial.org/Overview.asp (Accessed March 26, 2011)
[142] Rick Sheenhan, quoted in Kieran Nicholson,, "Memorial wanted away from view of the campus," A14, *The Denver Post*, June 24, 1999.
[143] Plaque, Wall of Healing, Columbine Memorial.
[144] Overview, Columbine Memorial website.

"Never Forgotten" ribbon, which the official memorial website explains "[frames] a connection with the outer Wall of Healing becoming a symbolic link between the community and the deceased."[145]

The Wall of Healing encircles the memorial and has four quotes that uniquely convey the structure of the commemorative processes and its rhetorical emphasis on Christian faith and national unity. The Wall was composed almost entirely of anonymous quotes from students, teachers and community members that express a variety of memories of shock, grief, strength and sadness. The anonymity of the majority of these quotes effectively draws attention to the importance of the only four attributed quotes on The Wall. Teacher and committee member Lee Andres' quote describes the pyramid model used by the CMC and integrates it with the football chant: "We dedicate this ground to the memory of 13…those who suffered harm…the students and staff…all of their families; and we dedicate this ground to the community that is Columbine; We are…Columbine." Dawn Anna's quote from the groundbreaking ceremony permanently positions victims as Christian "They're here; can you feel them? Our angels………" Pastor Gino Geraci's quote reiterates the phrase "we remember" from his groundbreaking speech that emphasized that for the Columbine community, "never forgotten" should be "a sacred vow, a holy pledge."[146] The final attributed quote from President Clinton asserts that "Columbine was a momentous event in the history of the country," before concluding that the national unity of the aftermath illustrates that "even in the midst of tragedy we've seen the best, the best there is to see about our nation and about human nature." The local and national reputation of the people chosen for the only four

[145] Ibid.
[146] Geraci, "Columbine Groundbreaking Ceremony."

attributed quotes on the Wall of Healing potently proclaim the structure of the memorial process and the commemorative rhetoric developed at Columbine.

The Ring of Remembrance contains the "narrative remembrances" of the victims, yet just below the surface of each of the thirteen plaques is a subtle yet observable polarization of the memories of the families. The dominant commemorative discourse in the Ring is the evangelical rhetoric chosen by seven of the families which foregrounds Christianity as the central to memory of their murdered children. The families of Cassie Bernal and Rachel Scott reference the martyr stories that made their daughters into the most nationally recognized victims. Kelly Ann Flemming and Lauren Townsend's parents both chose journal entries written by the two young women about their personal relationship with God and Jesus. John Tomlin and Matthew Ketchner's families both used quotes in the New Testament from the Gospels of John and Matthew that inspired their son's given names. The families of Daniel Rohrbough and Ketchner both chose to begin their plaques by referring to their murdered sons as "a gift from God." In all seven of these narrative remembrances, God, Jesus and Christianity receive nearly as much attention as the victims themselves. The dominant discourse in the Ring accentuates, like the words on Tomlin's plaque, how each of the victims "love for Jesus developed in [them] a strong set of Christian morals."

A subtle resistance to the prevalence of evangelical Christian rhetoric in the memorial is sharply revealed in the decision of five of the families to make no mention of Christianity and instead focus entirely on their loved ones lives and aspirations. The Curnow's described their son Steven as a "generous and forgiving young man. He never held a grudge and was quick to offer encouragement, forgiveness and friendship" as well

his love of movies, soccer and flying. The DePooter's emphasized that their son "Corey was an outdoorsman at heart" and had a "goal to become and officer in the Marine Corps." William "Dave" Sanders' family spoke about his lifelong passion for teaching and mentoring and urged people to "remember Dave for how he lived." The parents of Kyle Albert Velasquez's bravely noted their son's struggles "with developmental delay and learning abilities. He knew his limitations, yet wanted to be like every other kid" before concluding that "he always smiled, forgave and saw the GOOD in those around him." The loud absence of Christian rhetoric was displayed most vividly in the Mauser family's decision to describe their son Daniel as a "gift with spiritual dimensions that caused us to seek a deeper life." The narrative remembrances of these five families exemplify a silent rebuttal that refused to allow the dominance of evangelical Christian rhetoric throughout the memorial process to be ascribed to the memory of their lost loved ones.

The most profound memorial resistance in the Columbine Memorial, however, resides in Isaiah Shoels plaque's powerful critique of his many exclusions. The Shoels family was a devout Christian family. They were also a black family. On the day of his murder, Shoels was only "days away from becoming one of the few African-Americans ever to graduate from Columbine" since its founding in 1973.[147] While much has been written about Shoels and the issue of race at Columbine, commemoratively speaking, what transpired with the Columbine High School football team profoundly illuminates his commemorative exclusion. In the 1998/1999 academic year when the killings occurred, Shoels was a senior cornerback and Matthew Ketchner was a junior lineman on

[147] Mike McPhee, "Columbine—The Victims: Isaiah Shoels," *denverpost.com*, April 23, 1999. http://extras.denverpost.com/news/shot0423r.htm (Accessed march 26, 2011).

the Columbine Rebel football team. The following season, however, the team chose to have only Ketchner's "[number] 70 emblazoned on their helmets [in] memory of [their] slain teammate."[148] In December of 1999 the Rebel football team became a national Cinderella story when they won the 5A state championship and again initiated the "We are Columbine" chant that "had become the schools unofficial motto since… the [killings]."[149] When asked about Shoels exclusion from the memorial tribute to murdered teammates, Jefferson County school district spokeswoman Marilyn Slatzman stated matter-of-factly that "the team dedicated the season to Ketchner because he would have been a member [of the team] this [academic] year."[150] The absurdity of this claim and the pain it inflicted was laid bare a month later in January of 2000 when the Shoels family moved to a suburb of Houston, Texas to get "away from the pain and bad memories" that Isaiah's father Michael describes as "that prejudiced Colorado soil."[151] The exclusion of Isaiah Shoels from the commemorative actions of his football team was but one of the many reasons the Shoels family relocated, but provides a helpful frame for understanding the meaning of Isaiah's plaque in the Columbine Memorial.

The Shoels chose quotes from the Bible that are a deft usage of infrapolitics to critique the ongoing exclusion of their family and the memory of Isaiah from the Columbine community and its commemorative processes. James C. Scott defines infrapolitics as "the circumspect struggle waged daily by subordinate groups is, like infrared rays, beyond the visible end of the spectrum. That it should be invisible . . . is in

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[148] Associated Press, "Columbine Wins State Title," *USAToday.com*, December 4, 1999. http://www.usatoday.com/sports/preps/hsfs25.htm (Accessed March 26, 2011).
[149] Ibid.
[150] Associate Press, "Columbine dedicates state title game," *Amarillo-Globe News*, December 4, 1999. http://amarillo.com/stories/120499/spo_LS0430.shtml (Accessed March 26, 2011)
[151] Andrew Guy Jr., "Voices of Columbine: The Family of ISAIAH SHOELS," *denverpost.com*, April 16, 2000. http://extras.denverpost.com/news/shoels0416.htm (Accessed March 26, 2011).

large part by design—a tactical choice born of a prudent awareness of the balance of power."[152] The Shoels family started their son's narrative remembrance "The love of God was first in Isaiah's life," before moving on to emphasize

> his respect for others…he was taught to love others no matter how they treated him. Isaiah died in a room filled with hate and darkness…he would want you to look up and see the light, to put away the guns, hate, prejudice, and pride, and see the great light that is love…Isaiah, we will always miss you. We will always love you. With love from your Family and friends.

Even more striking were the three passages the Shoels family selected from the Book of Isaiah in the Old Testament of the Bible. Each of the passages were not deployed as on other plaques as general religious idioms, but were instead a pointed indictment aimed directly at the greater Columbine community.

> Stop doing wrong, learn to do right. Isaiah 1:15-17
> Maintain justice and do what is right. Isaiah 56:1-2
> Those who walk uprightly enter into peace. Isaiah 57:1-2

In the aftermath of the killings, the Shoels family found themselves and the memory of their murdered son ostracized from the community's commemorations. Yet in the allotment of 200 words for their narrative remembrance, the Shoels forever marked both Isaiah and their family's many exclusions in the sacred heart of the Columbine landscape.

The Columbine Memorial was inscribed with evangelical zeal and memorial resistances against it, each of which found symbolic representation in the one and only cross in the memorial. Daniel Rohrbough's divorced parents decided to use a large cross symbol to literally separate their two divergent narrative remembrances on their son's plaque. Daniel's mother Sue Petrone and her husband Richard wrote a heartfelt

[152] James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990). 183; see also *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985).; *The Moral Economy of the Peasant: Rebellion and Subsistence in Southeast Asia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976).

remembrance of their son's life on the left side of the plaque that answered the question "What will the world miss," which they concluded with "…just beginning your journey with so much to learn, yet you taught us so much. We miss you." On the right side of the plaque, Brian Rohrbough continued his established role as outspoken evangelical orator with an inscription that he explained was "based on a conversation between [he] and his son—part real, part imagined."[153] [For the sake of clarity, the imagined part of the inscription is italicized]

> "Dad, I have a question."
> Why?
> *My son, in a Nation that legalized the killing of innocent children in the womb; in a Country where authorities would lie and cover up what they knew and what they did; in a Godless school system your life was taken…Dan I'm sorry.*
> "I love you dad I'll see you tomorrow." 7:00 p.m., April 19, 1999.
> "There is no peace," says the Lord, "for the wicked." Isaiah 48:22

In the online "Comments" section of an exclusive interview Rohrbough gave the *Rocky Mountain News* about the meaning of his inscription, polarized public responses quickly exceed 16,000 words in the five days the thread was active.[154] Not unexpectedly, Brian Rohrbough's evangelical advocating against abortion, the separation of church and state, and his own belief in the Littleton Police Department's covering up what they knew and did regarding the killings in his narrative remembrance for his murdered son quickly reignited and displayed the ongoing vitality of the cultural debates at Columbine.

The only cross in the Columbine Memorial symbolically links the many social divisions and subjugated memories that persisted throughout the community's

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[153] Kevin Vaughn, "Rohrbough expects memorial words to spark conversation," *Rocky Mountain News*, September 21, 2007. Accessed February 18 2011.
http://blogs.rockymountainnews.com/rockytalklive/archives/2007/09/rohrbaugh_expects_memorial_wor.html
[154] Ibid.

commemorative processes. The cross on the Daniel's plaque literally separates his parents, which illuminates the inability of even the family members of those murdered to fully come together--as individual families or collectively as a group. The cross marks the divisions within the local Christian community: Daniel Rohrbough's Christian parents couldn't agree, the Christian Shoels family was ostracized from their fervently Christian community, and the Ring of Remembrance discursively illustrates how different families chose either silence or evangelism to frame the memory of their children. There are also important historical and spatial connections between the one cross in the memorial and the fifteen crosses that were installed on Rebel Hill eight years earlier: the initiation of the 15/13 debate, Greg Zanis and Brian Rohrbough as the public figureheads of the debate, and how the cross became the very symbol of the memories of Columbine that rapidly proliferated throughout the local landscape. Moreover, the memorial significance of the cross was borne in the controversy of the two perpetrator crosses, and thus, to varying degrees, all the memorial crosses at Columbine symbolize the memory of the perpetrators: in Zanis' direct and indirect involvement in many of the permanent cross memorials, in the spatial relationship of bodies and crosses in the Columbine Memorial Garden, in the multiple prayers for the perpetrators that went up around Daniel Rohrbough's cross on the first anniversary, and, indeed, carved permanently on Daniel's narrative remembrance in the heart of the Columbine Memorial.

The rhetoric, remembrances and resistances to the commemorative process and the communal debates that began after the killings are all inscribed in the official Columbine Memorial. The pyramid model that the Columbine Memorial Committee adopted from the Oklahoma City model created a new kind of mass murder memorial

process that enabled family members to address a range of social, ethical and political issues in their narrative remembrances of the victims. Most of the families chose to write remembrances that adhered to the local evangelical framing of the memory of Columbine. Others used an array of tactics to resist the dominance of evangelical rhetoric that alienated many families from the community and the commemorative process. The ritualized assemblage of permanent memory sites completed before the official memorial transformed crosses into the primary symbol of the memory of the killings. The only cross in the Columbine Memorial connected the rhetoric and memory of the many debates and exclusions of the commemorative processes. The completed Columbine Memorial is a narrative remembrance of the victims and survivors, but it is also a poignant public record of the social divisions, subjugated memories and national framing of the importance of the killings that persisted long after the last bullet shells hit the ground.

Mass Murder Memorials and American Identity at the Turn of the Century

The commemorative environment surrounding the many memory sites that were constructed at Columbine was marked by an ongoing public struggle to materially define the cultural terms of inclusion in the local community and in the nation at the turn of the twenty first century. In his discussion of the United States most famous battlefield memorials, Edward Linenthal argues that "activities at all these centers of power have helped to define, for numerous generations, those who are 'insiders' and 'outsiders' in American culture, those who belong in the stories and, equally important, *how* they

belong in them."[155] The memorialization processes at Columbine illuminate—far more visibly than at Oklahoma City—how the memory of mass murder was becoming a domestic battleground upon which the definition of American identity at turn of the twenty first century was beginning to be waged.

At Columbine, President Clinton repeating the socio-political script he created in Oklahoma City, and in so doing, transformed it into a Myth of the Slaughtered Citizen that stressed the importance of remembering national unity after events of mass murder. The frontlines were different at Columbine, however, because evangelical leaders joined the President at the bully pulpit and established Christian faith as the dominant rhetoric of the local commemorative process. The social divisions that quickly resulted hinged on two very different interpretations of forgiveness that became the foundation of the 15/13 debate. Local conflicts also resulted in the social causalities of people in the community—including many of the families of the victims—who felt silenced or were outright excluded from having a public voice, either because they were not Christian or because the actions of the community effectively ostracized them publicly, as in the case of the Shoels family.

After Columbine, the widespread adoption of the Myth of the Slaughtered Citizen led some American citizens to voluntarily compare Columbine to historical events of violence that have come to define the identity of the United States itself. An editorial in the *Rocky Mountain News* written by a visitor to the Columbine Memorial Garden articulated simply

> my eyes filled with tears as I read on each cross the name that had become as familiar as those of my own family: Cassie, Isaiah, Rachel, Dave…just like the Texas School Book Depository in

[155] Linenthal, *Sacred Ground: Americans and Their Battlefields*. 216.

> Dallas, or Ford's Theater in Washington, one cannot fully grasp what transpired at each place until a [memorial] visit is made. The same can now be said for the Columbine tragedy.[156]

Like President Clinton's speech after Oklahoma City, in the aftermath of Columbine citizens began to think of mass murders as being historically equivalent to famous American battles, wars and political murders. At two different scales, mass murder was becoming a new kind of battlefield deemed worthy of national commemoration. The killings themselves were increasingly regular hostilities that took place domestically with American citizens being both the perpetrators and the victims. In the aftermath of the killings, social conflicts over the memory of the killings began to be fought for years afterwards by the citizens who survived. After Columbine, the causalities of both of these battles were collectively inscribed in the ritualized assemblage of memory sites that grew locally, but which were increasingly viewed by all Americans as vital components of the United States' patriotic landscape.

At the aesthetic core of all the memory sites in ritualized assemblage at Columbine stands the symbol of the cross, yet no single cultural perspective was ever able to establish a monopoly on its meaning, despite significant efforts to do so. The evangelical majority did everything in its power to define the cross as a symbol available only to the victims, and of the victim's martyrdom in a "Godless society." For the sizeable minority whose numbers were likely far larger than the media ever depicted, however, the cross was a symbol of Christianity's radical and often unfathomable message of forgiveness. Non-Christians, non-evangelical Christians and other excluded community members often used the cross as a tactic by which they intentionally staged

[156] Beth Leary Hegedus, "Cemetery visit manifests the Columbine tragedy," Letters, *Rocky Mountain News*, n.d. (Original Copy of the editorial in the Olinger Chapel Cemetery file on the Columbine Memorial Garden. Photocopy of the article in the author's possession).

silent protests or deployed Christian faith to critique the hegemony of the evangelical community in Columbine. The symbol of the cross thus became an 'X' that marked the spot of both the people who were murdered and of the cultural battles that further divided the Columbine community in the years after the killings.

The 'official' Columbine Memorial followed many of the commemorative precedents established at Oklahoma City, yet it more clearly illustrated the inherent quandary of appropriating mass murder as a means of promoting a sense of local or national unity. At the heart of the paradox of the Columbine Memorial was the attempt of the local community to create a memory site to mark their losses, yet to attempt to do so in a suburban landscape that limited the creation of communal bonds. Bob Easton reflected after the eight year memorialization process that

> something [the committee and I] are proud of, [is that] all thirteen families ultimately agreed on, and bought into, the final design of the memorial. And if you read the background on this place, I don't think there was anything that all thirteen families agreed on outside of this memorial process.[157]

Speaking comparatively about his role as a memorial design process consultant at both Oklahoma City and Columbine, Paul Morris suggests that

> these [memorials] are all very conscious and intentional, but are [also] actually unconscious acts to convey to the world who [these communities] are…these memorials, in a very, very profound way…make a statement about who they are as a people. And that landscape that they have now sculpted is going to be there when they are not. It's not a sculpture, its not a piece of art—it's a physical transformation of them and their personal character and identity.[158]

Easton and Morris' reflections provide insight into how the Columbine Memorial outwardly promotes a vision of unity while also illuminating the disunity of the local

[157] Bob Easton interview.
[158] Paul Morris interview.

community. Columbine exposed a crack in the evolving national commemorative sensibility by illustrating both the transient nature of unity of the imagined bereaved community, and the ways in which mass murder exacerbates, if not exemplifies, existing social divisions.

A decade after the end of the Cold War, a range of political and cultural actors used Columbine to solidify a Myth of the Slaughtered Citizen that framed mass murder as a new kind of battle central to American identity. The interweaving of Christian faith with the rhetoric of national unity imbued the Myth with a sacred dimension it previously lacked. By the time the Columbine Memorial was dedicated in 2007, the word "Columbine" had become *the* American euphemism for mass murder generally, and school killings specifically. The number of people killed at Columbine resulted in the national media attention it received; yet President Clinton acknowledged early on that "even thought [Columbine] is the worst example of school violence we've seen, it is by no means the only one."[159] Instead, this particular mass murder was a "momentous" historical moment in the United States at the turn of the twenty first century because, as the President reiterated tirelessly after the killings, "when America looks at [Columbine], many of us see a community not very different from our own."[160]

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[159] Clinton "Roundtable Discussion with Students on Violence," PPPUS.
[160] Clinton, "Pep Rally on the One-Month Anniversary."

Chapter 4 UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS: STONES AT THE BASE OF THE TOWER: The Retrospective Commemoration of the 1966 Tower Killings, 1999-2007

In 1999, on the thirty-third anniversary of the infamous 1966 University of Texas Tower killings, the university publicly initiated a retrospective commemorative process with a dedication ceremony for a memorial that had not yet been planned, designed, funded or constructed. University President Larry Faulkner led the ceremony in a space north of the Tower that since the 1930s been known as the Turtle Ponds, but which on this day was renamed and dedicated as the "Tower [Memorial] Garden…a permanent memorial to the victims of the tragedy of August, 1 1966…in the months to come we will…make this garden a fitting memorial, to be maintained in by this institution, in perpetuity."[1] Faulkner understood that the dedication was premature and referred to the ceremony as "symbolic actions…to integrate this place, and its memories, into the daily life of this campus."[2] In the following eight years, however, the President and the three different committees formed to make these symbolic actions a reality confronted obstacles that collectively stopped the memorial from ever being completed. The failure of the University of Texas' retrospective process illuminates that despite the emergence of a contemporary national expectation to create mass murder memorials, this new commemorative tradition was not a given.

[1] Larry Faulkner, Author's transcription of the UT Tower Garden Dedication ceremony, August 1, 1999. See also, "UT Tower Garden Dedication, Remembering August 1, 1966," in The Tower Garden Memorial Archive (hereafter TGMA), in the possession of University of Texas Vice Provost Neal Armstrong, 1999 Folder.
[2] Ibid.

The period from 1999-2007 is, however, an insufficient timeframe for understanding the failed memorial because a century of commemorative politics on campus resulted in a powerful ritualized assemblage that held the very identity of the University of Texas (UT). As Kenneth Foote and Sylvia Grider write "[the] marking of 'sacred history' is often a key feature of college campuses. Their buildings and landscaping often play an important role in fostering a sense of community."[3] From early in UT's history, the landscape was itself an active player in a series of ideological struggles over both where to locate the campus and how memory sites were used to narrate the identity for the university. The most influential of these memory sites was the Tower, which architect Paul Cret designed in the early 1930s to be "the image carried in our memory when we think of [the University]" and to serve as "the heart of The University."[4] By using the Tower to commit murder in 1966, the perpetrator left the university with an unenviable conundrum: it could neither destroy the Tower nor allow the structure to become a site for subsequent violence or death. The result was that the Tower itself became a dual site of memory as both the symbol of the university and the ever-present reminder of the mass murder that nearly everyone attempted, often futilely, to move beyond. UT's retrospective memorialization process thus needs to be analyzed as but one period within the long commemorative history of the campus' ritualized assemblage.

The failure of the retrospective commemorative process that began in 1999 was also due to the exceptional commemorative sensibility of the select group of university

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[3] Foote and Grider, "Memorialisation of Us College and University Tragedies: Spaces of Mourning and Remeberance." 184.
[4] Paul Cret, quoted by University of Texas President William Faulkner in "UTexas & 116: An Anniversary Celebration, The University of Texas, 1883-1999" flyer, September 15, 1999, back page. Author's Collection.

administrators who led the memorial committees. This group, which I call the "Tower Memory Bearers," was comprised of five individuals—President Faulkner, Assistant Vice President of University Events Susan Clagett, Deputy to the President Charles Roeckle, Vice Provost Neal Armstrong and Senior Vice President Shirley Bird Perry—whose exceptional relationship was formed by three shared characteristics. First, these individuals had a personal relationship with the reality of the killings because they were all graduate students at the University of Texas in 1966. For people of this generation, mass murder was not something to be memorialized, but rather something shameful that was better forgotten. Second, each of these individuals was a top administrator at UT in 1999 that President Faulkner called on to play a critical role in the memorial process. These administrators daily interactions with the active UT student body inspired most of them to adopt the new generations commemorative sensibility about the appropriateness of memorializing mass murder. Lastly, by nature of being administrators at UT, each of these individuals literally worked daily *within* the bounds of the ritualized assemblage that constituted the heart of campus. The memory sites in this space, both consciously and unconsciously, exerted a powerful influence on the commemorative changes on campus in the late twentieth century. The Tower Memory Bearers had an exceptional set of collected memories forged in the 1960s, but shaped by their professional relationships in the 1990s, which imbued this group with a unique commemorative sensibility that they shared with neither generation.

A comparative analysis with contemporary mass murder memorials also illuminates something that was absent from the UT commemorative process: a resonant symbol from the immediate aftermath of the killings. Members of the UT community

recalled the construction of small immediate aftermath memorials, yet no one remembered any notable symbol of grief or mourning that emerged after the killings. In the 1960s American citizens still maintained the long held commemorative sensibility that mass murder was shameful, and none of the modest immediate aftermath memorials that were constructed resulted in the emergence of a local symbol. Considering the important role that resonant symbols played in other mass murder memorials of the period, the lack of any such symbol limited the commemorative options available at UT for engendering community buy-in for a retrospective memorial.

In this chapter I argue that at the University of Texas, generational sensibilities about violence, the influence of the campus' established ritualized assemblage, and absence of a resonant symbol from the aftermath were collectively stronger than the emerging national expectations of commemorating mass murder and resulted in the failure of the proposed memorial for the 1966 killings. To support this assertion I will first detail the complex commemorative history of the university by focusing on the emergence of the primary parts of the campus's ritualized assemblage in the period from 1910 to 1937. I will then detail how the commemorative landscape of the campus changed in the three decades after the 1966 Tower killings as the result of local, regional, and national experiences of public violence. I will pay special attention to how the ritualized assemblage itself increasingly framed the identity of the University and tangibly influenced the actions and decision of members of the campus community who sought to expand or alter its configuration. Having established this background, I will illustrate how the creation of new rituals at the University from the late 1980s through the mid 1990s and the decision to reopen the Tower in 1999 were important commemorative

precedents. I will analyze the university's retrospective commemorative processes that began in 1999 and that were brought to a conclusion, albeit unsuccessfully, in 2007. At the turn of the twenty-first century, the University of Texas failure to create a retrospective memorial for one of the most infamous killings of the twentieth century illustrates the power of past commemorative sensibilities to undermine contemporary national expectations about the appropriateness of mass murder memorials.

4.1 Commemoratively Creating "The Forty Acres," 1910-1937

In order to understand the failure to create a memory site for the people killed in August of 1966, it is first necessary to understand the commemorative politics that are the foundation of the very identity of the University of Texas. From its founding in 1883, the permanent location of the campus was a major dilemma that erupted into a political struggle in 1910 that lasted until 1933. Central to this struggle were a number of memory sites that established the heart of the campus and came to frame not just the University's memory of itself, but also became the physical sites where issues of the present and concerns about the future played out. Three memory sites in particular formed the original ritualized assemblage on the campus: the Old Main building which was ultimately destroyed and reincarnated in the form of "the Tower," the Littlefield Gateway Memorial, and a statue of President George Washington. The story of the creation of these memory sites, and the long and contentious battles waged for decades to make them a reality, provides insight into how the ritualized assemblage at the heart of campus influenced the University's later attempt to create a mass murder memorial.

The identity of the University of Texas—referred to colloquially to this day as "the Forty Acres"—was, from its founding onwards, intimately linked to its geographical location. The early campus consisted of only two sets of structures, the Old Main building designed by F.E. Ruffini, and a group of public bathrooms located on the northeast part of the campus.[5] Two years before the University opened in 1881, UT President Lamar's secretary Edward Fontaine noted that there was a desire to create a broad avenue south from the university that was three hundred feet wide and would connect the Texas State Capitol with the University and was intended to "enable grand processions to March from the capitol during the annual commencement" ceremony.[6] Although never constructed based upon these specifications, the essence of the idea of orienting the campus southwards in order to create an unmistakable spatial and visual connection with the State Capitol continued to be discussed throughout the beginning of the twentieth century.

The power struggle over the final location of the University of Texas involved two men by the name of George Washington. By the end of the first decade of the twentieth century, the Forty Acres was no longer a sufficient amount of space for the growing campus, and two of university's most wealthy benefactors sought to leave their mark by dictating how and where the university was to be permanently established. The first benefactor, George Washington Brackenridge, wanted to relocate the university and, to this end, in 1910 donated 450 acres of land along the Colorado River near downtown

[5] The outhouses were situated roughly where the Will C. Hogg building is located today. "Buildings Completed by 1885 Fact Sheet," accompanying the "University of Texas Campus, 1885 Model," from the University of Texas Buildings Collection. Model created in 1936 for the Texas Centennial Exposition. Displayed outside the Alexander Architecture Archive, June 2012. Photographs located in the Author's personal collection.
[6] *Austin Statesman*, August 12, 1881.

Austin in order to provide a feasible long-term site for the university.[7] The second benefactor, George Washington Littlefield, adamantly opposed such a move and sought to keep the university in its original location on the Forty Acres. In 1916, Littlefield began discussions with his favorite sculptor, Pompeo Coppini, about creating a memory site to the Confederacy that would serve as "an entrance on the South of the University grounds."[8] Littlefield asked Coppini to begin drafting plans for memorial promenade that he envisioned would concurrently do three things: be an aesthetic and monetary investment in the original campus location that would render relocation impossible; create a campus entryway that spatially connected the university spatially to the Texas State Capitol; and "build a monument to the Confederate cause" that would indelibly link the university to the Confederacy and "the South."[9] The struggle to establishing the permanent location of the campus persisted throughout the 1910s and was only officially decided in Littlefield's favor in 1921 when the Texas Legislature approved $1,350,000 to purchase nearly one hundred and fifty additional acres around the Forty Acres.[10]

The creation of what became the Littlefield Gateway was driven by Littelfield's ideological desire to inscribe the Confederacy into the identity of the University. Coppini recounted that Littlefield wanted the site to include statues of "the leaders of the Confederacy…and a couple of great Texas political figures" whom Littlefield "most

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[7] "'The Forty Acres' fact sheet," accompanying the "University of Texas Campus, 1885 Model"; "University of Texas Campus, 1921 Model" from the University of Texas Buildings Collection. Models created in 1936 for the Texas Centennial Exposition, and displayed outside the Alexander Architecture Archive, June 2012; Charles Roeckle interview with the author, September 5, 2012.

[8] Compeo Coppini, *From Dawn to Sunset* (San Antonio, TX: The Naylor Company, 1955). 255, 295. Littlefield was growing old and was acutely aware that his name and legacy could very well hinge on his success or failure in securing the Forty Acres as the permanent home of the university.

[9] Ibid. 208, 255.

[10] "Thirty-seventh Legislature of Texas appropriated $1,350,000 for 135 additional acres to be added north and east of the original forty acres. See "'The Forty Acres' fact sheet"

admired as America's great men."[11] Coppini warned Littlefield that future generations might not be so supportive of continued regional animosities and suggested that instead of creating an arch to the Confederacy, that the site should be a fountain that would exemplify that after World War I "all past regional differences have disappeared and that we are now one welded nation…[it will be] a fountain symbolic of the perpetual flowing of American patriotism and American enlightenment."[12] To do this, Coppini created a gateway memorial design centered on what Littlefield referred to as the two "war presidents:" Woodrow Wilson, "President of the United States," and Jefferson Davis, "President of the Confederate States of America." The other great men to be included in the memorial "Court of Honor" were Confederate General Robert E. Lee, Postmaster General of the Confederacy John H. Reagan, Texas Attorney General and Texas Governor James S. Hogg, and Confederate General Albert S. Johnston. At the south end of the gateway was a fountain that composed of a multi-tiered 100-foot pool centered around a ship carrying a female depiction of Columbia and two men representing the Army and Navy flanking the sides of the vessel. The ship, Coppini explained, was drawn "by three sea-horses, [two of which] symbolize the sea power of the United States; the center sea-horse, [representing] the wild force of mob hysteria, kept in check by [the] strong disciplined manpower of the Navy as well as of the Army."[13] Amidst the domestic social turmoil and labor disputes of the post war 1920s, G.W. Littlefield sought to establish a gateway to the campus which proclaimed national unity, but which

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[11] "Littlefield to Coppini Letter, July 23, 1919." Coppini-Tauch Papers, 1892-1988, Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin. Box 3R152: The Littlefield Fountain. General Correspondence Coppini: Littlefield Memorial Fountain, July 30, 1919-Nov. 17, 1921. Hereafter, referred to as "CTP." Last quote from Coppini, *From Dawn to Sunset*. 255.
[12] Ibid. 255.
[13] Ibid. *

championed the Confederacy specifically, the military generally, and warned of the danger of the masses in the quest for "world democracy."[14]

Littlefield and Coppini assumed that their vision for the Littlefield Memorial as a site of national unity was obvious; however, this assumption was contested from earliest days of the commemorative process.[15] The U.S. Postmaster General Albert S. Burelson, a Texas-native, contacted President Woodrow Wilson directly in 1920 with a request that he pose for Coppini's statue. President Wilson considered the idea of "a joint memorial of the Confederacy and of the world war…[representing] the fusion of these two elements in our national life" absurd and adamantly refused to cooperate.[16] On campus, past President and faculty member, Dr. William J. Battle leveled a thorough critique of the design. Battle pointed out that while the commemorative intention to represent national unity was "noble and defensible in itself…a fatal objection is the fact that every single statue represents a southern man. How can a group composed of men from only one section stand for a united nation?"[17] Dr. Battle suggested that the only workable solution was to "change the conception of the whole…[to] a memorial of the Patriotism

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[14] Ibid. 344.

[15] Coppini and Littlefield's vision and its strong emphasis on the Confederacy and its weak emphasis on WWI is nowhere more clearly defined than in the ultimately abandoned plans for an inscription in the West Wall of the Fountain itself, which read, "To the Men and Women of the Confederacy who fought with valor and suffered with fortitude that states rights be maintained and who, not dismayed by defeat or discouraged by misrule, builded [sic] from the ruins of a devastating war a greater South./ And to the Men and Women of gave their possessions and their lives so that free government be made secure to the peoples of the earth/ This Memorial is Dedicated the Gift of George W. Littlefield./ Soldier in the Confederate Army./ Leader in Texas Industry./ Regent of the University." Paul Cret Sketch, "Inscription on West Wall," July 6, 1932. *Paul Cret's Littlefield Memorial Drawings,* Alexander Architecture Archive, University of Texas. Hereafter, referred to as AAA.

[16] "University of Texas President Robert E. Vinson letter to US Postmaster General Albert S. Burleson," November 9, 1920. In CTP, General Correspondence Coppini: Littlefield Memorial Fountain, July 30, 1919-Nov. 17, 1921. The degree of social divide in the proposed commemorative narrative is illustrated by Coppini's astonishment that President Wilson "resented the thought of appearing in the same memorial with Jefferson Davis!" Coppini, *From Dawn to Sunset*. 266.

[17] "William J. Battle Letter to University of Texas President Robert E. Vinson," September 22, 1921. In CTP, General Correspondence Coppini: Littlefield Memorial Fountain, July 30, 1919-Nov. 17, 1921.

to the South."[18] More than any of his contemporaries, Dr. Battle understood that the Littlefield Gateway was "a matter of such great and lasting importance [that] the University of Texas cannot afford to leave any means unemployed to gain a satisfactory result."[19] Dr. Battle's prescient critique was, however, utterly ignored and the memorial moved forward as planned.[20]

The increasingly intense struggle over the Littlefield Gateway persisted throughout the 1920s and is illustrative of the politics of commemoration within public institutions that own and control their campus landscape. In the aftermath of the dismissal of Cass Gilbert, who served for nearly a decade as the Supervising Architect of the UT campus, a nationwide search began for a new campus designer that included the world-renowned landscape architect Fredrick Law Olmstead.[21] While Olmstead was not ultimately chosen, in his correspondence with Dr. Battle he noted that he would need to be given a contract guaranteeing his plans would be constructed because in his

> long and varied experience with universities and other educational institutions, I have very frequently encountered conditions of administrative organization and of personnel that have resulted in a very vacillating and unsystematic procedure in the making of those decisions which in fact determine the locations and designs of buildings and of other important elements of the physical plant—so much so that my efforts and my advice have been largely wasted(,) even if I am adequately paid for my time and effort.[22]

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[18] Ibid.

[19] By 1921 the statues to be included in the memorial were unalterable due to Littlefield's death the previous November (interestingly, G.W. Brackenridge died within a month of Littlefield). Ibid.

[20] In this context, the ongoing challenges to the Littlefield Gateway to the University of Texas at Austin since the mid twentieth century should be seen not as an ahistorical protest against a longstanding tradition, but as the continuation of a critique that has been present since the Littlefield Gateway was first proposed in the 1910s.

[21] Battle sent a letter to President Splawn introducing Olmstead as "the most eminent landscape architect in America," see "William J. Battle Letter to University of Texas President Walter W. M. Splawn," October, 28, 1925. In the William James Battle Papers, 1870-1959, the Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin. Hereafter referred to as WJBP. Box 2K245, "Landscaping, Sketches and Bids."

[22] "Fredrick Law Olmstead Letter to William J. Battle," October 23, 1925. In WJBP, ox 2K245, "Landscaping, Sketches and Bids."

Olmstead's hesitation was not without merit: soon after Littlefield's death in 1920, Coppini stepped into the role of defender of the vision of the Gateway. After one notable attempt in the late 1920s to move the Gateway to the east side of campus, Coppini admonished that such a move "would destroy the conception of a Memorial dedicated to the South."[23] The vacillating agendas of the four different university presidential administrations that presided over the process of creating the Gateway caused Coppini to begin referring to those who sought to interfere in such colorful terms as "those shrew respectable gangsters," and he even went so far as to describe his actions in defense of the memorial to his lawyer as "a plan of battle for you to follow."[24]

UT's selection of Paul Cret to the position of Supervising Architect ended over a decade of unresolved struggle with the unveiling in his 1933 Campus Master Plan of a *genius loci* that the entire university would revolve around: the UT Tower.[25] Cret envisioned a structure so striking that it would become "the image carried in our memory when we think of…The University."[26] To facilitate this vision, Cret transformed the Littlefield Gateway into a ceremonial promenade that was inspired by the University of Virginia campus, and made the enlarged Littlefield Gateway "the principal element of the

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[23] "Coppini to Hertzberg," January 30, 1930. In CTP, General Correspondence Coppini: Littlefield Memorial Fountain, 1930-1931.

[24] "Coppini Letter to Wroe," April, 5 1932, and "Coppini Letter to Wroe," January 26, 1932, respectively, in CPT, General Correspondence Coppini: Littlefield Memorial Fountain, 1932-1933.

[25] Also worthy of mention was Cret's masterful ability to communicate and appease Coppini's emotionally mercurial disposition. Cret's understanding of the need to negotiate and handle Coppini are well exemplified in his letter to Dr. Battle in which he notes "As you state, the most difficult point is the negotiation with Mr. Coppini. I am entirely at your service . . ." "Paul Cret Letter to William J. Battle," May 27, 1930. In WJBP, Box 2K244, "Paul Cret Correspondence." More generally, all of the Cret to Coppini letters between 1930-1933 illustrate Cret's masterful ability to deal with Coppini. See, for example, "Cret to Coppini," December 26, 1930. In CTP, General Correspondence Coppini: Littlefield Memorial Fountain, 1930-1931.

[26] Paul Cret, quoted by University of Texas President William Faulkner in "UTexas & 116: An Anniversary Celebration, The University of Texas, 1883-1999" flyer, September 15, 1999, back page. Author's Collection.

south campus…[that leads] up to the [Tower]."[27] Cret's master plan was approved by the university Regents in May of 1930, and in the final version Coppini agreed to "radical changes" in the design of the Gateway.[28] Unlike Coppini, however, Cret supported the southward orientation of the campus solely for aesthetic as opposed to ideological reasons. The implementation of Cret's 1933 Master Plan created the Texas Mall and forever linked the University of Texas to the Texas State Capitol, with the Littlefield Gateway framing the two structures spatial relationship.

With his masterplan approved, Cret's negotiation of the location of a statue of President George Washington illustrates the increasingly influence of the emerging ritualized assemblage at the heart of the campus had on the identity of the university. The location for the statue that Cret suggested as "the most suitable" was at the base of the Tower on the South Mall "in the center of the court of honor."[29] A debate concerning how this placement would affect the identity of the university commenced immediately. For the proponents, the statue was "an inspiration for patriotism … [that would] enhance a deeper love for the Father of Our Country."[30] However, one opponent showed deft

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[27] Paul Cret, "Memorandum Littlefield Gateway," April 29,1930. In WJBP, Box 2K244, "Paul Cret Correspondence & Sketches 1930-1931."

[28] The Regents approved the South Mall location on May 30, 1930. Coppini's comment was that "At a meeting (with) . . . Mr. Paul Cret . . . the representative of the Board of Trustees of the University and Mr. Dhal of the firm of Green, Meroche and Dhal, Architects of the University, radical changes have been adopted as to the construction of the Littlefield Memorial, to which I consented. The new plan will require the re-design of the whole scheme." See "Coppini to Bronzeworks," July 9, 1930. In CTP, General Correspondence Coppini: Littlefield Memorial Fountain, 1930-1931.

[29] "Cret Letter to Battle," with accompanying sketch by Cret. February 19, 1931. Underlining is Cret's. In WJBP, Box 4P256, "Washington Statue Correspondence."

[30] "Ida McFaddin of DAR Letter to Battle," January 9, 1932. In WJBP, Box 4P256, "Washington Statue Correspondence." In the beginning of 1931, the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) submitted a proposal to the Regents about donating a statue of George Washington to the university on the occasion of his 200th birthday in February of 1932. The proposal was unanimously accepted, and Dr. Battle contacted Cret about possible locations for the statue that would complement his campus plan. See Author Unknown, "George Washington Memorial—Daughters of the American Revolution," date unrecorded, early 1931; "Battle Letter to Cret," February 15, 1931. Both in WJBP, Box 4P256, "Washington Statue Correspondence."

spatial awareness in critiquing that locating the statue on the South Mall would “suggest to students, faculty, and visitors every day a false notion that Washington played a part in the founding of the University…how could Texas, of all the states in the Union, give Washington first place of honor on the campus of The University of Texas?”[31] While attempts to block the placement of the Washington statue were ultimately unsuccessful, this episode illustrates early recognition of how the established ritualized assemblage influenced citizens’ views of the identity of the University.

The early struggles exemplify the UT campus was thus never a haphazard conglomeration, but was instead a carefully planned assemblage of memory sites that developed the identity of the university in three ways. First, due to the Tower’s role as the “heart of the university,” the proximity of any memory site to the Tower was directly proportional to the site’s influence on the identity of the University. Second, Paul Cret casually noted early in his tenure that “for the convenience of description, the campus is divided into, -south, east, west, and north campus,” yet since that time, this cardinal division of “malls” has become the colloquial discourse of the spatial configuration of campus.[32] Memory sites located on the four Malls are the most influential on campus with, the South Mall being the most prestigious, the West and East Malls being literally peripheral, and the North Mall, because it is always in the shadow of the Tower, being the most secluded. Lastly, any proposal to locate a memory site on one of the malls was sure to be contested because people at UT implicitly understood the relationship between these spaces and the identity of their university. In the years that followed, the campus

[31] Anonymous Letter to the Editor, “What About the Statue,” *The Daily Texan*, February 6, 1932. The author of the editorial thought that “for every loyal Texan,” any memorial situated in that location should obviously be dedicated to “Stephen F. Austin, [the] Father of Texas.”
[32] Paul Cret, “Memorandum on General Plan No. 1 (Preliminary Study),” April 29, 1930. In WJBP, Box 2K244, Paul Cret Correspondence, 1930-1931.

ritualized assemblage that emerged during the 1930s and linked the university to the State Capitol increasingly became an active agent in dictating the identity of the university, the city of Austin, and the state of Texas itself.

4.2 Thirty-Three Years of Commemorative Silence, 1966-1999

Commemoratively speaking, the generational sensibility of Americans living before the 1980s was one of silence in which one did not permanently mark shameful events of violence like mass murder in the landscape. Kenneth Foote refers to this as a "shadowed past," which emerges when "[the sites of] major episodes of tragedy or violence remain unmarked because they conflict with or contradict…a heroic view of the national past."[33] Susan Clagett, a graduate student at UT at the time of the killings who later became the Assistant Vice President of University Events, recalled in 2012 that

> thinking about it now, it is interesting that it seems so normal and even expected today to create a memorial site to these types of events, because in the aftermath of the shooting here at UT I don't remember a single person talking about or even suggesting that we create a permanent site to remember the event. Most of us wanted to forget, or to move on, or both.[34]

Locally, commemorative silence quickly became the norm. Jorien Hopsappel-Brons argues that in Western society there is an "increasing preference for silence in collective ceremonies…silence is not only a frame for ritual, it *is* ritual itself."[35] Brons' work reveals that silence was the dominant local commemorative sensibility that held sway in the city of Austin for over three decades after the Tower killings.

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[33] Foote, *Shadowed Ground: America's Landscapes of Violence and Tragedy*., 284.
[34] Susan Clagett, Interview with the Author, August 24, 2012.
[35] Holsappel-Brons, "Space for Silence: The Interplay between Space and Ritual in Rooms of Silence.", 251-252.

In the days after the killings a handful of small immediate aftermath memorials were constructed, but no notable symbol emerged from these memory sites. Gary Lavergne, author of *A Sniper in the Tower,* recalled that there were only a handful of immediate aftermath memory sites which

> took the form of flowers placed in areas where some of the victims fell. That was just about it. I cannot recall any coverage of anything like a [memorial] wall or a fence where people gathered or left things. Neither do I remember a campus-wide or city-wide memorial service; churches had services for their parishioners, but nothing like what we [see in the twenty-first century]. Remember, this was well before we [Americans] tied 'yellow ribbons.'[36]

In 1966, not only were yellow ribbons largely an unknown symbol of mourning, but there was also no cultural precedent for constructing the massive immediate aftermath memorials that became common later in the twentieth century. Flowers were placed on campus, but no significant symbol ever caught the attention of the grieving community, and like the flowers, local memories of the killings in public spaces quickly withered away from view.

After the August 1, 1966 killings, however, that symbol that quickly ingrained itself into public memory was the Tower itself. On that day, the perpetrator, an engineering student and ex-Marine sniper killed his wife and mother in their homes before ascending to the top of the tower where he shot and killed fourteen more people, shot an eight month-pregnant woman that resulted in a miscarriage, and wounded dozens of others.[37] As UT student Nicole Tomich wrote decades later, "when a physical object

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[36] Gary Lavergne, Email correspondence with the author, April 29, 2013.

[37] For the most definitive book on the events of that day, see Gary M. Lavergne, *A Sniper in the Tower: The Charles Whitman Murders*, 1st ed. (Denton: University of North Texas Press, 1997).

is attributed to an event in time, the object can become a symbolic memory."[38] The observation deck of the Tower, where the shooting took place, was initially closed by the University until 1968, but after being open again for only six years, the Tower was again closed indefinitely in 1974 because numerous suicide jumps finally forced the administration to deem it unsafe for public access.[39] The killings and subsequent suicides very literally held the identity of the university hostage for over three decades and an air of infamy hung around the campus in the form of whispers, cautious glances skywards, and many people's intentional avoidance of any part of the campus that fell under the long shadow of the Tower. Reflecting on the symbolic impact of the killings years later, Vice Provost Neal Armstrong explained, "what [the perpetrator] had done was that he had robbed the campus of its soul."[40]

The strong local desire to forget the killings was intimately related to three acts of violence that were still fresh in the memory of the UT community. For Texans and Austinites, the violence of the 1960s commenced with the November 23, 1963 assassination of President Kennedy in Dallas, Texas—just 200 miles due north of Austin. The whole country was profoundly affected by the assassination, however, UT student Jill Gibson noted that being the state where JFK was killed in many ways "tarnished the view that others have of [Texas]," and found colloquial expression in phrases such as

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[38] Nicole Tomich, "The Tower is Home to Hopes and Dreams, Rallies, Protests and, Above All, Symbolism," in Joshua Fischer, ed. *Our Tower: Reflections on Public Space and Memory* (University of Texas, Austin: 1999).

[39] The exact number of suicides that occurred is unclear. Patrick Beach claims it was nine people from the Tower's founding in 1937 until its closure in 1974, whereas Joshua Fisher cites the number of suicides at eight. See Patrick Beach, "Drawn to the Edge," *Austin-American Statesman,* September 12, 1999; Joshua Fisher, "Faulkner's Focus Opens Deck," in ibid.

[40] Neal Armstrong, Interview with the Author, July 23, 2012.

“Texas is the reason JFK is dead.”[41] UT President Larry Faulkner, who was nineteen years old at the time, was particularly affected because he was in Dallas on that day and “watched President Kennedy drive by in his motorcade and a few blocks later he was shot and killed.”[42] Two years later, in July of 1965, the violence came to Austin when a male student at UT raped and strangled two Chi Omega sorority members in his apartment. In an era before school killings had become commonplace, Terry Young recalled that this killing was “‘shattering’ for the mellow, laid-back Austin of that era” and made the community “take a different look at everything.”[43] The last event of violence occurred a mere two and a half weeks before the Tower killings, when eight Filipino nursing students in Chicago were raped and murdered in their school dormitory. While the Chicago nurse murders received national media attention, the fact that the violence was perpetrated on female students a year after the killing of the UT sorority members stirred up traumatic memories for many members of the Austin community.[44] The collective trauma of these three acts of violence coupled with the Tower killings fostered a desire in the local community to forget all of the violence and move on as quickly and quietly as possible.

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[41] Jill Gibson, “Can Texas Overcome its Tragedies?” in Fischer, *Our Tower: Reflections on Public Space and Memory*.; The quote “Texas is the reason JFK is Dead” is noted by Roas Eberly, who described the influence of violence on that state as “the difficulty Texans and Austinites have had coming to terms with . . . tragic regional events.” See Rosa A. Eberly, "Everywhere You Go, It's There: Forgetting and Remembering the Univerity of Texas Tower Shootings," in *Framing Public Memory*, ed. Kendall R. Phillips (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 2004). 67-68.

[42] Larry Faulkner, Interview with the Author, July 7, 2012.

[43] Bob Tutt, “Aftermath/Slaying of coeds altered Austin’s view,” *Houston Chronicle*, Section 1, Page 7. January 29, 1897.

[44] Both President Faulkner and Assistant VP Clagett mentioned the Chicago nurse killings, on their own accord, as a formative part of their memories of the violence of the era. President Faulkner later recalled that during this period “there was an emergence of these weird, senseless, public murders,” and led him to conclude, “this period of our history brought about a dramatic changes in the psychological life of the United States.” Clagett had a similar sentiment in her appraisal that “during this period there was a horrible series of events that no one could quite envision or understand.” Faulkner and Clagett interviews.

In the subsequent decades, the commemorative silence and lack of any physical memorial resulted in the proliferation of media depictions that increasingly framed national public memory of the Tower killings. The most well known of the media memory sites that emerged in the aftermath did so in three periods marked most noticeably by the similar medium in which they emerged. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, written words in the form of poetry, books, and music were the predominant sites of memory. Jose Morante's corrido, *El Policia de Austin; Accion Heroica de Ramiro Martinez* (1966), Mary Francis Lamport's book *The Impossible Tree* (1972), as well as the songs "Sniper" by Harry Chapin (1972) and Kinky Friedman's ballad named after the perpetrator (1973)[45] served as the widely disseminated cultural sites of memory that provided diverse, parodic and ambiguous narratives of the event.

From the mid 1970s through the late 1990s, movies became the cultural sites of memory, that Rosa Eberly writes problematically glorified "the culture of violence that, in part, led to the shootings in the first place."[46] The first film, Kurt Russell's made-for-TV movie "Deadly Tower" (1975), attempted to tell the story of the killings, albeit with a focus on spectacle rather than content. Russell's film was followed by Stanley Kubrick's "Full Metal Jacket" (1987), Richard Linklater's "Slacker" (1991), Oliver Stone's "Natural Born Killers" (1994), and Dante Harper's "The Delicate Art of the Gun" (1996). Unlike the period of poetry and music, which told different narratives of the events, the

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[45] Perpetrator's name asterisked. I have been reminded on numerous occasions that omitting the perpetrators names from quotes and primary sources is not an academically accepted practice. With this feedback from a number of my mentors and colleagues at the front of my mind, I most humbly disagree. I am writing a history of the memory of citizen slaughter, and if there is one memory that everyone retains, it is the name of the perpetrator. My omission of their name is its own active commentary on the normative commemorative discordance of individuals and society publically claiming to remember and care about victims, but only really remembering the perpetrators.

[46] Rosa A. Eberly, "Yankee Rhetorician Tells It On The Tower: Why We Must Care," in Fischer, *Our Tower: Reflections on Public Space and Memory*.

people involved, and the people killed, the films of this period were united in their focus on the perpetrator. Moreover, most of these films portrayed the perpetrator as heroic, as worthy of acclaim and notoriety.

In the 1990s, internet websites emerged as an new medium that held the memory of the killings. The logical endpoint of valorization of the perpetrator seen in the films manifest in Gregory's Combs' online fan club for the perpetrator, which won a number of awards and had a forum filled with praise of Combs' "inventiveness."[47] On the other side of the spectrum, the University tentatively dipped its feet into the commemorative milieu with its own website entitled "Scenes from the Top." The website presented an skewed chronology of the Tower's history that began not in 1933 or 1966, but in 1974, the year the Tower observation deck was closed. The website led some to conclude that it was the university's unofficial "attempt to compensate for keeping the Tower closed" for so long.[48] The websites, like the films, writings, and songs before them, were the media sites where the national public memory increasingly resided in the decades after the killings.

On campus, a new group of memory sites became part of the ritualized assemblage in the aftermath of the killings: bullet hole sites. The perpetrator shot in all four directions from the Tower and many of the scars the bullets left have become sites of folk memory on the campus, three of which are on the South Mall. At the foot of the Jefferson Davis statue in the Littlefield Gateway there is a baluster rail that Officer Billy Speed used as a cover to return fire at the perpetrator. The second shot fired back at Officer Speed ultimately killed him; however, the first struck between two of the

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[47] Eberly, "Everywhere You Go, It's There: Forgetting and Remembering the Univerity of Texas Tower Shootings." 74.
[48] Ibid. 76-77.

balusters forming a deep hole by nature of the angle from the top of the Tower.[49] The surprising smoothness of this hole from a combination of rain and the repeated finger rubbings of people in the know suggests it is the most visited bullet site. Nearby, in the middle of the South Mall promenade, the gunman shot George Washington in the back two times, leaving well-know scars in the statue. On the upper terrace of South Mall, the base of the United States flagpole became the barricade that Charlotte Darenshori hid behind for over an hour an a half as bullets rained down around her. The notoriety of this site stems from the fact that images of Darenshori curled up behind the pole were broadcast internationally and Gary Lavergne writes that Darenshori "became as much a symbol of the unfolding tragedy as the Tower or [the perpetrator]."[50] The last well-known bullet site resulted from the many Texans who raced to campus and attempted to shoot the gunman. As a result, the observation deck of the Tower is peppered with dozens of bullet holes that have been plastered over but still scar the top of the Tower. All of these bullet sites, while not a constructed part of the ritualized assemblage, nevertheless entered into it and expanded the mythology of the area around the base of the Tower.

From the 1980s onward, many groups on the campus initiated a debate that continues to this day that questioned appropriateness of the statues in Littlefield Gateway on the South Mall.[51] UT student Joshua Fisher articulated the critique that many members of the university held that having one historically lackluster president (Wilson) and five "confederate heroes welcoming the world to the heart of the [University of

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[49] Lavergne, *A Sniper in the Tower: The Charles Whitman Murders*., 156-158, 162-165.
[50] Ibid., 146-148.
[51] No one I talked to—either officially and colloquially—suggested an exact year that the questioning of the statues on the South Mall started. The general consensus seems to be that it was during the emerging rights struggles of the 1960s, which makes sense.

Texas]" was neither appropriate nor intelligent.[52] Increasingly, members of the UT community made calls for the removal of the statues on the grounds that they were "confederate men who don't speak to the present or the future" of the University and "clearly, we need new heroes."[53] Arvel Seale, a writer for the traditionally conservative *Texas Alcalde* magazine, also noted pragmatically that the statues "continue to be something of a liability for UT's high profile struggle to recruit more black students and professors."[54] Joh Bul articulated the counter-argument of supporters of the Gateway. "The idea of removing the statues is absurd. In no way are these statues offensive, which some may argue, but instead a lesson in history, and how we have progressed as a nation…if the statues are removed, history is removed and lost."[55] The debate about the appropriateness of the statues in the Littlefield Gateway rejuvenated public discussion and knowledge of the importance of the South Mall at the end of the twentieth century.

Two colloquial discourses also circulated on campus during this period and further exemplify the vitality of memory sites on the South Mall. In true college town fashion, the term "Six-Pack" was used on campus by many students to refer to the South Mall. Fisher writes that the "'Six-pack' could refer to the six somewhat identical buildings found beyond the South Mall…or perhaps it refers to the six statues, not counting George Washington, that decorate the area…either way, when one thinks of the 'Six-Pack,' this area immediately comes to mind."[56] The second colloquial narrative was

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[52] Fisher, "Analyzing 'The Six Pack,'" in Fischer, *Our Tower: Reflections on Public Space and Memory*.
[53] Joshua Fisher, "Editor's Note," in ibid.
[54] Seale, cited in Joshua Fisher, "Analyzing 'The Six Pack,'" ibid.
[55] John Bul, "Confederate Icons Belong Here: The Littlefield Memorial," in ibid.
[56] Fisher, "Analyzing the 'Six Pack,'" in ibid. My italics. Interestingly, the vernacular discourse of the 'Six Pack' has effectively distinguished the spatial entanglement of the statues of the Littlefield Gateway from the Washington Statue for the campus community far more effectively than either historical facts or plaques, as William Battle argued in somewhat surprisingly—due to his ranging architectural knowledge—when questioned about possible confusion of the two memory sites by the Daughters of the American

a humorous but taboo story in the campus' oral history. In my multiple research trips to Austin, there is one question that everyone asked me, "Do you know about the Washington statue?" Coppini, who also designed the Washington statue, depicted the President standing proudly with his left hand grasping the hilt of a sword slung near his waist. Viewed from the northeast as though approaching from the Wilson statue, however, it is blatantly obvious that Washington's hand is wrapped firmly around his surprisingly anatomically proportioned penis. While officially unseemly, these discourses exemplify the vitality of the ritualized assemblage in the campus' lore.

By the 1980s, the ritualized assemblage constructed around the Tower had established itself as both a site of contestation and an active producer of the identity of the university. Constructed in the early 1930s, the different memory sites of the ritualized assemblage oriented the campus southward—both spatially and ideologically—and linked it to the State Capitol. In the aftermath of the 1966 killings, the Tower was bifurcated into a dual site of memory of both the university and the killings. National public memory of the killings came to be located in the cultural mediascape in the form of writing, songs, films and websites which glorified the perpetrator to the exclusion of the violence that took place that day or its victims. The ritualized assemblage on the University of Texas campus was no longer just mortar, copper and inscription; it had become the heart, the soul, and the narrative of the people who claimed the university as their own. And it would be within this growing and productive commemorative milieu that the attempt to create a memory site for the victims of the 1966 killings would enter, and be beholden to, after thirty-three years of commemorative silence.

Revolution in 1933. See "William Battle letter to J.S. Moss," February 20, 1933. In WJBP, Box 4P256, "Washington Statue Correspondence."

4.3 Reinventing Rituals & Reopening the Tower, 1986-1999

In the 1980s, the University of Texas was experiencing an identity crisis that prompted a move to invent new campus rituals and eventually led to the reopening of the Tower. Jim Nicar, an alumnus and renowned UT historian, recalled that the University ceremonies and rituals of the period

> didn't really attach people to the university…alumni involvement was pretty low. I think part of the reason is that your experience as a student at the university will determine your alumni involvement later…so there was during this period, an explicit effort to create a sense of community that in the 1980s was not just lacking but was completely gone.[57]

UT's move to revive and invent new rituals and traditions that, as Hobsbawm and Ranger note, "established or [symbolized] social cohesion or the membership of groups, real or artificial communities."[58] The students' lead the way in the establishment of the new campus traditions in the 1980s, and university administrators followed the student's lead in the 1990s with broad revisions to the institutions' commemorative traditions. The enactment of many of these new traditions on the South Mall coupled with the thirtieth anniversary of the killings in 1996 stimulated a renewed public interest that led to the reopening of the Tower in 1999.

In the mid 1980s, student leaders formed the Spirit and Traditions Board (S&T) established three revitalized and invented rituals designed to build a stronger sense of community at UT. In order to start successfuly, the S&T Board's first new ritual was intimately tied to the university's popular football program. The group rediscovered a ritual begun in 1941 against Texas A&M called the "Texas Hex Rally," in which red candles were burned the night before a game to "hex" the Aggies. The S&T Board

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[57] Jim Nicar, Interview with the author, June 13, 2012.
[58] Hobsbawm and Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition*., 11.

revived the long discontinued Hex rally in 1986 and were granted permission by the administration to have the Longhorn Band lead students across campus and converge at the South Mall at midnight. The event gained so much attention that President William Cunningham flew back from a formal dinner in north Texas and had a police escort from the Austin airport in order to ensure that he made it to the rally, albeit still in his tuxedo, on time.[59] Following the success of the Hex Rally, the S&T Board also revived the Torchlight Parade for the game against division rival Oklahoma in 1987.[60] The final tradition that the S&T Board sought unsuccessfully to establish was the creation of a "annual class gift" to the university in the hopes that by each UT class "helping out and giving something to the campus, then it [became] more [their] campus."[61] The idea for the first class gift was a twenty-foot seal of the university to be placed in the center of the upper terrace on the South Mall. Support for the gift was high, but Vice President Shirley

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[59] Jim Nicar interview.

[60] Interestingly, the Texas Exes alumni association, which, in cooperation with their student chapter, currently organizes these events, acknowledges on its website the two decade hiatus of the Torchlight Parade, but suggest incorrectly that the Hex Rally has been continued, unabated, since 1941. On the Torchlight Parade, the Texas Exes website notes correctly (in italics) that "The first Torchlight Parade began in 1916 before the Thanksgiving Texas vs. A&M game. In keeping with the time, men and women marched separately to Old Main. Texas won the game and the parade became a spirit staple until the late 1960s. *After a 20-year hiatus, the Texas Exes restored the Torchlight Parade tradition in 1987*." In discussing the history of the Hex Rally, however, they incorrectly assert (in italics) its uninterrupted longevity in the following ritual description. "On Thanksgiving Day in 1941 UT was to travel to College Station to take on the Texas Aggies. Texas A&M was having a banner season. Undefeated and ranked second in the nation by the AP . . . for 18 years - the Longhorns had been unable to win a game at Kyle Field. Desperate to break the College Station "jinx," UT students consulted Madam Agusta Hipple, a local fortune teller. She instructed the students to burn red candles the week before the game as a way of "hexing" the Aggies . . . The rally begins with trumpeters sounding off from the top of the tower for all of Austin to hear. The Longhorn Band and Texas football team enter to the beat of the band as student's erupt in wild cheers and begin the rally. Student spirit groups then raise the energy of the crowd with their electrifying dances and cheers leading up to the most anticipated part of the night. Head Coach Mack Brown, two players, and strength and conditioning coach Jeff "Maddog" Madden speak to the students and stir them into a frenzy as "Maddog" does his infamous "Ooooooooo TEXAS!" cheer. Next, *as Longhorns have done since 1941, a Hex is put on the other team*. The "Eyes of Texas" is sung three times as the thousands of students pass on the flame from candle to candle until the [South] Mall is illuminated." The fact that both of these traditions were discontinued in late 1960s is, while inconclusive, is worthy of mention in the current context of the memory of the 1966 Tower killings. See, respectively, http://texasexes.org/get-involved/torchlight-parade.aspx / http://texasexes.org/get-involved/hex-rally.aspx. Both accessed, November 21, 2012.

[61] Jim Nicar interview.

Bird Perry "stymied" and ultimately blocked the idea because "she just didn't think it was appropriate" for the University.[62] The student efforts, both successful and unsuccessful, intentionally used the ritualized assemblage as the setting for a new repertoire of campus rituals.

From 1993 to 1997, the administration of President Robert "Bob" Berdahl built upon the success of these earlier student created traditions, and reinvented some of the University's most sacred rites of passage. Berdahl charged Susan Clagett, then the Vice President of Development, to

> think seriously and creatively about what needed doing to strengthen the university's relationships with both internal and external constituencies. The means of communication was symbolic, and that is the language that was utilized to create a body of high quality, relevant events that represented the institution to its publics…[the University of Texas] wasn't demonstrating what it felt like to be loved back. That is an important role for an institution and it takes careful thought so the responses are meaningful and genuine and appropriate to the unique culture of the place.[63]

Clagett stressed symbolic communication in her active redesign and creation of many new official university rituals. The foremost ritual to receive attention was Commencement which Clagett decided to "approach as theater" by consulting with "people who thought visually" like artists, musicians and architects for advice on how to make this particular rite of passage more engaging and memorable.[64] The revamped Commencement ceremony quickly caught on and attendance rose from 10,500 in 1995,

[62] The support for the first proposed class gift came from ocal businesses offering to donate labor, commencement organizers proposing a realignment of the ceremony to incorporate the seal, many student groups starting successful fundraising efforts, and even the Presidents Office reviewing the proposal. Ibid.
[63] Susan Clagett interview.
[64] Susan Clagett interview. Jim Nicar explained that at the time of Berdahl's arrival, Commencement was a "very dry ceremony . . . usually the stands they would set up . . . were half full. It really was kind of sad for the University of Texas—it was not (an event) that you would want to go to."[64] To address this problem,

to over 30,000 by 2012.[65] Clagett's theatrical vision "made (Commencement) fun." and quickly became "one of those ceremonies that people will remember—it will attach them to University."[66] Clagett also created "Gone to Texas," a commencement-like performance on the South Mall designed to introduce freshman "to the culture, traditions, and magic of the university."[67] Following the student lead, UT administrators used the ritualized assemblage as a stage to revitalize the unity and identity of the university.

Clagett also guided the creation of a new ritual called "UT Remembers," that was designed to memorialize the death of campus community members. Clagett explains that in pursing this project she was inspired

> to think about milestones of human existence and development, and I realized that UT was not acknowledging these things—when children leave home to attend the university, when students or faculty receive high honors, when employees retire after long years of service, when employees and students die.[68]

With this objective in mind, in 1996 Clagett formed the UT Cares Committee "to provide support to the University community in times of trauma or loss."[69] In 1998, the committee unveiled UT Remembers in the first week of May, where university administrators read the names of every UT community member who has died in the prior year. The daylong event actively utilized different parts of the ritualized assemblage: the

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[65] Susan Clagett offered the following numbers: 1995—10,500; 1996—13,000; 1997—15,000; 2012—30,000. Ibid.

[66] Ibid.

[67] "Camp Texas," freshman interest groups or "FIGs," and "Fresh Start" were all examples of newly created rituals, but the hallmark ritual was "Gone to Texas" which provided 8000 new freshman, on the night before their first class, with "a mini-production of Commencement. It is to say to the new students, 'we want you to come back here in four years and graduate from the University of Texas at Austin.' Ibid.

[68] Susan Clagett interview.

[69] The UT Cares Committee spent two years carefully planning what would become UT Remembers in order to feel, Clagett explained, "comfortable proposing and producing a memorial program" that would openly address the death of members of the UT community. Clagett remembered having a conversation with Dr. Edwin Sharp in which he stated in passing, "I hope that there is a day when people think '*UT cares . . .'*" She pointed to this comment as the impetus for the name of the committee. Susan Clagett, Interview with the Author, August 24, 2012. For second quote, see David Maly, "Tower to shine orange for annual 'UT Remembers'," *The Daily Texan*, May 4, 2012.

two flags on the South Mall are lowered to half-mast, the bell in the Tower is rung after each name is read, and a Tower lighting configuration called "The Darkened Tower" begins after sunset.[70] Another important commemorative innovation of UT Remembers was the recording and archiving of attendee's memories of the dead. UT provided official stationary for people to record whatever reflections they wanted to share and were given the promise that these memories would "preserved in the University's permanent archives" in the Briscoe Center for American History.[71] The UT Remembers ceremony established a new precedent of commemorating the death of university members on campus and within the ritualized assemblage.

The thirtieth anniversary of the killings in 1996 resulted in unprecedented interest in the reopening of the Tower and inspired a number of successful proposals to create new memory sites in the ritualized assemblage. On the anniversary, Clagett recalls, "the University had a 'quiet' observance" in which the bells were tolled sixteen times for each of the victims;" a practice that was "was a new experience" on campus.[72] Nationally, the "heightened public interest in the three-decade mark," resulted in a number of media retrospectives by the likes of news anchor Walter Cronkite and journalist Hank Stuever.[73] Locally, the most noticeable result of this anniversary was that it generated "considerable press coverage relating to the possibility of the reopening of the Tower observation

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[70] Susan Clagett interview.
[71] Larry Faulkner, Author's transcription of the UT Tower Garden Dedication ceremony, August 1, 1999; see also, "A guide to the UT Remembers Records, 1999-2012," Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin, http://www.lib.utexas.edu/taro/utcah/00561/cah-00561.html,
[72] Susan Clagett quoted in Shirley Bird Perry, ed., "TOWER GARDEN REVIEW—CHRONOLOGY: Updated: May 10, 2006." In the Tower Garden Memorial Archive (hereafter TGMA), 2005-2006, in the possession of University of Texas Vice Provost Neal Armstrong. It is notable and surprising that the 1991 twenty-fifth anniversary had "nothing planned in the way of a ceremony or service or anything. The flags will be at half-staff, but that's all." See, John Durham quoted in ibid.
[73] Walter Cronkite, "Cronkite remembers," *Austin-American Statesman,* May 23, 1996; Hank Stuever, "99 minutes, 30 years later," *Austin-American Statesman,* July 29, 1996

deck."[74] Moreover, UT students began to organize themselves in order actively lobby for new memory sites to be added to the campus's ritualized assemblage in addition to the reopening of the Tower. A combination of student mobilization and administrative anticipation serious initiated public discussion about reopening the Tower and spurned the first significant growth of the ritualized assemblage since the 1930s.

The new commemorative sensibility on the campus in the 1990s found its most telling manifestation in Dr. Rosa Eberly's visionary decision to offer a course in the fall semester of 1996 entitled "The UT Tower and Public Memory." Eberly questioned why every year on August 1st people in Austin inundated local radio stations with calls "to narrate at length what they had been doing" on that day in 1966. Eberly concluded that "these [local] people made those calls because their memories had no public place to go other than talk radio, even 30 years after the shootings. Their memories were like roaming ghosts."[75] The Tower course was Eberly's way of addressing the lack of a site for memory of the Tower killings in the local community, which she envisioned as a

> class where students at the university would speak and write in common about whether and how they thought the Tower shootings were and ought to be remembered. In other words, seeking and not finding the *topos* from which to judge the state of public memory of the Tower shootings, I decided to head to the undergraduate rhetoric classroom, a place I consider a protopublic space.[76]

Eberly taught the course two times and students produced dozens of op-ed articles and numerous interviews, some of which were collected in 1999 into a "special, keepsake

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[74] Perry, "TOWER GARDEN REVIEW—CHRONOLOGY: Updated: May 10, 2006." TGMA, 2005-2006 Folder.

[75] Eberly, "Yankee Rhetorician Tells it on the Tower: Why We Must Care," in Fischer, *Our Tower: Reflections on Public Space and Memory*. See also, Eberly, "Everywhere You Go, It's There: Forgetting and Remembering the Univerity of Texas Tower Shootings." 68.

[76] "Everywhere You Go, It's There: Forgetting and Remembering the Univerity of Texas Tower Shootings." 71. My underlining.

publication" entitled *Our Tower: Reflections on Public Space and Memory*.[77] Eberly described the course as "a living educational memorial" and many of Eberly's students played a leading role in campaigning for both the creation of new memory sites on campus and the reopening of the Tower.[78]

The most significant project pursued by the students in the early 1990s was the addition of a new memory site that became the first non-white figure in the ritualized assemblage on campus. The Martin Luther King Jr. Sculpture Foundation (MLKSF) was formed in 1987 by students to, as Fisher explains be "a timely addition to campus memory, [because] it is high time to grace this campus with heroes from every culture, not just confederate men who don't speak to the present or the future…clearly, we need newer heroes."[79] Unlike the statues on the South Mall, however, no UT benefactors or organizations offered to pay for the MLK statue. It as only after students voted on a referendum to impose new fees on themselves that the MLK statue was finally dedicated, seven years later, on September 24, 1999 on the East Mall.[80] The MLK statue marked the new generation of UT student's efforts to redefine the identity of the university by expanding the range of public memories included in the ritualized assemblage.

The final location of the MLK statue and subsequent statues on peripheral malls powerfully illustrates the ability of the ritualized assemblage by the 1990s to dictate and circumscribe the terms of its expansion. The MLK Statue was constructed on the East Mall nearly two times as far from the Tower as the Memorials on the South Mall. In

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[77] Joshua Fisher email to President Larry Faulkner, April 14, 1999. In POR, 1998-2000 (POTOWER) Tower: 2008-268 (Box 21).
[78] Eberly, "Everywhere You Go, It's There: Forgetting and Remembering the Univerity of Texas Tower Shootings." 78-80.
[79] Joshua Fisher, "Editor's Note," Fischer, *Our Tower: Reflections on Public Space and Memory*.
[80] Jim Nicar, "How the MLK Statue Came to the East Mall," *40 Acres*, Special "UT History" Edition, February 2, 2012; Charles Roeckle, Interview with the Author, August 5, 2012.

2007 and 2009, statues of civil rights activists Caesar Chavez and Barbara Jordan were added in far more proximate locations to the Tower, but on the West and North Malls respectively.[81] As a result, the first statues on the UT campus dedicated to historical figures who were black, Latino, and a woman, were located on the peripheral malls. The influence of the established ritualized assemblage on the South Mall is illustrated by the very fact that there was never a public discussion about the location of these new memorials.[82] Such discussions were not hindered by the lack of a sympathetic campus community, but rather, because the assemblage itself made the consideration of a balanced or coextensive outcome a commemorative impossibility.[83] In lay terms, the absurdity of Jefferson Davis standing next to Martin Luther King Jr. in perpetuity eliminated the possibility of anyone ever even considering having a conversation about such an arrangement.

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[81] Both memorials were very close to the base of the Tower, a noticeable contrast to the MLK sculpture. Interestingly, both were dedicated after the university abandoned the Tower Garden memorial in early 2007. For a University press release that discusses the commemorative processes and dedication of both these memory sites, see Robert D. Meckle, "Caesar Chavez Statue Unveiled on West Mall of University of Texas at Austin Campus," University of Texas at Austin Press Release, October 9, 2007.

[82] The spatial politics of the campus were addressed indirectly years after the dedication of the MLK statue in a meeting in which President Larry Faulkner and UT sought input from black faculty members about the ongoing controversy concerning the Confederate statues on the South Mall. Charles Roeckle remembers that the gathered faculty concluded that the best path forward was to "create a new history of statues. The South Mall Statuary already has a history that won't be erased by changing it." The black faculty's position, interestingly, echoed defenders of the Littlefield Gateway's stance that the statues were a part of the history of the campus. In conceding to the status quo of the memory sites on the South Mall, the black faculty failed to understand how proximity to the Tower affected the influence of the memorial. The result of this has been that while the MLK Statue has served as a rallying point for many university events and parades since its unveiling, the events themselves are limited in the sense that they address only certain identity groups which tend to be "minority issues." Unlike the memory sites on the South Mall which are regularly populated with important and university wide events like Commencement, for example, the memorials located elsewhere are, spatially speaking, perpetually peripheral and imbued with far less influence on the identity of the University of Texas. See Charles Roeckle interview for comments on the meeting with the black faculty about the South Mall Statuary.

[83] Viewed individually, the attempt might be made explain this in terms of spatial availability. The fatal weakness of this argument, however, is that the site on the South Mall that Paul Cret himself called the "the most suitable [site] . . . in the center of the [South Mall's] court of honor" on the upper terrace, remains empty to this day. Additionally, this is not even taking into account sites of less prime location that might be considered on the South Mall without any necessary reconfiguration of the Littlefield Gateway. See Cret Letter to Battle," with accompanying sketch by Cret. February 19, 1931. In WJBP, Box 4P256, "Washington Statue Correspondence."

All the campus landscape development, reinvented rituals and commemorative discussions on campus inspired the students to join forces with the President to reopen the Tower. Larry Faulkner was appointed President in 1998, and his ongoing ties to the university since his time as a graduate student in 1966 enabled him to reflect on "how inhibiting the Tower closure was for the community and the university," which led him to start "thinking about [the reopening] a bit in the transition between my appointment [as UT President] and when I actually showed up."[84] Faulkner's preparation was auspicious, because two weeks after he arrived to his new office, a student proposal hit his desk expressing a fervent desire to reopen the Tower.[85] Student Government President Annie Holand took the lead in spearheading the student effort to reopen the Tower because she believed it was "important to create a sense of community. To say that this is *your place*."[86] Faulkner described his work with Holland and the student government as a "fortunate" collaboration because it was "helpful to have a parallel lobby in the student body."[87] The appointment of a new President with personal connections to UT and a student body largely disassociated from the past stigma of the Tower enabled a campus-wide dialogue aimed at reopening the Tower.

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[84] By the time his presidency began in 1998, Faulkner had a long association with UT that included starting graduate school in 1966, being hired as faculty in 1983, and, after leaving for the University of Illinois, buying a house in Austin in 1993. Larry Falkner interview.

[85] The student proposal was authored by authored by Heidi Baker, Duane Pozza, and Martha Shelton. See Joshua Fischer, "Faulkner's Focus Opens Deck," in Fischer, *Our Tower: Reflections on Public Space and Memory*. See also, Christy Hoppe, "UT students aim to take back tower: Proposal for access sent to administrators," *The Dallas Morning News*, August 2, 1998. Two other notable letters to university administrators lobbying for the reopening of the Tower, one drafted by a student, the other by an alumni, include, Jim Dedman, "RE: Access Policies to the University of Texas Tower's observation deck, et cetera," a.k.a. "Uniform Tower Access Policy," and Gary Lawless letter to Donald L. Evans, Chairman of the Board of Regents, August 5, 1998, in POR, 1998-2000 (POTOWER) Tower: 2008-268 (Box 21).

[86] Annie Holand quote in Christy Hoppe, "UT students aim to take back tower: Proposal for access sent to administrators," *The Dallas Morning News*, August 2, 1998.

[87] Larry Falkner interview.

At the end of 1998, President Faulkner submitted a proposal to the Board of Regents outlining a plan to reopen the Tower. Faulkner argued that the Tower was

> the most important symbol of academic aspiration and achievement in Texas…it is my opinion that we should actively use this icon…if this symbol of academic achievement remains closed to the public, we are left with only the history of unfortunate experiences associated with the Tower and few occasions to create positive experiences for new generations.[88]

Faulkner's proposal used a simple yet effective strategy: it involved a wide range of university constituents who comprehensively addressed every previous objection to the feasibility of reopening the Tower.[89] Three "major issues" were identified in the proposal: management of safety and concerns, American Disability Association Access standards, and the administrative issue of tour organization and management. Previous UT Presidents had routinely cited the cost of ensuring the Tower was secure and accessible as prohibitive, but alumni Jim Dedman insightfully noted that it was not really an economic issue, but rather "a political one."[90] Nationally renowned architect and artisan Lars Stanley was hired to construct a "protective crown" for the observation deck that maintained the aesthetic conception of Paul Cret's original design and addressed the

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[88] Larry Faulkner, "Tower Proposal," October 23, 1998.

[89] Faulkner organized a working group to draft the proposal that include the Office of Business Affairs, Campus Planning and Facilities Management, the Physical Plant, Student Affairs and the University Police. See ibid.

[90] Faulkner's proposal addressed security by urging the installation of a metal detector and stationing of a police officer in the Tower. On the issue of ADA standards, Faulkner addressed Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and proposed a solution that was not cost prohibitive. Quote from Jim Dedman, "RE: Access Policies to the University of Texas Tower's observation deck, et cetera," a.k.a. "Uniform Tower Access Policy." See also, Gary Lawless' letter to Donald L. Evans, Chairman of the Board of Regents, August 5, 1998 in POR, 1998-2000 (POTOWER) Tower: 2008-268 (Box 21).

issue of safety.[91] The final proposal was persuasive, because just weeks after receiving it, the Board of Regents approved its implementation in November of 1998.[92]

The University merged the reopening of the Tower with the 116th anniversary celebration of the university and created a ceremony to reclaim the Tower for "this [University], the state [of Texas], and the nation."[93] The day-long ceremony was entitled "The Tower Reopens!", and included a morning "Birthday Celebration" and a symposium entitled "The Open Tower" in which members of the university faculty and administration reflected "on the Tower's real and symbolic past."[94] In the middle of the day President Faulkner delivered his "State of the University Address," where he confidently proclaimed

> in this year of the millennium, I ask our community to [acknowledge]…that audacity—daring—surprising boldness— is a part of our cultural heritage and ought to be a part of our plans…it goes far beyond the vanity of rankings. It goes directly to the question of whether the Texas of the early 21st century, at a pivotal point in her history, will or will not…succeed in the mission of service for which this university really exists.

After detailing the ways in which he would address the issue of establishing the identity of UT in the new millennium, Faulkner continued

> As a means of observing our 116th anniversary, and as a gesture symbolic of our desire to enhance every Texan's sense of ownership of the University, we will formally reopen the observation deck of the UT Tower about six hours from now. It is my hope that we will come to view this event as the beginning of

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[91] Nancy Neff, "Campus Cameo: Austinite Helps Ready The Tower Observation Deck for Grand Reopening," 1999, publication unknown. Copy of the article in POR, 1998-2000 (POTOWER) Tower: 2008-268 (Box 21).

[92] Larry Faulkner to Members of the Board of Regents, October 23 1998. A hand written note from Board or Regents member (name illegible), in POR, 1998-2000 (POTOWER) Tower: 2008-268 (Box 21).

[93] Joshua Fischer, "Faulkner's Focus Opens Deck" in Fischer, *Our Tower: Reflections on Public Space and Memory*.

[94] UTexas@116 Program, "The Tower Reopens! An Anniversary Celebration" The University of Texas at Austin, September 15, 1999. It is notable that both Rosa Eberly and Kenneth Foote were on the symposium panel.

> new, constructive chapter in the history of the Tower and of the University [because] the Tower plays a central role in the daily life of the campus. Everything from marriage proposals to commencement ceremonies to spirited public debate takes place in and around this magnificent building. The Tower is linked to our experiences on the 40 Acres—moments of triumph and elation, of sadness and loss. Today, we will climb the stairs to the observation deck once again. We will savor the view of this special corner of the world . . . the Tower has become the most powerful symbol of higher education in Texas, and we are proud to share it fully once again.[95]

On "normal" UT anniversaries, the "State of the University Address" is the keynote of the day, but on this particular day, the address and the daytime activities merely set the stage for the main event.

The evening's "Tower Concert and Ceremonial Reopening of the Tower" made calculated use of the South Mall, patriotic orchestration, and the thousands of assembled bodies as the means of literally bringing the Tower back to life. The music used in the ceremony emphasized southern connections and conveyed a historic mood with renditions of *The Battle Hymn of the Republic, Southern Harmony, Camelot Fanfare,* Richard Wagner's "King Heinrich's Call" from *Lohengrin*, and the university song, *The Eyes of Texas*.[96] President Faulkner stressed the historical context of the evening by reminding that audience that

> on this day in 1883, the University of Texas held its opening ceremonies. Tonight we celebrate 116 years of excellence; we also celebrate the reopening of the Tower, the architectural and spiritual heart of our campus . . . [and] the cultural center of the University.[97]

[95] Larry Faulkner, "Address on the State of the University," Delivered in Jessen Auditorium, Homer P. Rainey Hall, University of Texas at Austin, September 15, 1999.
[96] The rendition of Wagner was advertised as "a "World Premiere" of United States Marine Corp Band Director John Bourgeouis' arrangement." UTexas @ 116 Program.
[97] Larry Faulkner, "Welcoming Remarks," at the "Tower Concert and Ceremonial Reopening of the Tower," University of Texas at Austin, September 15, 1999. Author's transcription.

Like President Bill Clinton's speech at Michigan State University after the Oklahoma City Bombing, Faulkner noted the historical parallels between the moment and the founding of the institution.[98] Following the speech, university staff selected members of the audience to join "representatives of the UT community [and] Dr. Faulkner atop the Tower for the Ceremonial First Public Tour of the Tower Observation Deck."[99] In order to share this experience with the audience, "footage was broadcast down below to the [South] Mall so members of the audience could experience being the first to *see* the long unfamiliar view from the Tower observation deck."[100] The reopening ceremonies used a complex mix of auditory and visual media to affectively and corporally create a strong public memory of the Tower's rebirth in the minds and bodies of the assembled UT community members.[101]

One remarkable letter written to President Faulkner on April 20, 1999—the day of the Columbine killings—illuminates how the Tower reopening ceremony was organized similarly to religious rituals concerned with cleansing after death. UT Religious Studies professor John Nelson began his letter to the President by acknowledging that

> today's sad news from Colorado is motivating me in part to write to you since a number of similarities exist between these two institutions of learning, one suddenly thrust into the limelight

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[98] Bill Clinton, "Remarks at the Michigan State University Commencement Ceremony in East Lansing, Michigan, " May 5, 1995. *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States*, U.S. Government Printing Office. Available online at: http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/browse/collection.action?collectionCode=PPP&browsePath=president-58&isCollapsed=true&leafLevelBrowse=false&ycord=0 Accessed June 4, 2013.

[99] UTexas@116 Program, Third Footnote. A ceremonial procession of the winners of the competition and university officials then boarded the elevator for the top of the Tower while renditions of *The Merry King, A Gaelic Blessing,* and *Worthy to Be Praised* were played as the build up to the official reopening moment.

[100] Susan Clagett interview.

[101] What was conspicuous in it's absence in the reopening ceremony was any mention of the Tower Memorial Garden that was dedicated two months earlier on the thirty-third anniversary of the Tower killings. Symbolically speaking, however, the obscuration of Tower Garden Memorial is representative of how the shadowed history of the Tower killings was becoming increasingly incompatible with the university's attempts to proclaim a new and cleansed identity for the Tower and the university itself.

> because of violence and death and the other sharing a similar notoriety some thirty-[three] years ago.[102]

Professor Nelson recognized that a new retrospective commemorations period was beginning at that university that would have to address three decades of "negative history associated with the" Tower.[103] Nelson suggested convening a group of figures from different faith traditions "in order to represent the diversity of the student population as well as that of the state" to conduct a "private ritual on the observation deck" followed by "another ritual…on the [South Mall] for the general public" in order to symbolically cleanse the Tower's "dark history."[104] While there is no indication that this proposal influenced any formal university preparations, Nelson's suggestion is exactly what happened with secular university representatives standing in for the suggested religious figures. The Tower reopening ceremony used the cultural prestige of university officials as representatives of school and state identity to reintegrate a cleansed memory of the Tower back into "the life of the campus."[105]

The collective work of students and administrators sought to reawaken the campus's commemorative landscape and chart a new identity for the University of Texas. Joshua Fisher gave voice to what students and administrators hoped to accomplish.

> It is safe to say that most of us are immensely excited to see the Tower's re-opening, a symbolic gesture we see as representative of the University's willingness to open things up here. The status quo has ruled for too long. It is time to create new memory on this campus, surrounded by pride and excellence, not tragedy and closure.[106]

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[102] John Nelson letter to Larry Faulkner, April 20, 1999, in POR, 1998-2000 (POTOWER) Tower: 2008-268 (Box 21).
[103] Ibid.
[104] John Nelson letter to Larry Faulkner, April 20, 1999; Joshua Fischer, "Cleansing the Tower" in Fischer, *Our Tower: Reflections on Public Space and Memory*.
[105] This was a phrase that Faulkner used repeatedly throughout his tenure as President, see Joshua Fischer, "Faulkner's Focus Opens Deck" in ibid.
[106] "Editors Note," ibid.

In the 1980s students initiated a period of commemorative creation, expansion and revision, and university administrators continued this process institutionally in the 1990s. The campus' ritualized assemblage was not merely revitalized in the process, it was the space in which the rituals were held and played an active role in governing the terms of its own expansion. The reopening of the Tower in 1999 was a culmination of all of these efforts and symbolized the university's desire to move past the stigma associated with the Tower for over three decades. Yet the reopening ceremonies also marked the outset of the university's official efforts to create a memorial for the 1966 killings, and this process was only just beginning.

4.4 Retrospective Memorialization of the 1966 Tower Killings, 1999-2007

The initial dedication of the Tower Memorial Garden in the space on campus known as the Turtle Ponds in August of 1999 marked the beginning of the University of Texas' attempt to design and construct a permanent memorial that ultimately failed. At the center of this process were the Tower Memory Bearers, a group of five UT administrators who led the three committees created for the project and who shared a unique commemorative sensibility about the killings because they had all been graduate students in 1966. An advisory committee was formed in 1999 to research what kind of memorial would be best for the university and how to go about pursing the project. In 2001, a second committee was formed and unanimously selected Jill Bedgood's 'evolution' as the design for the memorial. Despite nearly five years of research and planning, however, the Tower Memory Bearers underestimated the difficulty of fundraising for the memorial without a resonant symbol to inspire the alumni base that

still held the commemorative sensibility of silence regarding the killings. While a third committee was formed to devise new methods of fundraising, in 2007 the university abandoned their plans for the memorial they had spent eight years pursuing.

All the university administrators who President Faulkner charged with leading the memorial process shared the bond of having had a traumatic personal experiences of the Tower killings. On August 1, 1966, three of the Tower Memory Bearers were fortunate enough to be off campus at the time of the shooting. Charles Roeckle was driving away from Austin to take a job in south Texas and had a friend who had agreed to turn in his recently completed Master's Thesis for him After learning about the killings on the radio he ended up spending the entire day frantically trying to contact his friend for fear that she was shot while delivering his thesis.[107] Susan Clagett had just finished her summer semester and was "sunbathing and enjoying freedom" at the time of the shootings and made an "effort [not] to go to the campus in the days and weeks afterwards."[108] Larry Faulkner was on campus the day of the shooting because

> August 1st was payday. Checks were in the Bursars office in the main building, but when I arrived there I encountered a sign around noon that read 'Checks are not available until 2 pm,' so I left and went home. Upon arriving home, my wife asked me if I had heard about the shooting on campus. We listened to the events on the radio all afternoon.[109]

Neal Armstrong and Shirley Bird Perry were not so lucky—both were on campus and were shot at by the perpetrator. Years later, Perry shared her experience in a personal letter to a family member of one of the victims. "I was waking to lunch on the Drag [and

[107] Charles Roeckle interview.
[108] Larry Falkner interview; Charles Roeckle Personal correspondence with the author, November 5, 2012; Susan Clagett interview.
[109] Larry Falkner interview.

the gunman] shot at me, missing me by about a foot."[110] These five Tower Memory Bearers held traumatic memories of the killings that inspired their commitment to creating the Tower Garden Memorial.

While there is no definitive origin of the idea to create a memorial, a letter written by UT alumni Richard Brown to President Faulkner on October 6, 1998 had a profound impact. Brown started out by congratulating Faulkner on taking "steps to reopen the observation deck of the Tower—something that is long overdue," before noting

> one final step I believe is overdue and will provide closure is a permanent recognition of the victims of the Tower shootings of 1966. My suggestion is the erection of a modest plaque or marker at the island garden area just outside the east doors of the Main Building. The inscription would read something like: 'This garden is dedicated as a living memorial to those who lost their lives on August 1, 1966.'…the tragic incident is still firmly etched in the minds of many Austinites. I think a simple acknowledgement of this type is necessary for all.[111]

Brown's letter clearly influenced President Faulkner because one month later he responded personally.

> I have discussed your suggestion about a plaque or marker with the appropriate individuals on campus, and there is agreement that a plaque should be created and placed in the island garden area. The wording that you suggested was well received and will be used on the plaque.[112]

Six days before the dedication of the Tower Memorial Garden in July of 1999, Brown contributed $500 to the project and Faulkner again responded "I am glad, too, to see that you are taking a strong sense of ownership in this project. You certainly deserved to do

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[110] For Shirley Bird Perry's experience, see "SPB to Ms. Eckman-Harris," April 11, 2006, in TGMA, 2005-2006 Folder; Charles Roeckle and Larry Faulkner informed me of Neal Armstrong being shot at, see respective interviews. Dr. Armstrong did not voluntarily offer any information about his experience of having been shot at and I did not ask him to do so because I believe is an ethically improper question due to the potential trauma of such an experience and an individuals memory of it.
[111] Richard Brown letter to Larry Faulkner, October 7, 1998. In POR, 1998-2000 (POTOWER) Tower: 2008-268 (Box 21).
[112] Larry Faulkner letter to Richard Brown, November 3, 1998. In Ibid.

so, for it was your earlier letter to me that began to move the idea among the University's executive officers."[113]

That Brown's letter had a significant influence is clear, but what is equally important is how the letter suggested to President Faulkner and university administrators that there was alumni support for the memorial. A decade later, Faulkner did not recall Brown's letter, but had a telling response when reminded about the initial letter and his responses to it. "Richard Brown's idea came at a time in which a lot of things were happening at the university that made it auspicious that he contributed his ideas at that time."[114] The memorial was going to have to be financed through external fundraising efforts, and thus the support of alumni would be vital to the project's successful completion. The idea for a memorial may have been in the air at this time, but Brown's identity as a supportive UT alumnus—as opposed to the current students who were lobbying for the reopening of the Tower at this same time—suggested support from the alumni constituency that would ultimately be responsible for funding the project. Brown's letter thus served the dual role of inspiring the idea for the memorial and suggesting to UT administrators that there was alumni support for the project.

When UT administrators decided to move forward with the Tower Garden Memorial, the other constituency consulted in the early stages was the victims' relatives, who were consistently supportive of the project. Terry Evers, who worked in the Presidents office, was given the unenviable job of contacting all the families to solicit their feedback. In preparation, Evers and Clagett met with local pastor Larry Bethune, who warned, "UT has been in institutional denial about the shooting and thus…anger will

[113] Larry Faulkner letter to Richard Brown, July 30, 1999. For Brown's letter and contribution, see Richard Brown letter to Larry Faulkner, July 25, 1999. Ibid.
[114] Larry Falkner interview.

be a likely initial response because UT waited 33 years to acknowledge the victims, and some of that is justified because it is true. But the response is healthy for it is an important first step."[115] Bethune's warning, however, did not come to pass because nearly every relative reacted to Evers similarly to Clair Wilson James, who

> repeatedly expressed her thanks for dedicating the garden. She described how terrible it has been for her being unable to talk about the event in all these years. She was saddened that no one in the University ever expressed sympathy for her loss…she reasoned that it was the Sixties, and people were more stoic then, in fact, admired for holding their problems inside. The only person who reached out to her in sympathy was C.A. Whitman, the father of [the perpetrator].[116]

John Palmer, who lost his mother Vera in the killings, articulated another widely shared sentiment when he requested, "that his mother's name be on the memorial."[117] By 1999, the usage of names on mass murder memorials had become commonplace, but for the family members of victims of the Tower killings it was deemed essential in light of the over three decades of official silence concerning their murdered loved ones. Evers recounted that the sister of Roy Dell Schmidt "said she has always felt that her brother died for nothing, because the tragedy has never been discussed or acknowledged."[118] Collectively, the family members were supportive of the planed memorial and hoped that it would finally mark the names—and thus the lives—of the people who had been so violently and abruptly taken from them in 1966.

In the days after the dedication of the Tower Memorial Garden in August 1999, President Faulkner created the "Tower Garden Advisory Committee," and named Charles

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[115] Terry Evers, notes on "Meeting with Pastor Larry Bethune," June 25, 1999. In POR, 1998-2000 (POTOWER) Tower: 2008-268 (Box 21).
[116] Terry Evers, Listing of Potential Attendees (Victims or Family of Victims) and Other Contact Victims [of] August 1, 1966," 1999. In TGMA, 1999 folder.
[117] Ibid.
[118] Ibid.

Roeckle, the Deputy to the President, as the Chair of the committee. The university had the good fortune of having Dr. Kenneth Foote, the most knowledgeable scholar of the history of memory sites to violence in the United States, on the faculty and he joined the committee.[119] In addition to Dr. Foote, architect David Heymann and landscape architect Eleanor McKinney's membership resulted in the compilation of an impressive preparatory reading list that included articles on the Oklahoma City Memorial, the Kent State University memorial, the National AIDS Memorial Grove, Foote's book, and Gary Lavergne's *A Sniper in the Tower*.[120] The thirty years since the Tower killings allowed the advisory committee a significant degree of retrospective reflection and historical comparison not possible in a contemporary mass murder memorial processes.

The question of how the victims of the killings would be represented in the memorial became the central focus of the advisory committee. Roeckle recounted the two questions that drove his committee. "Should there be a monument on the site? [We answered this question] Yes. Should there be names on the monument? [We answered this question] No."[121] The three decades since the killings had transformed the question of "who was a victim/who was killed" into a complex political issue. The committee and university decided that the memorial would not include names because "the number of

[119] Foote, *Shadowed Ground: America's Landscapes of Violence and Tragedy*.
[120] Kim A. O'Connell, "The Gates of Memory," *Landscape Architecture*, September 2000; Clare Cooper Marcus, "Act of Healing: At the National AIDS Memorial Grove, restoring a landscape has helped comfort and restore those touched by AIDS," *Landscape Architecture*, November 2000, both articles in TGMA, 2001-2002 Folder; Charles Roeckle, et. al, "Report of the Tower Garden Advisory Committee," The University of Texas at Austin, May 1, 2000. In TGMA, 1999 Folder; Lavergne, *A Sniper in the Tower: The Charles Whitman Murders*. Usage of Lavergne's book noted in Charles Roeckle, ed., "Report of the Tower Garden Advisory Committee," The University of Texas at Austin, May 1, 2000. In TGMA 2000-2001.
[121] Charles Roeckle interview.

people affected by the event extends in ways far beyond those killed and shot."[122] While unquestionably true, this obscured far more complex problems, including the fact that the perpetrator had first killed his wife, Kathleen Leissner Whitman, and his mother, Margaret E. Whitman, at their homes off campus before he climbed the Tower. For the committee, this was commemoratively problematic for two reasons. First, because these women were killed off campus and had no official ties to the university, did they qualify to be a part of a university-specific memory site? More vitally, however, was the simple fact that these two women shared the perpetrator's last name and the committee's and university's resolute decision to not acknowledge him either directly or indirectly ultimately resulted in a further impetus to not recognize his name in any way—even if that meant not recognizing two women who were murdered that day.

The committee's decision to not include names on the memorial was also driven by the reality that thirty years later it was profoundly ambiguous whom exactly the perpetrator had killed. Officially, thirteen people were murdered *on campus* that day and Karen Griffith died of her wounds four days later; however, there are two asterisks next to that number.[123] The first asterisk is the death of the unborn child of the eight-months-pregnant Claire Wilson, which died immediately when the bullet that pierced her abdomen shattered the skull of her child.[124] The committee was left with the lose-lose situation in which acknowledging this death would appear to be supporting a "pro-life" abortion position, whereas failing to do would be seen as a "pro-choice" stance. The

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[122] Charles Roeckle, et. al, "Report of the Tower Garden Advisory Committee," The University of Texas at Austin, May 1, 2000. In TGMA, 2000-2001 Folder.
[123] Lavergne, *A Sniper in the Tower: The Charles Whitman Murders*., xi.
[124] Lavergne notes, interestingly, that killing the baby appears to have been the perpetrator's objective. He says "Given his marksmanship, the magnification of a four-power scope, and unobstructed view, this elevation, and no interference from the ground, it can only be concluded that he aimed for the baby in Claire Wilson's womb." ibid.,141-144.

absurdity of this conundrum—insofar as the issue of "life" and "choice" are completely absent from this situation—was apparent to the committee members, and illustrates lucidly the ability of contemporary political debates to influence the construction of official memory narratives of the past. The second asterisk on the death toll is the sad case of David Gunby, who lost a kidney as the result of having been shot, but who "lived" for the next thirty-five years in "excruciating agony…as a result of the injury."[125] When Gunby died in 2001 as a result of taking himself off dialysis, "the coroner labeled his death as a 'homicide' due to the [central] role the kidney [he lost in the 1966 Tower killings] played in his death."[126] Both of these complex problems made it exceedingly difficult, Roeckle explained, for the first committee to "establish a set list of names that would not have been controversial, so we decided that it would be best to forgo listing the names on the final [memory] site" altogether.[127] In May of 2000, the advisory committee submitted its final report to the President and was disbanded.[128]

A second committee was formed to address what kind of memorial "object" would be used as the touchstone for the Tower Memorial Garden, and to review the condition of site itself.[129] The new committee was named the "The Tower Garden Selection Committee," and met for the first time on April 6, 2001 under the leadership of Vice Provost Neal Armstrong. The committee's central charge was to "[select] a visual

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[125] Gary Lavergne interview.
[126] Ibid. To further complicate matters, Lavergne notes that because Gunby took himself off of dialysis, the question is raised, "did he kill himself?" Gary Lavergne interview. See also, "David Gunby, Victim of Texas Gunman," *Sun Sentinel,* November 17, 2001.
[127] Charles Roeckle interview.
[128] Charles Roeckle, et. al, "Report of the Tower Garden Advisory Committee," The University of Texas at Austin, May 1, 2000. In TGMA, 2000-2001 Folder.
[129] The term "object" was used repeatedly, including in the first meeting of the second committee, see "UT Tower Garden Design Meeting Minutes," April 26, 2001, in TGMA, 2000-2001 Folder.

artist to design the Tower Memorial Garden."[130] One of the biggest early issues faced by the selection committee was addressing the multiple uses of the Turtle Ponds. The School of Biological Sciences managed the ponds for testing and teaching purposes, and around the same period had formed their own "Turtle Pond Committee" to address the issues of the subpar upkeep and need for major renovation to the ponds.[131] While communication between the two committees was cordial and efficient, the selection committee quickly learned that effectively integrating the memorial into a living ecosystem would require significantly more time, money, and planning than originally envisioned.[132]

Concerns about the followers of the perpetrator and the involvement of the family members of the victims were two other issues the selection committee faced early on. The infamous legacy of the perpetrator became a commemorative issue because, as Armstrong explained, since the killings "he [had] garnered a following," and his "[Austin] home had become a magnet for people to visit."[133] The committee feared that followers of the perpetrator who were upset because of his omission from the memorial might desecrate the site.[134] On the opposite end of the spectrum, the committee floated the idea of trying to find "a way to involve the 'voice' of the victims" by contacting "families to inform them of the progress and give them the parameters…for feedback."[135] The idea was in line with commemorative expectations of this era, as family members of

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[130] Neal Armstrong letter to Thana Lauhakaikul, November 8, 2004, in TGMA, 2003-2004 Folder.
[131] On the state of the pond, see Matthew Hempel, "Forgotten Memorial," *The Daily Texan*, February, 8 2001; Rachel Stone, "pond MEMORIES," *The Daily Texan,* Jun 18, 2001; On correspondence between committees, see Paul Gottlieb letter to Charles Roeckle, December 6, 2001, in TGMA, 2001-2002 Folder.
[132] Rachel Stone, "pond MEMORIES," *The Daily Texan,* Jun 18, 2001. In addition, the committee worked to develop a plan that would not interfere with the established use of the area "to rest, read, mediate and enjoy a grassy area in the middle of campus." Neal Armstrong interview.
[133] Neal Armstrong interview.
[134] Ibid.
[135] "UT Tower Garden Design Meeting Minutes," May 22, 2001, in TGMA, 2000-2001 Folder.

the victims were central to many contemporary processes. However, the retrospective nature of the UT project coupled with the university's sensitivity about the killings resulted in the President not being "comfortable with the recommendation to contact victims, or to organize meetings of victims or their families, or to pursue other similar activities," and as a result, the process was kept largely 'in house.'[136] For the University of Texas, the creation of the Tower Memorial Garden was a complex issue intimately tied to the image of the university, and as such, the involvement of victims family members was deemed too potentially detrimental to be allowed.

The selection committee held a unique design competition that was limited to Texas artists and which preceded very quickly. Calls for proposals were sent out in October 2001, and the finalist was selected just five months later in February 2002.[137] The four finalists were interviewed on campus in December of 2001 and all shared the desire "to recognize the individual lives lost."[138] While the second committee was "receptive to the idea that individuals, even *by name*, might be recognized," this option had already been taken off the table by President Faulkner and the first committee.[139] The selection process was also unique in that it did not ask for artists to submit a design for the TGM, but to instead submit a statement of interest and slides of past work they believed prepared them to work collaboratively with the selection committee

Local artist Jill Bedgood's previous public art projects dealing with death and change led to her being the unanimous first choice of the committee, and "very much

[136] Charles Roeckle email to Neal Armstrong, July 13, 2001, in TMGA, 2000-2001 Folder.
[137] Claire Wickersham, "The University of Texas at Austin Tower Garden Memorial: Request for Qualification," October 22, 2001, in TMGA, 2001-2002 Folder.
[138] Neal Armstrong email to Pat Clubb, Charles Roeckle, Andy Adkins and John L. Rishling, with comments from Rishling, December 10, 2001, in TMGA, 2000-2001 Folder.
[139] Ibid.

informed" her unique final design, entitled "evolution."[140] Bedgood's "Pilgrimage: Transformation" was the piece that caught the committee's attention. It consisted of twenty-five cast concrete sculptures of books that were "embedded in the earth" and symbolized "the journey of human existence—alpha to omega, pilgrimage to transformation, birth to death, big bang to black hole."[141] After being chosen as the winner by the selection committee in February of 2002, Bedgood developed a striking idea of creating a memorial that it would not specifically be about the victims, their families, or the event at all.[142] Bedgood explains

> it seems to me that since the creation of the Vietnam Veteran's Memorial, all memorials since have to have the names. But names are something that have overshadowed what memorials should be, because violence is unending, and [memorials to violence] should not be about a specific person but about a broader situation. Loss is loss and I don't know of anyone who has not experienced loss… my inspiration was, 'where would I want to go if there was some [new] tragedy? Where, in the city of Austin, collectively, where would we go?'…[I wanted this site to be a bridge for people] to start understanding the complexity of the initial violence and then the aftermath…it's hard for people to consider "the whole"… which is kind of a reflection of who we are as a society.[143]

Bedgood's experience of creating transformative public artwork led to her selection by the committee and she pressed the envelope even further with 'evolution,' a memorial designed as a sacred space to reflect broadly on violence in society.[144]

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[140] The committee said this about Bedgood's experience: "She has executed large installations . . . the Committee found Mr. Bedgood's design solutions for each of these projects to be thoughtful, appropriate for the site, and professionally executed…[she] has a clear understanding of the challenges associated with undertaking a public art project, both from the perspective of the artist and the client." See "Tower Garden Memorial, Summary of Artist Selection Process and Qualifications of Recommended Artist," February 1, 2002, in TGMA, 2001-2202 Folder. Quote from Jill Bedgood interview.
[141] Jill Bedgood, "Pilgrimage: Transformation" Sculpture Description, funded by the Connemara Conservancy, Dallas Texas, 1996.
[142] Bedgood remembered that "everything had to be done yesterday" and she was given a month an a half to complete her design, asked to read all the previous work of both the committees, while teaching full time at a local university. Jill Bedgood interview.
[143] Ibid.
[144] Bedgood pointed to the assassination of JFK--like both President Faulkner and Vice President Clagett--as a transformative moment in her personal understanding of violence. She explains, my first incident of

The final design for "evolution" was created around the middle of the three turtle ponds and emphasized the cyclical nature of violence. Cut stones and coping were situated around the pond and located "the art at the water's edge [which]…will cause the viewer to contemplate not only the art, but also the water, and to enter into a state of reflection. The art acting as a boundary and a transitional line."[145] The objects in Bedgood's design were two bridges at both ends of the pond and six concrete "evolution objects." Each of the memorial objects were inscribed with, and symbolic of, words selected collectively by the committee and Bedgood to trace "the emotional journey of the incident…as well as similar [and parallel emotional] states of loss."[146] Bedgood explains her philosophy behind the final design.

> If a state of chaos exists due to violent activity [as a result of human activity or of nature], the eventual aftermath is restoration and calm. Emotional states follow the same path of cataclysm fear, pain, mourning, stillness, and hope. The work will suggest the evolutionary states moving from excess to simplicity. Loss of innocence is often a result of a notable event that leads to becoming educated to reality, whether it be loss of innocence of human experience—concerning society or personally. The objects on the north side [of the pond] will appear damaged and on the south [side], made whole.[147]

The 'evolution' memorial was designed circularly so that visitors would start on the north side of the pond—which faced the Tower—and first encounter the symbolic object "VIOLENCE," followed by "CHAOS" and finally "LOSS" before reaching the "TRANSFORM" bridge in order to, literally, cross over to the other side. Once on the

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realizing that people kill people was when [President] Kennedy was shot. I was a kid, and it was all over TV. I actually got very sick, I started throwing up and I threw up for 3 straight days. My mother was worried and asked me, "What's wrong?" and I said, "People kill people." It affected me. You live in this little house with your parents and your family and then all of the sudden you realize the world, and all the sudden you feel fearful…I do think that these kinds of incidences affect how I, as an artist, view the world and the idea of violence." Bedgood interview.

[145] The decision to select the center pond highlights how Bedgood artistic reputation of doing a lot of research on public art projects helped her to see after numerous on-site visits that "the East pond was for families, it was the turtle pond, the West pond was for research, but the middle pond wasn't being used much." See Jill Bedgood, Interview with the Author, September 26, 2012. Quote from Jill Bedgood & Eleanor McKinney, "Integration of Art & Landscape Architecture—A Unified Whole," University of Texas at Austin: Tower Garden, June 20, 2002. Author's personal collection.

[146] Ibid. For a detailed description of the "evolutionary objects," see Jill Bedgood, University of Texas at Austin, "Tower Garden Memorial Art," 2002. Copy of Bedgood's 'evolution' portfolio in TGMA.

[147] See Jill Bedgood & Eleanor McKinney, "Integration of Art & Landscape Architecture—A Unified Whole," University of Texas at Austin: Tower Garden, June 20, 2002. Author's personal collection.

South side—from where the Tower is not visible—the viewer would continue the cycle by passing "REFLECTION" followed by "SOLACE" and then "HOPE." The real innovation with Bedgood's design, however, is that the cycle did not stop there—after "HOPE" one crosses the "REMEMBER" bridge and is returned to "VIOLENCE." Bedgood's circular design of 'evolution' was a profound aesthetic commentary that emphasized the operation of memory amidst ongoing cycles of violence.

After the approval of the design by the Board of Regents, the university's decision to dismiss Bedgood and many of the other designers who had served on the committees handicapped the university's ability to successfully sell the design publicly. Early in the selections committee's work, Claire Wickersham, a consultant charged with developing "the process or artist selection… and [taking] care of the details of construction," explained that "an important thing to remember is that no matter what we do, someone will not like it! We have to make sure the process is defendable…we cannot control outside forces, but we can educate the public so that they embrace the end result."[148] After the Board of Regents accepted the final project on February 13, 2003, the artists and designers were, for all intents and purposes, let go and the project was given to the UT Resource Development Office to begin "fund raising activities."[149] The dismissal of the designers hindered the completion of the project because, as Jill Bedgood notes,

> what the university failed to realize is that the artist [and art professionals are] the best people to explain the work…[they] know how to…realize the project, but [we] were never asked to talk about the work with the Regents or with the [UT] Alumni Association…these memorials, how the process occurs, is quite flawed. Not seeing the artist and arts professional as integral to the process, not just to the art, but to the whole process and its fruition.[150]

[148] "UT Tower Garden Design Meeting Minutes," May 8, 2001; see also, "UT Tower Garden Design Meeting Minutes," May 22, 2001, both in TGMA, 2000-2001 Folder.
[149] Neal Armstrong letter to Thana Lauhakaikul, November 8, 2004, in TGMA, 2004-2005 Folder.
[150] Jill Bedgood interview.

As the University moved towards the final stage of fund raising it decided to do so through its normal funding and construction channels. But this was not a normal project, and the decision to abandon the artists and designers handicapped to the university's ability to successfully explain the vision of the project to the alumni.

The fundraising campaign designed by the university was broadcast widely, but focused specifically on alumni who had been students at UT when the shootings occurred in the 1960s. The university had already committed "about $200,000 dollars to the initial process" and needed to raise "another $820,000…from private sources to complete the memorial."[151] The central objective of the Office of Resource Development was that "although major gifts will be accepted, the desired outcome of this development plan should be to promote a strong grassroots effort."[152] A fundraising campaign was designed that reached out broadly to current students and all past alumni, but a targeted campaign was implemented and involved "direct mail or telemarketing effort to [the] segment of alumni who were students at UT during [the] mid-late 1960s."[153] The generation of alumni with personal a connection to the Tower killings was viewed as the crucial constituency, and thus became the primary focus of the university's fundraising strategy.

After seven months of planning, the university began a fundraising campaign designed to have "a high degree of exposure" in a concentrated timeframe that, despite their planning, was a complete failure. The centerpiece of the campaign was an advertisement in the Fall 2003 *Texas Tribute* that was "mailed to more than 40,000 major

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[151] Don Hale, "University unveils redesign plans for Tower Garden Memorial," University of Texas at Austin Press Release, March 21, 2011.
[152] "Tower Garden Memorial Initiative: Working Document," March 3, 2003, in TGMA, 2003-2004 Folder.
[153] Ibid.

donors."[154] For the Tower Memory Bearers who had spearheaded the commemorative process and had a personal commitment to its fruition, what happened next was nothing short of shocking. As Neal Armstrong recalled, "we ran [the] ad…asking for donor support, but we did not receive a response from a single donor."[155] After four years, two committees, and hundreds of thousands of dollars spent, the result of the University of Texas' targeted fundraising campaign was met with utter silence.

In the immediate aftermath of the fundraising collapse, the University formed a third and unplanned "funding and implementation" committee which was never able to recover from the initial failure.[156] Chaired by Senior Vice President Shirley Bird Perry, the third committee developed on-site and online funding mechanisms and flirted with significant changes to the design, but none of these measures generated any significant financial support.[157] "When it became clear that there would not be enough money," Charles Roeckle recalls, "the question became, okay, what do we do about this?"[158] The university responded by quietly bringing the long commemorative process to a close with

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[154] Ibid.
[155] Neal Armstrong, Interview with the Author, July 23, 2012.
[156] Neal Armstrong letter to Thana Lauhakaikul, November 8, 2004, in TGMA, 2003-2004 Folder. The third committee was chaired by Vice President Shirley Bird Perry, and also included Jim Kunetka from Resource Development, Bethany Ramey Trombley from Architecture and Engineering Services and Heather McKinney of McKinney Architects Inc (no relation to Eleanor McKinney).
[157] Jim Nicar believes that Shirley Bird Perry did not share this commemorative sensibility of the other Tower Memory Bearer's that the memorial should be constructed, and maintained the personal belief that creating a Tower Garden Memorial was improper. Nicar believes that Shirley Bird maintained a deep concern that creating a memorial "might tarnish [the university's] image somehow." Jim Nicar interview. The bulk of Perry's committee's work and financial expenditures were focused on creating new means of fundraising. The most notable of these, the "eTribute" system was proposed in 2004 and became the main focus of the committee chaired by Shirley Bird Perry. The original cost estimate for the system was $380,000 for the physical kiosks that would house the system and another $72,000 for the development of the software. The kiosk idea was abandoned, but President Faulkner approved the $72,000 for the eTribute system in January of 2005. The system was an utter failure with less than ten donations every having been made. For the details of the eTribute system see Shirley Bird Perry, ed., "TOWER GARDEN REVIEW—CHRONOLOGY: Updated: May 10, 2006." In TGMA, 2005-2006. To see the eTribute system, see http://giving.utexas.edu/gateway/etribute/ Accessed July 11, 2012.
[158] Charles Roeckle interview.

the placement of a small boulder with a memorial plaque near the first Turtle Pond on January 10, 2007.[159]

While the Tower Memory Bearers put forth a long and impressive effort, it was the very uniqueness of these shared experiences blinded them to the fact that very few other people shared their passion for a memorial for the victims of the Tower killings. Their fellow alums from 1966 did not share with them the new commemorative sensibility of marking mass murder in the landscape, and current UT students were too far removed from the Tower killings to have any meaningful personal connection with such a memorial. In comparison with other mass murder memorial processes of the era, the lack of any well-known symbol from the aftermath of the killings may have further hindered the university's ability to appeal to an emblem shared in public memory for their outreach to the alums of the 1960s. In 2012, a graduating UT senior responded tellingly when asked why she had no idea where the Tower Garden Memorial was but was able to immediately identify the Turtle Ponds, that "of course everyone knows where the Turtle Pond is, there are turtles there."[160] The Turtle Ponds and the turtles that inhabited them were a part of UT's public memory, but despite the university's substantial efforts, the Tower Memorial Garden dedicated in 1999 remains unrealized as a site for memories of the victims of the 1966 Tower killings.

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[159] Robert D. Meckel, "Memorial Plaque in Tower Garden Commemorates Victims of August 1, 1966 Shooting Tragedy," University of Texas Press Release, January 10, 2007.

[160] Samantha Barrera, informal discussion with the author, December 18, 2011. Author Gary Lavergne suggested, as a kind of fun social experiment, that I ask random people on the UT campus if they knew the location of both the Tower Garden Memorial and the Turtle Pond. I have done this regularly on three separate trips to Austin, and to date, not a single individual has been able to point me in the direction of the Tower Garden Memorial, and every single individual has known the exact location of the Turtle Pond. Moreover, many of these individuals respond, tellingly, that they assume that the Tower Memorial Garden "must be somewhere near the Tower."

Old Memorial Traditions in a New Millennium

The University of Texas' failed retrospective attempt to establish the Tower Garden Memorial demonstrates the dynamic power of ritualized assemblages and generational commemorative sensibilities to impede even the determined effort of committed people to create a memory site to violence that is still deemed shameful. "Traumascapes," Maria Tumarkin writes, "are precisely the places that remind us that the past cannot simply be erased or, for that matter, simply reconstructed."[161] The University of Texas's inability to generate a sufficient amount of interest in transforming its traumascape into a memorial was due to three factors. First, while the Tower Memory Bearers adopted the emerging commemorative sensibility of the 1990s that marking citizen slaughter was appropriate, their fellow alums from 1966 exemplified their disagreement in their unequivocal refusal to contribute a single penny to the project. Second, the campus' ritualized assemblage exerted its own significant influence by limiting the feasibility of its expansion to only those memory sites which promoted heroic identity of the university and shunned any memories deemed shameful. Third, unlike many contemporary American communities that successfully completed mass murder memorials, the UT community lacked any well-known symbol to make the centerpiece of its memorial. At the turn of the twenty-first century mass murder memorials quickly became a normative expectation in the United States; however, UT's failure to complete their memorial illustrates how a tradition of silenced memories of violence can stubbornly refuse to adhere to contemporary expectations.

[161] Tumarkin, *Traumascapes: The Power and Fate of Places Transformed by Tragedy*. 18.

The pivotal moment for understanding the power of generational commemorative sensibilities about memorializing mass murder was the collapse of the fundraising campaign of 2003. The central question of the memorial process was whether or not the Tower killings should be officially acknowledged on campus. The long efforts of President Faulkner and the other Tower Memory Bearers answered this question in the affirmative. However, when the 1960s alumni of UT ignored the fundraising call they collectively answered this question with a resounding "no." Many knowledgeable UT members offered a number of possible explanations for the memorial's failure: the post-9/11 "collapse of the financial world;" the fact that "it had just been too long" since the killings; speculation that the "[donors and alumni] might not think that it is their responsibility" to fund the project; and that perhaps "UT donors want to donate for life, not for death."[162] While all these factors no doubt played some role in the failure, considered either individually or collectively, none of these ideas provide an adequate explanation for why the UT's affluent alumni's response was not just underwhelming, but completely nonexistent. The failure of the Tower Memory Bearers to successfully convince their fellow alumni to back the project exemplified the enduring strength of past

[162] Quotes, respectively, from Larry Falkner interview. (both Charles Roeckle and Neal Armstrong also expressed this sentiment); Neal Armstrong interview; Jim Nicar interview; and Gary Lavergne interview. One could add to this list of extenuating factors that it was very unclear that the fundraising advertisement run in the *Texas Tribute* was in fact asking for contributions. The ambiguity of the "advertisement" lays in the simple fact that it is by no means clear that readers are being asked to contribute, and it seems highly likely that many readers might have seen the ad as more of an informative piece about the Tower Garden Memorial than a request for a contribution. In light of the ever-present issue throughout the commemorative process of being mindful of the "image" of the university, it appears that the author(s) of the advertisement, in its attempt to not be morbid or offensive with regards to the Tower killings, were far too guarded and thus *forgot to clearly state that alumni were being asked to make a donation*. The advertisement was also not even a full page or placed at the front of the issue in which it appeared, meaning it was not even featured prominently of the issue of the *Texas Tribute* that it was unveiled in. See *Texas Tribute*, Fall 2003 Issue. Additionally, while the advertisement in the *Texas Tribute* was mailed to 40,000 alumnus, the overall fundraisings campaign was not distributed as widely or featured as prominently as might have been expected for such a high profile project.

generational sensibilities that mass murder was best left in silence despite contemporary expectations to never forget.

In addition to the influence of these generational sensibilities, by the 1990s the ritualized assemblage exerted its own agency in dictating the terms of its expansion and limiting the feasibility of anything that might tarnish the image of the university. The Tower and the South Mall were the heart of the ritualized assemblage and conveyed, both spatially and ideologically, a heroic narrative of white southern culture. The construction of the King, Chavez and Jordan statues began the expansion of this narrative at the dawn of the new century. Yet the placement of these memory sites on peripheral malls exemplified the marginality of these memories relative to the powerful ritualized assemblage used to produce the identity of the university. Similarly, the memorial was proposed on the North Mall, a site literally hidden in the shadow of the Tower. Even with this placement, however, the memorial became largely irrelevant after 1999 because the reopened Tower was itself a memory site to the heroic triumph of the university over its stigmatized past. A memorial that marked the killings, despite Jill Begdood's visionary design which downplayed the event, did not match the campus' commemorative milieu. The revitalized Tower at the heart of UT's ritualized assemblage championed a heroic narrative of the university that had neither precedent nor inclination to include memories of violence and loss.

Perhaps the many resistances to the Tower Memorial Garden might have been overcome had there been some resonant symbol for the local community to revive, but there was not. After the killings, only a few modest immediate aftermath memorials were constructed and quickly disappeared without inspiring any symbol for the local

community. Soon thereafter, a communal quiet took hold of local public memory and, after three decades of social practice, transformed silence into the primary site of local memories of the killings. The lack of any symbol hindered the potential of uniting the UT community, inspiring acceptance of the retrospective memorial and combating what Susan Clagett explained as the

> memory of [local] people being embarrassed that it could happen here and also wanting to protect the image of the university. That was the case for decades and still is for those who don't want to call attention to it. It's a stigma for UT and any institution that has experienced such a tragic occurrence.[163]

A symbol could have inspired reconsideration, promoted past alumni to adopt the commemorative sensibility of the Tower Memory Bearers, or offered an aesthetic means of representing university history. No symbol existed though, and so the university struggled for eight years to create a memorial without a symbol that so many other communities across the United States had strategically manipulated to create their own memorials.

By 1999, mass murder memorials were a national expectation in the United States, but two minority groups effectively stopped the University of Texas' attempt to construct the Tower Memorial Garden. UT historian Jim Nicar explains, "the Tower [Memorial] Garden is an image issue. Acknowledging the shooting might tarnish [the University of Texas'] image somehow, at least that's the perception—and I think [in the twenty first century] it is a minority perception"[164] The first group that made up Nicar's 'minority' was the UT alumni of the 1960s who experienced the killings personally and who had developed a strong belief for over three decades in the appropriateness of

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[163] Susan Clagett interview.
[164] Jim Nicar interview.

silence. The reopening of the Tower in 1999, with its emphasis on cleansing and growth, only buttressed this group of alumni's belief that marking anything shameful on campus was bad for the identity of the university. The Tower was itself also a member of the second minority group--the small handful of powerful memory sites that made up the heart of the campus' ritualized assemblage. Collectively, these structures had, in the seven decades since their construction, come to materially manifest the sacred identity of the university.   Foote and Grider write that on-campus violence results in conflicting desires to "efface the evidence [of the violence, and]…an urge to honor the victims and reassert community values…[but] fitting such tragedies into a campus's sense of tradition can be very difficult."[165] The minority of a past generation of UT alumni and the campus' ritualized assemblage unknowingly joined forces and—amidst a new national expectation of constructing mass murder memorials—maintained their own long-held traditions and stopped the creation of any such memory site at the University of Texas.

[165] Foote and Grider, "Memorialisation of Us College and University Tragedies: Spaces of Mourning and Remeberance." 184.

Chapter 5 VIRGINIA TECH - HOKIE NATION: War, Sports, and the Institutionalization of Mass Murder Memorialization; 2007-2012

One member of the memorial committee created after the April 16, 2007 killing of 32 people and the suicide of the perpetrator at Virginia Tech had a unique perspective on the commemorative process that ensued. Bobby Freeman, a member of the Virginia Tech Board of Visitors, had served for two decades as the Chairman of the Newport News Public Art Foundation in northern Virginia and was been intimately involved in the planning, design and installation of countless public sculpture and memorial projects. Reflecting back on his experience of serving on the Virginia Tech's "Physical Memorial Committee" seven years later, Freeman shared that

> there is a timeline for [memorials built after mass murders and major tragedies]. Most current memorials don't happen until a significant amount of time after the event, and there is a reason for that. It takes a community such a long time to heal, and such a long time to be able to stand back and reflect… a timeline like the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, [for example]…[at Virginia Tech, however], there [was] an overwhelming feeling of wanting to create closure as quickly as possible, and that is what drove this [memorialization process]. We weren't going to get bogged down in the process; we were going to get it done [quickly].[1]

Freeman's public art experience helped him to understand that Virginia Tech's attempt to begin a commemorative process so soon after a major act of domestic violence was an uncommon move that had little precedence nationally.

[1] Robert "Bobby" Freeman, Interview with the Author, January 23, 2014.

Within days of the killings, administrators at Virginia Tech (VT) created a closed-membership committee to facilitate the rapid completion of a memorial. Like the commemorative process overseen by Edmond Mayor Carl Reherman twenty years earlier, VT President Charles Steger named Tom Tillar, the Vice President of Alumni Relations, Chair of the memorial committee, which Tillar quickly filled predominantly with other administrators. Yet research and retrospection also led Tillar to appoint a number of student leaders, whom he and other administrators had worked with before, to the committee. The inclusion a few students created the appearance of an open and inclusive committee, like the memorial committees at Oklahoma City and Columbine. But in practice, VT's committee excluded family members of the victims, survivors, local community members, and with one exception, non-administrative faculty members. All of these decisions resulted in a closed committee with a primary goal of avoiding debate and completing a memorial as quickly as possible.

In this chapter, I argue that Virginia Tech's history led the university's administration to institutionalize the process of memorializing mass murder by transforming the memory of the killings into a means of strengthening the university community's identity and national reputation. Before Virginia Tech, many communities across the United States used both open and closed commemorative processes to complete their respective memorials. What all these communities had in common, however, was that they did not begin formal memorial committee meetings for months or years, and each committee took years to process the impact of the killings and elicit public feedback on proposed plans and memorial designs. What happened at VT was different because they began their process in the traumatic immediate aftermath and

moved swiftly to create closure as quickly as possible. In the end, Virginia Tech institutionalized the memorialization of mass murder by establishing a novel commemorative convention that was efficient, avoided unwanted interference, and rapidly dedicated a memorial that adhered to the university's established identity.

To support this assertion, I will first detail how the military and sports-centered history that shaped the identity of the university now known as Virginia Tech. I will then detail the four related processes that the administration used to transform the killings into something that strengthened the university's identity and national reputation. The commemorative script established in Oklahoma City was again used in the immediate aftermath to repeatedly to frame the brief emergence of an imagined bereaved community as the memory worth remembering. In the months that followed, administrators created a closed memorial committee that excluded many local constituencies, including the families of the victims, in order to facilitate the rapid completion of a university-sanctioned memorial. The constructed memorial was purposely incorporated into the heart of the campus' ritualized assemblage and materially solidified the killings as central the university's narrative of its history. In the following year, the administration transformed the colloquial term "Hokie Nation" by merging the memory of the killings with the school's military and sports-centered history and, in so doing, created what appears to have become the national identity of the university in the twenty-first century.

5.1 A Landscape of Soldiers and Sportsmen

Virginia Tech's history of having been founded as a military institute, transitioning into an engineering school, and later transforming into a sports-centered

university was materially inscribed in the campus landscape and profoundly influenced the memorialization of the 2007 killings. Originally called the Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College, the school was originally an all-male, all-white, military institution. In the 1920s, the school was renamed Virginia Polytechnic Institute and began a period of transformation of the campus landscape into college with a focus on engineering. Like the University of Texas, a new campus plan was instituted that spatially marked a particular memory narrative at the heart of the campus. In the 1960s, military involvement became voluntary at the university. After eight decades as a military institute, university administrators worked to establish a new national reputation for the school in intercollegiate sports by beginning construction of a major sporting complex on campus. By the early twenty-first, the university now called Virginia Tech had established the military, engineering and sports as the central tenets of its institutional identity, and the marking of each on campus significantly impacted the memorialization of the 2007 killings.

Founded with funds from the Morrill Land-Grant College Act of 1862, the Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College (VAMC) was plagued with what VT historian Peter Wallenstein calls "great problems in maintaining student discipline" that led administrators to question whether the college should "be organized on a more fully military basis?"[2] By the late 1870s, President Charles L.C. Minor, was only in favor of incorporating a military component if it was an optional and secondary. Professor James H. Lane, on the other had, became the chief proponent of organizing student lives on a fully military basis. Tensions over these opinions rose to the point where "a fistfight

[2] Peter Wallenstein, *Virginia Tech, Land-Grant University, 1872-1997: History of a School, a State, a Nation* (Blacksburg, VA: Pocahontas Press, 1997). 52, 64.

[erupted] between Lane and Minor in a faculty meeting in March 1878."[3] The Board of Visitors sided with Lane and fired President Minor in late 1879, before directing "a reorganization of campus life along military lines. All students must live in barracks, be subject to military discipline, and, if able-bodied, participate in regular drill."[4] In 1891, President John McLaren McBryde officially named the military organization of student life the "Corps of Cadets," and mandatory participation "remained largely intact" for the first four decades of the schools existence.[5]

In the 1920s, relaxing of mandatory student participation in the Corps and the enrollment of the school's first female students by the administration again sought to address the issue of student conduct at Virginia Polytechnic Institute (VPI). Wallenstein writes, "rather than help, the Corps of Cadets seemed to college authorities to foster rowdy…behavior."[6] President Julian A. Burruss had faculty support in his suggestion to abolish the Corps, but the Board of Visitors (BOV) instead chose to change that "membership in the Corps of Cadets for men, long mandatory, remained required for [only] the first two years but became optional for juniors and seniors beginning in 1924-25" as well as allowing full-time females students.[7] Reflecting on this transition, one Corps alumnus recalls, "we became less hostile…we seemed to be groping for ways to make our activities more constructive…for the greater VPI."[8] The 1920s began a period in which the identity of the institute and its student body slowly transitioned away from its all-male, military origins.

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[3] Ibid. 64.
[4] Ibid. 64-65.
[5] Ibid. 66. For information on the formation of the Corps of Cadets, see 83-84.
[6] Ibid. 146.
[7] Ibid. 204. Burruss championed female enrollment by arguing with the BOV that in light of women having recently secured the right to vote and having also been instrumental in the war effort, it was time for the "school to end its ban on admitting Virginians just because they were female." Ibid. 132.
[8] Ibid. 147.

During the 1920s, President Burruss also created a new architectural plan that initiated the radical transformation of the campus. The Burruss plan firmly rooted the military history of the school at the heart of the campus in the architectural form of the "Drillfield." Burruss' vision was for "a central recreation and drill field, approximately three times the area of the old athletic field…this expanse is to be left open forever, and around it are to be grouped the buildings of the new [campus] plant."[9] Architecturally, the plan established a cross-axial armature that situated the Drillfield as the literal, spatial heart of the campus. In the plan, the two campus axes intersected in the exact center of the Drillfield, making it the epicenter for all future campus expansions. The first structure built on the Drillfield was a reviewing stand for Corps instructors to conduct cadet rituals and drills, and the stand is perfectly bisected by the north-south campus axis. During his tenure as President, Burruss repeatedly spoke of creating "a greater VPI," and the Drillfield formed the spatial representation of his vision and immediately became "[Virginia] Tech's most distinctive environmental feature."[10]

During WWI, Virginia Tech served as a training ground that sent many of its students to fight and die in the war, and the construction of the War Memorial Gymnasium forever marked the students killed in the war. Completed in 1926, the War Memorial Gymnasium (also known as War Memorial Hall) was constructed on the south edge of the Drillfield directly across from the Corps of Cadets review stand, and is also bisected by the north-south campus axis. The memorial stone table inside the front doors reads "this building as [sic] a memorial to the alumni who served their country in the World War of 1917-1918," and the memorial was "dedicated to the memory of all the

[9] Julian Burruss, cited in ibid. 143-44.
[10] Ibid. 143.

[Virginia] Tech men who had died in the Great War."[11] Because the campus' first war memorial was a gymnasium, students unwittingly developed an interesting colloquial expression when they were going to the gym by informing their peers that they were "going to War." The completion of War Memorial Gymnasium marked the military history of the school poignantly on the south side of the Drillfield, and quickly became a space that most members of the campus referred to simply as "War."

The adoption of "Hokie Stone"—locally quarried white sandstone—and neo-Gothic architecture as the official style of new construction on the university in the 1920s transformed the campus aesthetic. Hokie Stone was first used on campus on "the YMCA building, (now the Performing Arts building) completed with private funds in 1901."[12] In the 1900s and 1910s, Price Hall and the first McBryde Hall were also constructed using neo-Gothic design and Hokie Stone. Then-President Joseph D. Eggleston urged that this "new prototype of [Virginia] Tech building be adopted."[13] It was not, however, until "the 1920s, [that] the new style would be adopted as [Virginia] Tech's characteristic architecture."[14] VPI followed the architectural trend of gothic revival that was common at universities in the early twentieth century, but the campus' specific style was "castellated gothic." As Virginia Tech architecture professor Howard "Scott" Gartner explained, the campus' style was "gothic because it was a university, and it was castellated because it was military."[15] The castle-like nature of the building is most obvious in the "arrow slits" along the top of many of the campus' buildings. After its official adoption in the 1920s,

[11] "Memorial Stone Tablet," War Memorial Hall, Virginia Tech campus; ibid. 143.
[12] Ibid. 92.
[13] Ibid. 141.
[14] Ibid. 92-93.
[15] Howard "Scott" Gartner, informal discussion with the author, January 29, 2014.

Hokie Stone quickly became the dominant campus aesthetic as well as the most recognizable material representation of the college.

The influence of President Burruss' plan on the campus eventually led to the construction of a new administrative building with an exaggerated castle-like structure that bears his name: Burruss Hall. During the 1930s, Burruss put a great deal of effort into securing federal funds from President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal for the continued growth of VT's campus. Burruss' efforts paid off, and as Wallenstein quips, "to list the Tech buildings that went up with federal aid during the 1930s is to take a tour around the [Drillfield]."[16] The most significant building constructed during this period was VT's one true castle: Burruss Hall, which was originally called the Teaching and Administration building. The importance of Burruss Hall was marked not only by its imposing stature and the fact that it housed the office of the President, but also because it was built on the north-south axis of the campus. In fact, the north-south campus axis perfectly bisects Burruss, the Corps Reviewing Stand and War Memorial Hall. The completion of Burruss Hall created a new administrative seat for the power on campus, and its on-axis location emphasized its spatial importance and connected it to other vital parts of the campus' growing ritualized assemblage.

Viewed collectively, all of the spatial changes brought about by Burruss' campus plan inscribed the memory of the college's early military and administrative history into the very fabric of the campus in the mid-20th century. The Drillfield and War Memorial Hall inscribed the school's military history in the center of the campus. The adoption of Hokie Stone transformed the campus' style that, coupled with gothic architectural design,

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[16] Wallenstein, *Virginia Tech, Land-Grant University, 1872-1997: History of a School, a State, a Nation*. 151.

created a fortified yet attractive aesthetic. The completion of Burruss Hall established the seat of administrative power directly across from the War Memorial, which was itself a spatial representation of the early identity of the university.

The 1960s brought about another major period of transformation of the school's identity and the campus landscape. In 1962, T. Marshall Hahn Jr. became the eleventh president of VPI, and his first impression of the Corps of Cadets was that "they were good students, and I liked what I saw."[17] Hahn quickly realized, however, that the only Corps students he saw were the cadets "who had survived their rat year—[because of the mandatory Corps requirement at VPI that] all freshman who resigned from the Corps had to drop out of school."[18] The "rat system" was the name given to the freshmen Corps membership, when new cadets were subjected to hazing practices while simultaneously dealing with the challenges of being first year college students. Hahn recalled

> as soon as I got here [in 1962] I started to be hammered on by parents of these freshmen who were being hazed to the point where their studies were suffering…you had top students who wanted to study in areas of academic concentration offered [in Virginia] only at [VPI] who were going out of state because of the Corps…I don't know how much of my time the first year I spent dealing with that, learning how severe the problem was and then trying to work with the Corps to reduce the…excessive freshmen rat type [hazing] activities.[19]

While not something that he had anticipated, President Hahn was immediately forced to address the social reality of a campus that "was an overwhelmingly white, male, military environment."[20]

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[17] Peter Wallenstein and Warren H. Strother, *From V.P.I. To State University: President T. Marshall Hahn, Jr. And the Transformation of Virginia Tech, 1962-1974* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2004). 153.
[18] Ibid. 153.
[19] Ibid. 154.
[20] Ibid. 3.

After educating himself about the Corps and its history, President Hahn decided to pursue making Corps membership a voluntary opportunity for male students. Hahn explained that the manifold problems associated with the Corps led him to conclude that "there was no alternative to making participation in the Corps of Cadets an elective opportunity if VPI was to meet its legal and moral responsibilities as a land-grant institution."[21] Tom Rice, the Rector of the BOV, was the most vocal and influential opponent of disbanding a mandatory Corps, but even his objections ultimately failed to derail the President's plan and, according to Wallenstein,

> beginning with fall quarter 1964, mandatory participation in the Corps of Cadets came to an end. The Corps continued to be an important part of campus life, but it did so for a markedly smaller fraction of the student population…a central dimension of the institution's history suddenly faded. Although a military component of student life certainly persisted, VPI became an increasingly civilian community.[22]

With this decision, the school was militarily reclassified as one of only three 'senior military colleges' in the United States with a large civilian population.[23] Yet after 85 years, Virginia Polytechnic Institute was no longer strictly a military college.

And the demographic changes didn't stop there, as President Hahn concurrently pursued an agenda that rapidly increased the number of women and black students at VPI, thus changing the identity of the university even further. In 1953, Irving L. Peddrew III became the first black student to enroll in VPI, but in the years that followed, black enrollment remained low. It wasn't until the 1966-1967 academic year that the college enrolled a double-digit number of blacks student—six of whom were the first black women to ever attend Tech. The number of female students admitted also

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[21] Ibid. 158.
[22] Ibid. 161.
[23] The other two being Texas A&M University and the University of North Georgia.

continued to rise throughout the Hahn years. All of these changes were symbolically interwoven in 1972 when Cheryl A. Butler and Debrorah J. Noss—one black, the other white—became the first two women allowed to join the Corps. Ex-BOV Rector Tom Rice later reflected on the removal of mandatory Corps enrollment that he and President Hahn "had a definite difference of opinion as to the type of school we wanted in Blacksburg."[24] By the early 1970s, however, Hahn's vision had secured a situation in which "female students as well as men claimed [membership in] the institution; black students as well as white…and, most of all, civilians as well as members of the Corps."[25]

While the 1960s saw dramatic changes in the student body at Tech, the construction of the War Memorial Chapel and the Pylons on the east end of the Drillfield exemplified the enduring role of the military in the framing of Tech's identity. In the aftermath of World War II, a War Memorial Chapel was completed in 1960 on the east end of the Drillfield to commemorate VT students who died in WWII. The Chapel has since been expanded as a memorial for all alumni killed in other wars, from World War I up to the many fronts of the contemporary War on Terror.[26] Above the War Memorial Chapel, eight towering stone pylons were constructed around a polished metamorphic rock cenotaph, which like other traditional cenotaphs, was dedicated as a tomb for fallen soldiers. On campus, the memorial on top of the War Memorial Chapel is known as both the "War Memorial" and as "the Pylons," and is a revered site used for various Corps rituals and as a site of innumerable student photos. The university motto, "Ut Prosim," a Latin phrase meaning "that I may serve," was engraved on one of the pylons, and at the

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[24] Wallenstein and Strother, *From V.P.I. To State University: President T. Marshall Hahn, Jr. And the Transformation of Virginia Tech, 1962-1974*. 156.
[25] Ibid. 310.
[26] Wallenstein, *Virginia Tech, Land-Grant University, 1872-1997: History of a School, a State, a Nation*. 163.

time of its inscription, was a reference to military service. In the late twentieth century, the war memorial Pylons were adopted as the symbol emblazoned on the university's official shield. Spatially, the east-west campus axis bisects the War Memorial Chapel and Pylons, a fact which cemented their importance in the growing spatial narrative of the university's identity.

The 1960s transition away from Tech's long history as a military college created a void in the institution's identity that President Hahn redirected into promoting his vision of a university driven by a strong collegiate athletics program. Early in his tenure as President, Hahn met with some of the university's most powerful boosters, the Hokie Club, located in the Washington D.C. area. As Wallenstein recounts, at the meeting

> Dr. Hahn urged support for a strong intercollegiate athletics program. The meeting…attracted more than fifty VPI enthusiasts…among them four corporation executives, a rear admiral, a general, and two colonels. A top-flight athletic program at VPI would generate greater interest in the school and facilitate its development as a major university, the new VPI president told the group…'Nothing can be more successful in solidifying support from all our publics than a successful intercollegiate [sports] program'"[27]

President Hahn dedicated his tenure to transforming VPI from a military college into a top tier sporting university that would gain "national visibility for the institution."[28]

To accomplish this goal, in the 1960s Hahn's administration transformed the southern end of the campus into a massive sporting complex beginning with the construction of major venues for the basketball and football teams. Cassell Coliseum, designed as the home to the schools basketball team, was the first major structure constructed in the sports complex and its size represented the scope of the university's

[27] Wallenstein and Strother, *From V.P.I. To State University: President T. Marshall Hahn, Jr. And the Transformation of Virginia Tech, 1962-1974*. 134.
[28] Ibid.

ambitions. Cassell was "envisioned as a huge structure…it was an unbelievable building for the era in which it was planned. The entire student population of VPI and Radford college combined could have been seated in the arena at one time and still have space for members of both faculties."[29] The Coliseum was completed in 1962 and made way for "the biggest project of all… a proposed new football stadium, expected to cost approximately $3 million—and relying on private gifts for its financing."[30] President Hahn got approval from the BOV in 1962 for what became Lane Stadium, and in 1964 a multi-phase construction project began and was completed in 1966. Lane Stadium and Cassell Coliseum gave Tech the infrastructure needed to compete on the national sporting stage. More importantly, the sporting complex enabled Tech to establish a new institutional identity as a sports-centered university.

By the first decade of the 21st century, Virginia Tech was a comprehensive university with two distinct social histories that lived side-by-side in the everyday practices of student life outside of the classroom and embedded throughout the campus landscape. The first was a military history that had been the central identity of the university for most the first century of its existence. The school's landscape itself was everywhere marked with these military origins, from the centrality of the Drillfield to the many war memorials, such as the Pylons, which became the official symbol of the university. The second history was the transition to engineering as the academic identity of the college with the changing of the school's name to Virginia Polytechnic Institute. The third history of the institution was the emergence of a sporting identity for the university that had grown steadily over the late twentieth century and was solidified

[29] Ibid. 136.
[30] Ibid. 105.

nationally when the football team played Florida State in the 2000 Sugar Bowl for the BCS National Championship. By the twenty-first century, the military and sporting histories, in particular, had become central to the identity of Virginia Tech, and were the inspiration behind nearly every sacred space in the campus landscape.

5.2 "WE WILL PREVAIL!": Convocation, Hokie Nation & President Bush

On the day after the killings on April 16, 2007, university administrators held a "Convocation" ceremony that established a powerful campus lexicon for local commemoration. Held in a packed Cassel Coliseum, the convocation featured President Bush, his strategic advisor Karl Rove, and nearly every major Virginia politician and university administrator. President Bush repeated the commemorative script established by Bill Clinton in Oklahoma City that stressed that the unity of the imagined bereaved community was a memory worth holding onto, and many of the speakers who joined him on stage echoed this belief. The speech of English faculty member Nikki Giovanni, however, became the enduring public memory of the event. Moreover, Giovanni was the only speaker that day to use the term "Hokie Nation," and in so doing, publicly initiated the phrases transformation from a campus' colloquialism into the discursive site for the post-April 16 identity of the university. The convocation ceremony reiterated the established national commemorative script of mass murder and added to it by deploying a number of terms would become hallmarks of VT's memorial processes.

Within hours of the end of the killings, the question of how the image of Virginia Tech would be affected rapidly began to circulate locally. An article in the campus newspaper the *Collegiate Times* (CT) the very next day ran the headline "Day of violence

mars image-building efforts" and cited a quote in the *Princeton Review* guide that Virginia Tech was one "of those schools that had a strong regional reputation, but in the past five to seven years has been rising rapidly into a strong national [brand] as well."[31] The topic of how efficiently the administration responded to news of the killings, a question that would persist for years, was also highlighted on the front page of the CT the next day in the form of a timeline detailing the three plus hours between the perpetrator's first and last murder. Local questions were further complicated by the immediate descent of national and international media onto the campus.[32] Soon after the last proverbial bullet shell hit the ground, questions about the potential effect of the killings on the university's image began circulating in the local community.

Zenobia Hikes, the Vice President of Student Affairs, set the precedent for the speed with which Virginia Tech responded commemoratively by organizing a massive Convocation ceremony the day after the killings. Jack Davis, the Dean of the College of Architecture and Urban Studies, later recollected that Hikes "did a very good job…she was very much on a meteoric rise [at Virginia Tech], she was hired only short of a year prior to [the killings] and she really did an excellent job taking over the emotional stability of the students."[33] Hikes chose Cassell Coliseum as the location for the Convocation, and because it was expected to exceed capacity, Lane Stadium was chosen as the overflow location that would broadcast the ceremony on its megatron screen. Despite the complex logistics of pulling such an event together, Hikes' crowning achievement was arranging for George W. Bush to speak at the Convocation. By doing

[31] Robert Franek, cited in Clay Mathews, "Day of violence mars image-building efforts," *Collegiate Times*, April 17, 2007. [CHECK QUOTE]
[32] Caroline Black, "Media descends on *Blacksburg*, *Collegiate Times*, April 17, 2007; "National spotlight glares on Blacksburg," *Roanoke Times*, April 18, 2007.
[33] Jack Davis, Interview with the Author, September, 24 2013.

this, Hikes continued the tradition established by Bill Clinton of having the President of the United States involved in framing the meaning and memory of mass murders deemed nationally significant. But unlike Columbine and Oklahoma City, which took each community nearly a week to organize, under Hikes' guidance, Virginia Tech's nationally broadcast Convocation ceremony was planned and carried out in less than twenty-four hours.

The Convocation allowed the Virginia Tech community to grieve, but it also enabled administrative and political leaders to recite the commemorative script that framed the unity of the immediate aftermath as the memory worth keeping. After a ritual procession by the Corps of Cadets, Zenobia Hikes opened the Convocation and was the first to highlight the importance of unity when she stated "what has happened to these beloved members of our [Virginia Tech] family has brought us even closer together…we will eventually recover. But we will never ever forget."[34] President Steger followed Hikes and began his speech by reinforcing the sense of unity beyond the campus to include the nation and the world. "Today," he stated, "our university community, indeed the entire nation and people from many other nations, come together to mourn and to grieve."[35] At the end of his speech, Steger highlighted the state and national unity the killings had created by pointing to all the politicians in attendance, which included President Bush and his advisor Karl Rove, Governor Tim Kaine, Attorney General Bob McDonnell, Lieutenant Governor Bill Bolling, and "all of the Virginia members of the U.S. Congress…[and] members of the Virginia General Assembly."[36] Governor Kaine, who had returned from a trade mission in Asia to attend the service, followed Steger and

[34] Zenobia Hikes, "Convocation Address," Cassell Coliseum, Virginia Tech, April 17, 2007.
[35] Charles W. Steger, "Convocation Address," Cassell Coliseum, Virginia Tech, April 17, 2007.
[36] Ibid.

reflected that while watching television in the international airports he had been amazed how

> in all these various news outlets, students were called forth to offer their thoughts…[and] were wearing the Virginia Tech sweatshirts, wearing the Virginia Tech caps, and [displaying] the incredible community spirit and sense of unity here on this campus…how well you represented yourselves and this university to a worldwide community…you, as a community, unified… We need, in Virginia, that spirit of community that you have here…this is a remarkable place. Do not let [go of a] hold of that sense of community that is so powerful in this room [today].[37]

Like the unity common in the basketball games normally held in Cassell Coliseum and the football games held in Lane Stadium, the three opening speakers, in progressively more global terms, repeated that the unity of the traumatic aftermath of the killings was that the memory should not be forgotten.

This set the stage for George W. Bush to again recite the commemorative script. established by President Clinton at Oklahoma City and Columbine, that the unity borne in the aftermath of mass murder exemplified the unity of the nation. President Bush reminded those in attendance and American citizens watching on television that

> this is a day of mourning for the Virginia Tech community—and it is a day of sadness for our entire nation…in such times as this, we look for sources of strength to sustain us. And in this moment of loss, you're finding these sources of strength everywhere around you. These sources of strength are in this community, this college community…even as yesterday's events were still unfolding, members of this community found each other; you came together…across the town of Blacksburg and in towns all across America… people who have never met you are praying for you…[and] there's a power in these prayers, real power.[38]

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[37] Tim Kaine, "Convocation Address," Cassell Coliseum, Virginia Tech, April 17, 2007.
[38] George W. Bush, "Convocation Address," Cassell Coliseum, Virginia Tech, April 17, 2007.

President Bush understood, like Clinton before him, that the brief period in the immediate aftermath of mass murder provided a unique opportunity to speak about—and actively create—a powerful and enduring public memory of national unity.

In the weeks that followed, President Bush continued to use Virginia Tech as a means of fostering a sense of national unity by linking it to American history in a number of political ceremonies. Two days after the Convocation, Bush linked the memory of Virginia Tech to the Holocaust during his speech at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

> We meet at a time of sorrow for our nation… at Virginia Tech…[we saw] courage in a teacher named Liviu Librescu. With the gunman set to enter his class, this brave professor blocked the door with his body while his students fled to safety. On the Day of Remembrance [Yom HaShoah], this Holocaust survivor gave his own life so that others may live…this is a place devoted to memory.[39]

Ten days later, the President gave his only university commencement address of 2007 at Miami Dade College in Florida. A minute into his speech, Bush explained, "on college campuses across America, our thoughts turn to…Virginia Tech…members of the Miami-Dade community share this sense of loss [because] one of the young victims was a former Miami-Dade student who transferred to Virginia Tech, Daniel Cueva."[40] On May 3, the President hosted the "National Day of Prayer" at the White House. The event, organized by Shirley Dobson and attended by her husband James Dobson of "Focus on the Family" fame, featured a small group of invited religious figures, politicians and

[39] George W. Bush, "Remarks at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum," April 18, 2007. In *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States*, U.S. Government Printing Office, (hereafter referred to as PPPUS). Available online at: http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/browse/collection.action?collectionCode=PPP . Accessed, October 1, 2013.

[40] Bush, "Commencement Address at Miami Dade College—Kendall Campus in Miami, Florida," April 28, 2007. In PPPUS.

members of the military that included Blacksburg Mayor Ron Rordam and Corp of Cadets Chaplain Houston Yu as representatives of Virginia Tech.[41] Like Clinton before him, President Bush continued to use Virginia Tech in political rituals that further solidified the national importance and memory of the killings.

Nevertheless, it was not President Bush, but Virginia Tech professor Nikki Giovanni who stole the show at Convocation with a poem that initiated the transformation of the campus colloquialism "Hokie Nation." Giovanni asserted boldly "we do not understand this tragedy. We know we did nothing to deserve it, but neither does a child in Africa dying of AIDS…no one deserves a tragedy."[42] Giovanni separated all the verses of her powerful poem with "We are Virginia Tech," which was the same sports chat used by Columbine in the aftermath of their killing. Giovanni was the first person at Convocation to use another Virginia Tech sporting term when she said "the Hokie Nation embraces our own and reaches out with open heart and hands…we will continue to invent the future through our blood and tears and through all our sadness," before ending her poem with the unforgettable finale

We are the Hokies
We will prevail.
We will prevail.
We will prevail.
We are Virginia Tech.[43]

Giovanni's poem lasted less than two minutes, but her words echoed throughout Cassell Coliseum and into the history of Virginia Tech. Moreover, her usage of "Hokie Nation"

[41] Bush, "Remarks on National Day of Prayer, May 3, 2007. In PPPUS.
[42] Nikki Giovanni, "Convocation Address," Cassell Coliseum, Virginia Tech, April 17, 2007.
[43] Ibid.

presented a colloquial term in a new way that was well suited to anchor the identity of the traumatized university community

The term "Hokie Nation" had long been a campus colloquialism associated with the sports identity of the university, but was first used officially as the slogan of the fall 2006 football season. Tim East, the director of marketing for VT Athletics for over two decades, traced "the use of 'Hokie Nation' back to 2006. It was just some wording we used in some marketing materials. I cannot find any [official] use of the term prior to that."[44] Ennis McCrery, then a graduate student at Virginia Tech and a Blacksburg native whose father worked for VT Athletics, recalled: "Hokie Nation did exist before April 16, [but] it was about sports... [and] it started with football…they put up flags along Southgate Drive before the football season… I think I even have cups that say 'Hokie Nation.' It was very much a sports thing."[45] Sumeet Bagai, the former President of VT's Student Government Association (SGA), similarly recounted, "before [April 16], the most common way that you would hear the term 'Hokie Nation' was in a sports arena. ESPN might mention it …Hokie Nation [existed] when you were in Cassell Coliseum or Lane Stadium."[46] Hokie Nation was fresh in local memory after serving as the official slogan of the football season before the killings, and Giovanni's usage of it in her immediately iconic speech began its transformation into an identity for the bereaved university community.

The Hokie Nation, in fact, coalesced in Cassell Coliseum following the standing ovation after Giovanni's speech in the form of the school's most popular sporting cheer. *Collegiate Times* Sports Editor Ryan McConnell wrote an article the day before

[44] Tim East email exchange with the Author. March 18, 2014.
[45] Ennis McCrery, Interview with the Author, October 2, 2013.
[46] Sumeet Bagai, Interview with the Author, January 15, 2014.

Convocation that offered a prediction. "I expect the Cassell [Convocation] to strike me with a much different, yet much more powerful sense of awe. I don't expect thousands of [people] to clap and chant in unison. I want to get chills from the silence of the gathered masses."[47] McConnell was wrong. As he himself explained in follow-up article the next day, "in the middle of the applause [after Giovanni's poem]…a lone voice on one side of the Coliseum called out" the school's standard football cheer "'Let's go…' [and] a small contingent on the other side responded 'Hokies'…it [quickly] snowballed like this until all of the 10,000-plus people were chanting and clapping in harmony. 'Let's Go, Hokies' reverberated throughout Cassell."[48] The 'Let's Go, Hokies' cheers at Convocation were surprising, because even to the CT Sports Editor acknowledged that this was "the signature cheer at Virginia Tech athletic events, a gameday ritual as automatic as tailgating."[49]

The eruption of the 'Let's Go, Hokies' sporting cheer at the Convocation just one day after the killings was both unifying and problematic. Ennis McCrery had a dual role as both a lifelong Hokie fan whose father worked in the athletics department, and as a future Omsbudperson for the university who worked with a number of victims' families in the years that followed. McCrery's dual role helped her to understand the alienation many people felt at the Convocation and at many other university commemorations that followed. McCrery reflects

> For some of us who were sports fans [like myself, the 'Let's Go, Hokies' chant] was very healing and unifying. For people who were not, it seemed very inappropriate and they questioned 'How could you bring this sports language into our mourning? You are

[47] Ryan McConnell, "10,000 Hokies strong for 32 fallen," *Collegiate Times*, April 17, 2007.
[48] McConnell, "'Let's go, Hokies' is much more than a simple three-word chant," *Collegiate Times*, April 18, 2007.
[49] Ibid.

> cheering?!?' …when people began to do the chant, it was total catharsis for me. I had goosebumps all over me and I cried and laughed and it a lot of ways it was very healing [for me and VT sports fans]. But there were other [VT] people who were so angry. In Nikki's poem it was "We are Virginia Tech," but the chant [that happened afterwards was] "Let's go... Hokies." It was the football chant… There were people who did not feel like they were a part of [the Hokie Nation] and who still do not feel as though they are a part of the Hokie Nation.[50]

McCrery's unique perspective illustrates that the use of sporting rhetoric helped many VT members to heal, but it also isolated many other VT members who felt that using sports chants a day after the killings was disrespectful and inappropriate.

The Convocation, attended by President Bush, Karl Rove and most Virginia politicians, was the first university-wide ritual organized by the school administrators that brought the community together and helped many people to grieve. Yet the speed with which the administration moved to commemorate also resulted in many other members of the Virginia Tech community feeling excluded and angered at the use of sporting rhetoric in the mourning rituals that took place so soon after the murder of so many.[51] Both of these seeds were planted in the first twenty-four hours after the killings, and both of these seeds began to grow in the soil of a transformed Hokie Nation.

5.3 HOKIE STONE: Immediate Aftermath Memorials on the Drillfield

In the week after the killings, the Drillfield became the space on campus where immediate aftermath memorials were constructed and a number of memorial services were held. While there were hundreds of aftermath memorials on campus, one particular memory site composed of Hokie Stones quickly became a central site of pilgrimage for

[50] McCrery interview.
[51] Ibid. In my four years of research on this topic while attending Virginia Tech, this observation by McCrery has been reiterated to me countless times by dozens of people who were at VT in 2007, but who were unwilling to be formally interviewed due to concerns about potential social backlash.

the thousands of people who came to mourn. Constructed by a group of student leaders, the Hokie Stone memorial became the focal point for the Candlelight Vigil, the photograph of which became the iconic image circulated around the globe (Fig. 1).[52] The Hokie Stone memorial quickly became a sacred space on campus where rituals of mourning were enacted.

In the immediate aftermath of the killings, Sumeet Bagai, who served two terms as the President of VT's Student Government Association (SGS) from 2004 to 2006, used his leadership experience to mobilize a student response. Bagai had been working late into the night on April 15 to organize Virginia Tech's upcoming 'Relay for Life.' At 10:00 a.m. the following morning, Bagai's father awoke him abruptly with a phone call, and this was how Sumeet learned about the killings. He took no time, however, in beginning to mobilize all of Tech's student leaders. As Bagai recalled, "I immediately started an AOL Messenger chat group with the other student leaders on campus…by midday the whole campus was closed, so we decided to hold a meeting at my house, and it occurred between 3:00 and 5:00 p.m. that afternoon."[53] The assembled group was comprised of student leaders that had joined together previously under the banner of "Hokies United," first after 9/11 to raise money for relief efforts, and again after the 2004 Asian tsunami, the 2005 Hurricane Katrina, and in 2006 for the local "Morva incident" in which a police officer and hospital security guard were killed during a manhunt near the campus. Bagai explains that two major topics were discussed at the groups first meeting.

> We collectively asked, what does our community need? That is when the brainstorming started. One of the first ideas was to do a candlelight vigil so that the community would have a formal way of coming together...then the discussion transitioned into, what is

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[53] Bagai interview.

> the proper way to memorialize? And that is where the Hokie Stone [memorial] idea came from.[54]

Bagai's long experience as an established leader on campus and his quick thinking during the first chaotic hours enabled Hokies United to reconvene and begin organizing a response for the local community.

Even before the first Hokies United meeting was completed, people throughout the community gravitated towards the Drillfield and quickly began to create hundreds of immediate aftermath memorials. Sylvia Grider notes the appearance of "flags, flowers and candles…school related items…many turkey legs…[which] to those familiar with the school and its traditions…referred to the… 'Hokie Bird,' the school mascot."[55] Dean Jack Davis remembers that "architecture students got together and banded all the trees on the Drillfield with…maroon and orange ribbons, and there were some black [ribbons]."[56] One of the most visited early aftermath memorials was a large "VT" sign made of cardboard and wood constructed by Brandon Stiltner and attached to a tree next to the War Memorial Chapel. The VT sign garnered attention after President Bush's motorcade stopped after the Convocation and the President, First Lady Laura Bush, and Governor Tim Kaine all got out and signed the memorial. In addition to the aftermath memorials, the Drillfield also became a place where students and community members came "to gather, to mourn, and, perhaps, begin to heal…some stood in circles at the center of the field…other sat on the grass watching the scene."[57] As one reporter noted, "it was reminiscent of the National Mall on a summer afternoon… the Virginia Tech Drillfield

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[54] Ibid.
[55] Grider, "Memorializing Shooter with Their Victims: Columbine, Virgnia Tech, Northern Illinois University." 122.
[56] Davis interview.
[57] "Makeshift Memorials," *The Roanoke Times*, April 19, 2007.

became a tourist attraction."[58] Within days, hundreds of different immediate aftermath memorials were constructed across campus, but the Drillfield became the site of pilgrimage and epicenter of both material and personal mourning.

The community memorial created by Hokies United in front of Burruss Hall quickly became the memory site that attracted the most attention and resulted in a continuous flow of visitors. When the question of how to memorialize arose at the meeting at Khan's house, architecture student Tom Quigley took out his drawing pad and in what many remember as a single creative moment, sketched out the complete design for a memorial. The original shape of the memorial was "hourglass-like" and consisted of two intersecting half-circles—one composed of Hokie Stone that surrounded the reviewing stand in front of Burruss, and the other composed of white plywood "message boards" that curved out into the Drillfield itself. The Hokie Stones semi-circle consisted of stones for each of the 32 victims and the message board semi-circle originally included approximately 10-12 message boards. Greg Sagstetter, a student leader in Hokies United, contacted Vice President Tom Tillar and asked how the group could get blocks of Hokie Stone. Tillar told him "you don't have time to deal with the quarry [where the Hokie Stone is made], so just go to a building site and take the stones you need. If you get caught, I've got your back."[59] Tillar later reflected on the possible reason that the students chose this particular site, which he emphasized he did not know anything about or have any hand in suggesting.

> In front of Burruss Hall there has always been the stone Reviewing Stand[for the Corps of Cadets, which]…has always been a focal point. It's the only thing built on the Drillfield aside from the [War

[58] Erin Hutkin, "Time of Tribute: Crowds Gathered at the Drillfield to view memorials for victims," *The Roanoke Times*, April 23, 2007.
[59] Tom Tillar, Interview with the Author, September 24, 2013.

> Memorial] Chapel and the [War] Memorial [Pylons]. I think that is why the students, rather than pick the existing chapel, came to that spot. Truly genius.[60]

The group of student leaders worked throughout the night, and by the dawn of the morning of the April 17 the hourglass shaped community memorial of Hokie Stones and wooden message boards was complete.

The Candlelight Vigil held on the evening of April 18 was attended by over 20,000 people and solidified the Hokie Stone community memorial as the central immediate aftermath memorial on campus.[61] Half the Hokies United has focused their efforts on building the memorial; the other half worked for two straight days to plan and prepare the vigil. President Steger had officially announced the vigil at the Convocation the day before: “The Student Government Association and the student body have organized a candlelight vigil that will take place on the Drillfield near the War Memorial at approximately 8 p.m.”[62] Steger’s assumption that the vigil would take place in front of the War Memorial made sense in terms of the historical ritual alignment of the Drillfield. However, in less than two days, the hourglass-shape community memorial had become a site of pilgrimage for everyone who visited the Drillfield, something which ultimately shifted the orientation of the vigil towards the north side of the Drillfield. Tom Tillar reflected that “the Candlelight Vigil kind of solidified [that Hokie Stone memorial, with] the use of the Reviewing Stand [as the stage for the vigil] and everyone facing it, and facing Burruss Hall.”[63] The Candlelight Vigil transformed the community memorial constructed by Hokies United into the focal point of a grieving campus.

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[60] Ibid.
[61] Unattributed editorial, “Students reflect on Drillfield remembrance,” *Collegiate Times,* April 24, 2007.
[62] Steger, “Convocation Address.”
[63] Tillar interview.

The Candlelight Vigil also established new ritual standards and expectations at Virginia Tech. The Corps of Cadets were employed as the ceremonial entourage that opened and closed the event, just as they had done at the Convocation the day before. As a part of the vigil ceremony, the Corps trumpeters played Echo-Taps—a variation on the classic 'Taps' in which two trumpeters play a delayed version of each stanza of the song from different locations. The two Drillfield locations chosen for the trumpeters were the War Memorial Pylons on the east side, and the Corps Reviewing Stand that was encircled by the community memorial on the north side. Ritually speaking, Echo Taps was a powerful auditory event that tangibly linked these two memory sites for the tens of thousands of members of the audience. During the vigil, some members of the crowd again initiated the "Let's Go, Hokies" football chant, which was embraced by many, but again upset other grieving Hokies who did not feel that sports cheers were appropriate two days after the murder of their friends and classmates.[64] However, these rituals, enacted and projected across a dark Drillfield covered in candle flames, reverberated deeply and enduringly with the traumatized Virginia Tech community.

A photograph of the Candlelight Vigil quickly became the iconic image of the memorialization of the Virginia Tech killings. By the following day, as Tom Tillar recounted, "the Candlelight Vigil was photographed and printed all around the world."[65] Reflecting on the vigil that he and his fellow student leaders had organized, Sumeet Bagai poignantly noted

> I mean, when else do you get 16,000 students or 100,000 people who associate themselves with Virginia Tech together? It's at a football game, right? Well this was the first time that I can

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[64] Both McCrery and Bagai mentioned this in their interviews, as well as many other individuals who I spoke to who requested that their comments be off the record.
[65] Ibid.

> remember that such a large number of people had gotten together on the Drillfield outside of a sporting event. In some ways, people looked at that as defining what the Hokie Nation was.[66]

For those who were at this first Candlelight Vigil, it was a defining experience that many find hard to convey in words. Yet the photograph of thousands of uplifted candles facing the Hokie Stone community memorial at the foot of Burruss Hall captured what Marita Sturken calls the unique ability of such images to "pair the spectacular with the intimate."[67] In a way, this image heralded the birth of the new Hokie Nation, and began to shift the spatial orientation of the campus away from the War Memorial Pylons and towards the community memorial and Burruss Hall.

Friday, April 20, exactly eight years to the day from the Columbine killings, the entire United States joined Virginia Tech in a nationwide "Maroon and Orange Day." Earlier in the week, President Bush declared that flags should fly at half-staff for the entire week "to let Virginia Tech know the country stands beside them."[68] Other universities and sporting programs around the nation joined in showing their solidarity. East Carolina University was slated to open the following football season against Virginia Tech in Lane Stadium, and publicly committed to donate $100,000 at the game. Penn State transformed their annual Blue-White spring football game into a commemoration where "the majority of the approximately 71,000 fans in attendance donned orange and maroon to show their support for Tech."[69] Junior VT student Justin Wish remarked that "the thing that gets me is all the people coming out of the woodwork from different colleges and places…they are all Hokies for this week [and it] is touching

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[66] Bagai interview.
[67] Sturken, *Tourists of History: Memory, Kitsch, and Consumerism from Oklahoma City to Ground Zero*. 96.
[68] Kim Berkey, "Governor's day of mourning for fallen," *Collegiate Times*, April 20, 2007.
[69] "Memorial Issue," *Virginia Tech Magazine*, Vol. 29, No. 3, 2007.

and makes me realize everyone is connected to Virginia Tech."[70] Local reporter Kim Berkey best summarized the national unity that appeared briefly during the immediate aftermath. "Today, all Virginians are Hokies. Today, red, white and blue is one and the same as maroon and orange. Today Virginia Tech will stand tall, as a symbol of strength united by a state and a nation of support."[71] Around the country, the Maroon and Orange Day illustrated the power of mass murder in the twenty first century to serve as a rallying point for patriotic displays of national unity.

On campus, an official moment of silence was held at the Hokie Stone community memorial, and this marked the end of the period of largely spontaneous mourning rituals and practices on campus. Governor Tim Kaine had officially declared, "as our Commonwealth begins the long and difficult healing process, I am filled with images of a Virginia Tech community that is resilient and unified. I ask everyone in Virginia to pause at noon on Friday."[72]While many students had gone home for the week after the Candlelight Vigil, hundreds showed up to join President Steger in observing the moment of silence on the Drillfield. After the observance began, however, it became clear to everyone in attendance that no one wanted to be the first to end the silence. Tom Tillar realized this, and moved swiftly to bring closure to the event.

> The moment of silence had gone on for 12 minutes and so I kind of slithered over to the side of the President and said quietly 'I am going to slide a rose into your hand, and I want you to walk forward and put it on that pile of flowers and that will signal the end of this. And there are 400 photographers waiting to take your picture.[73]

[70] Berkey, "Governor's day of mourning for fallen."
[71] Ibid.
[72] Tim Kaine, cited in ibid.
[73] Tillar interview.

Tillar's plan worked. As President Steger bent down to place the rose on the piles of memorabilia that now surrounded the Hokie Stones, hundreds of camera flashes went off, one of which captured an image that became locally iconic.[74] More importantly, Steger's placing of a flower on the community memorial marked an important transition in the commemorative process at Virginia Tech. In laying down a single rose, the week of largely spontaneous mourning was brought to and end. When the students returned the following Monday to finish their semesters, administrators began to craft plans about how to create an officially-sanctioned memory of the killings.

5.4 THE 32/33 DEBATE: Communal Dialogue or Administrative Threat?

Three days after the killings, a student placed a 33rd Hokie Stone to represent the perpetrator in the community memorial, and this simple action initiated the 32/33 debate at Virginia Tech that replicated the 13/15 debate that had occurred at Columbine.[75] Interestingly, the reaction to the 33rd stone at Virginia Tech, while upsetting to many in the community, never elicited the public animosity and vandalizing that erupted at Columbine. Instead, in the days and weeks that followed, a spatial and material debate began in which the stone was repeatedly removed and replaced anonymously during the night. The appearance and disappearance of the 33rd stone exemplified how the community took control of the immediate aftermath memorial built by the students as the site where people engaged in a symbolic struggle to come to terms with difficult issues of membership, alienation, and grieving in the traumatic aftermath of the killings. While the

[74] President Steger's Rose. Virginia Tech, Moment of Silence Ceremony, April 20, 2007. Associated Press photo.

[75] For a detailed account of the many memorial and media incarnations of the perpetrator, and the ultimate erasure of him and his suicide from the official memory narrative of April 16, see Kathleen Jones, "The Thirty-Third Victim: Representations of Seung Hui Cho in the Aftermath of the "Virginia Tech Massacre"," *The Journal of Childhood and Youth* 2, no. 1 (2009).

community showed a great deal of commemorative maturity in their handling of the 32/33 debate, the administration of the university reacted in a far more bureaucratic fashion. From the outset, the Virginia Tech administration moved swiftly to block or limit any commemorative ritual or site that they believed might negatively affect the image of the university. Because the community memorial immediately became the central site of pilgrimage, administrators interpreted the appearance of the 33rd stone as a public relations threat and took steps to immediately address the short and long term implications of its existence. The emergence of the 32/33 debate caused a wide range of responses from the community, all of which impacted the university administration's strategic maneuvers to create an officially sanctioned memory narrative of the killings.

When a single Hokie Stone representing the perpetrator was anonymously placed in the community memorial at 4 a.m. on the morning of Thursday April 19th, its presence was not immediately apparent for a number of reasons. First, soon after the community memorial was built, someone had come and placed 32 "VT" symbols made out of popsicles sticks with the names of each of the murder victims, thus attaching an identity to each of the stones. Before this point, the indistinguishable stones had been treated with an air of sacred reverence that had repelled anyone from placing any personal mementos. "The minute that each stone got a name associated with them," Sumeet Bagai recalls, "personal messages started showing up and more and more things began to be dropped of with individual names on them."[76] In less than twenty-four hours, the symbolic accretion around each stone had resulted in huge piles of personal offerings that by the end of the week were "eight feet high" around some of the stones.[77] The 33rd

[76] Bagai interview.
[77] Tillar interview.

stone was also distinctly different from the other stones when viewed closely, however it's general similarity appears to have been the root of its initial unrecognizability. The stone was rarely labeled with a name, and it was distinctly smaller, of a noticeably different hue of grey, and less expertly chiseled than the other stones. Bagai said that "the truth of the matter is that many of the times that the 33rd stone was out there, people didn't even realize whether it was there or not."[78] The *Collegiate Times'* incorrect assertion in its Tuesday the 23rd issue that the stone was placed on Saturday the 21st illustrated the degree of the 33rd stone's anonymity.[79] Interestingly, this suggests that when President Charles Steger's placed a rose during Friday's moment of silence ceremony, he placed it on a community memorial comprised of thirty-three stones. By Saturday the 21st, however, the 33rd stone's obscurity was obliterated when rumors of its existence began to circulate widely, thus initiating the public onset of the 32/33 debate.

The public revelation of the 33rd stone's existence led to the first of its many removals, which caused VT senior Katelynn L. Johnson to publicly out herself as the individual who had placed the stone. In an editorial entitled, "Remembering everyone who died in the VT tragedy," Johnson boldly asserted her reasons for placing the stone.

> Most of [the people at VT] probably wouldn't care that there were only 32 stones placed in memorial…but I care. My family did not raise me to do what was popular. They raised me to do what was morally right. We did not lose only 32 students and faculty members that day, we lost 33 lives. Yes, 32 were victims of another, but we lost 33 members of the Hokie family (say what you want about [the perpetrator] not being a part of this family…but as a Hokie, I choose to accept all my fellow students, faculty and alumni as Hokies no matter what I think about their

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[78] Bagai interview.

[79] Katelynn L. Johnson, "Remembering everyone who died in the VT tragedy," *Collegiate Times*, April 24, 2007. "The rock representing the 33rd person who died and the 33rd family who mourns wasn't placed there on Saturday as published in today's (Tuesday's) Collegiate Times; it was place there at about 4 a.m. on Thursday morning."

> current problems or their past, their criminal history or their political or religious views and especially no matter their mental health status). 33 people died. No matter what you think of [the perpetrator], his actions, his responsibility, his mental health status…he still had a family and loved ones who mourn his loss…I refuse to do what is popular and agree with everyone around me that only 32 people died on Monday. 33 died. We lost 33 Hokies that day, not 32.[80]

In the editorial, Johnson acknowledged that she was the person who brought the Hokie Stone "and put it there [in the community memorial]. I was not, however, the one who removed it and am saddened and outraged that it has been moved. I intend to bring another, and to continue for as long as the memorial remains there."[81]

Johnson's actions had initiated the 32/33 debate, but her letter was also the first document to address the fundamental question that would lay at the heart of the oncoming commemorative process at Virginia Tech: who had the right to define who was a member of the Hokie Nation? Johnson continued,

> those rocks aren't just for those who died. They are for all of us to mourn, to remember those they left behind, their family, their friends, their loved ones. If we are truly the tight-knit community that we represent ourselves as, we should have care and concern for ALL individuals in our community. You don't get to pick your family…just as I don't believe that you can choose the members of our Virginia Tech family.[82]

Johnson's concerns were not solely for the memorial or membership in the university, but also prompted by a fear for her own personal safety in that community. "Until now, I have not talked to anyone…about the event. I fear backlash from my fellow students and perhaps even faculty or staff members who do not agree with my actions."[83] Katelynn Johnson's actions and words were about far more than the 32/33 debate that she initiated;

[80] Ibid.
[81] Ibid.
[82] Ibid.
[83] Ibid.

they questioned the terms of inclusion amidst the widespread claims of unity of the entire Hokie Nation that echoed loudly across the Virginia Tech campus after the killings.

Johnson's explanation led to an immediate round of rebuttals in the pages of the *Collegiate Times*, and while the letters resolutely disagreed with the 33rd stone, the messages maintained a tone of respect for her right to hold such a position. Melissa L. Watson argued that the perpetrator was not a Hokie because "he turned on us. And he deserves nothing from us. He turned on us…I can't imagine how you can say he deserves to be recognized… let's just agree to disagree, this battle will rage for years; simply put, he's a murderer and an insult to the tradition and pride of Virginia Tech."[84] CT columnist Dan Sheehan offered an articulate rebuttal that emphasized the prevalent views concerning spatial and temporal etiquette in the commemorative response.

> [Johnson] said she is 'saddened and outraged' over the stone being removed. I am also saddened and outraged: I am saddened and outraged that a stone representing a mass murderer would be placed next to those memorializing the victims…while I don't doubt your intentions were well placed, your decision to put a stone in memorial of the gunman next to his 32 victims shows a completely absence of propriety. It is not your place to memorialize him. Forgiveness will come with time, but that time is not now…we memorialize people to honor their accomplishments and mourn their passing. The gunman deserves no such tribute.[85]

Foreshadowing the removal and replacement of the 33rd stone that continued in the following weeks, Sheehan ended his letter by stating "if you continue to place a stone for him at the memorial at 4 a.m., I'll come by at 5 a.m. [to remove it]."[86] These rebuttals expressed the majority position in the aftermath that the perpetrator did not deserve a place proximate to the victims and that it was not—if it ever would be—a time to forgive.

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[84] Melissa L. Watson, "Commemorating the victims, not the murderer," *Collegiate Times*, April 27, 2007.
[85] Dan Sheehan, "Commemorating only the victims of tragedy," *Collegiate Times,* April 27, 2007.
[86] Ibid.

While many people ranged in emotion from uncomfortable to outrage over the placement of the 33rd stone, the community's sympathetic material response to it was unprecedented in relation to the previous mass murder memorials. Tricia Sangalang, a VT student, explained that the 33rd Hokie Stone had,

> like the other stones: flowers, flags, notes, and candles lay before it. Many wrote notes sending their prayers to his family. Others, on the other hand, directly addressed [the perpetrator]. To my surprise, none of the notes I read expressed hatred, animosity or condemnation. The ones I read explained how they did not understand why he chose to shoot his peers and some even said they wish they would have known him so they could have tried to help in any way. One note simply stated on an index card, 'I forgive you.'[87]

People throughout the community vigorously argued their individual positions on the 32/33 debate, but not a single interpersonal altercation or instance of written assault of the perpetrator's stone was recorded or remembered by anyone involved. Put simply, at Virginia Tech, no one ever attacked the symbolic representation of the perpetrator at the community memorial.

The 32/33 debate spilled out into the town of Blacksburg as well. A church on North Main Street placed a sign along the road which simply said "33."[88] The Blacksburg Baptist Church, which sits directly across the street from Virginia Tech, had 32 flagpoles donated by a flagpole company and erected them along Main Street. The church, however, decided to post a sign after the 32 flagpole which read

> While only 32 flag poles were donated to the town and ultimately to our church for this project, it is important to also remember the [perpetrator's] family in their grief. Our prayer is for the healing

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[87] Tricia Sangalang, quoted in Roland Lazenby, *April 16th: Virginia Tech Remembers* (New York: Plume, 2007). 152.

[88] Nikki Giovanni, Interview with the Author, October 10, 2013. Giovanni remembered "one of the churches on the other side of the town did 33, and that caused a big controversy." Brian Britt, a professor of Religious Studies, also talked about the 33 sign in an informal discussion with the author.

> of everyone touch by the tragedy of April 16, 2007, and for every family on earth touched by the struggle of profound mental illness.[89]

Thomas McDearis, the senior pastor at Blackburg Baptist Church explained, "we weren't trying to say [the perpetrator] was just another victim, but we were trying to say that his family did deserve our prayers. Their hearts were broken just like everybody else."[90] The 32/33 debate quickly became a widespread local discussion, and like Columbine, various Blacksburg community churches attempted to symbolically address their religious perspective on all the people who died on April 16.

Unlike the community responses, Virginia Tech administrators' interactions with the student leaders of Hokies United suggest that the administration perceived the appearance of the 33rd stone as a threat to the image of the university and quickly moved to distance themselves from its existence. Sumeet Bagai recalled, "when the 33rd stone showed up, the university [administrators]—although they never said this in a public forum—were quick to deflect anything that brought any negative attention to them [or to the image of the university]."[91] Because of Bagai's leadership role in Hokies United and in the creation of the Hokie Stone memorial, the administration made the hasty assumption that he and the group had been responsible or involved with the 33rd stone's placement. Bagai explains

> I remember when the 33rd stone first showed up, I got a call [from an administrator] asking what was going on and I said 'I didn't do that. Somebody else did.' Then the stone vanished and then everything was good. Then the stone was brought back and [the administration] was again calling me saying 'Sumeet, what is going on?' And I said, 'I don't know how many times I can tell you that

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[89] "A Call for Remembrance and Prayer," Sign, Blacksburg Baptist Church, 2007-2008.
[90] Gordon Block, "Memorials take different approaches," *Collegiate Times*, April 18, 2008.
[91] Bagai interview.

the 33rd stone was not my decision, or [Hokies United's] decision.'[92]

Behind the scenes, the relationship of the students in Hokies United with the university administration was often turbulent. As Bagai recalls

> when something was happening related to the memorial or 4/16 that wasn't convenient [for the administrators] it was easy to blame or deflect onto me or my fellow student leaders, but then, when people took pride in something the students created [the administrators were quick] to take credit. I feel as though the group [of student leaders] was dealt with in general as a matter of convenience.[93]

Virginia Tech administrators' pressuring of student leaders to remove and block the 33rd stone suggests that they viewed it as a threat to the university's image.

The university administrators' accusations of the student leaders involvement in the placing of the 33rd stone led Hokies United to clearly assert that the memorial they had built was not theirs—it was the community's memorial. For Bagai and all the student leaders in Hokies United,

> the one thing we all knew, despite our personal opinions, whether it was that in our capacity as student leaders or collectively as Hokies United, was that this was the community's memorial, so we wanted to let the community dictate the discussion on whether it should be thirty two versus thirty three stones. You could tell that there was clearly some back and forth, and it was hard to ever really know how many people stood on either side of the issue… But we decided [as the student leaders of Hokies United] to let the community dictate, first, whether it was 33 or 32, and also, the [the association of individual] names [with the stones].[94]

For the members of Hokies United, "the memorial was created by 30 or so of us who came up with the idea, but it took on a life of its own after that. It was collective, shared ownership and interest in [the memorial] and that is what guided our thought process" in

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[92] Ibid.
[93] Ibid.
[94] Ibid.

considering it the community's memorial.[95] Students created the Hokie Stone memorial, but after repeated assumptions of their involvement in the placement of the 33rd stone, they candidly informed the administration that they did not own the memorial; it was now the community's memorial.

Much like the 32/33 debate, the Hokie Stone community memorial was a constantly fluctuating material manifestation of the ongoing community dialogue in the aftermath of the killings. Throughout the spring and summer of 2007, the community memorial was a fluid and ever transforming memorial that on some days had 33 stones, on other days had 32. The Hokie Stone memorial became so powerful exactly because it concurrently represented the grieving, forgiveness and anger that cycled through the community for months after the killings. Despite administrative concerns, the community-at-large allowed and maintained the 32/33 debate in an impressively respectful fashion that stands in stark contrast with Columbine's 13/15 debate. Recognition of the 33rd stone became so normative in the community that author Ronald Lazenby's *April 16th: Virginia Tech Remembers*—a book locally became a highly recognized memorial text—chose to describe the spontaneous Hokie Stone memorial as "a collection of thirty-three Hokie Stones on the Drillfield, one for each victim, even the killer, although most Hokies preferred to think of that stone as place to acknowledge the grief of the [perpetrators] family."[96] The community memorial was never merely a student memorial—it was a fluid memory site that enabled all the members of the Virginia Tech community to respectfully communicate their different perspectives on the meaning and memory of the killings.

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[95] Ibid.
[96] Lazenby, *April 16th: Virginia Tech Remembers*. 150.

5.5 Tom Tillar's 'University-Sanctioned' Memorial Committee

Seven days after the killings, President Steger called upon Tom Tillar, the Vice President of Alumni Relations, and appointed him head of the official Virginia Tech memorial committee. As Tillar recalls, "[Steger] called me Monday morning and said 'we need a memorial, and I want you to Chair [the memorial committee]."[97] Steger's decision to select Tillar was both practical and personal. It was practical because, as Tillar explained, in his role as the lead administrator in Alumni Relations he "planned ceremonial occasions. That was a part of my role, and [the President] knew that there would need to be a dedication and so forth."[98] Selecting Tillar was also a personal move because Steger and Tillar "were classmates [at Virginia Tech], we knew each other from our freshman year, which was 1965. So we were friends, we were more than colleagues."[99] In fact, both Steger and Tillar were from "the fabled class of 1969" VT graduates, and the President had populated his administration and university staff with a number of friends from that class, including Frank Beamer, the Head Coach of the football team, and Ray Smoot, the Chief Executive Officer of the Virginia Tech Foundation, which houses all of the university's financial and material assets.[100] Tillar's selection to chair the memorial committee was a practical and personal decision by President Steger that ensured a close and reliable administrative affiliation throughout the commemorative process.

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[97] Tillar interview.
[98] Ibid.
[99] Ibid.
[100] Larry Hinker, "Changes coming to the Virginia Tech Foundation: Raymond D. Smoot Jr. to step down; John E. Dooley to become chief executive officer," Virginia Tech Press Release, October 24, 2011. http://www.vtnews.vt.edu/articles/2011/10/102411-vtf-newceo.html Accessed March 11, 2012.

Tillar quickly assembled a committee composed almost exclusively of administrators, plus a small number of students leaders with whom Tillar had previously worked. Tillar explained: "I created the committee, and I put students on it, and faculty, and the university architects," however, a majority of the nineteen person committee was administrators: Tillar, Jack Davis, Bobby Freeman, Scott Hurst, Ann Spencer, John Dooley, Betsy Flanagan, Zenobia Hikes, David E. Lowe, and Ray Smoot. Five of the six students on the committee—Sumeet Bagai, Adeel Khan, James Tyger, Ennis McCrery and Greg Sagstetter—were current or previous campus leaders with a long history of working with the administration. Nikki Giovanni's popular Convocation speech led to her selection as the sole faculty representative on the committee. Giovanni described her role on the committee as more of an observer, which illuminates the lack of faculty or staff agency in charting the path of the memorial committee.[101]   Tillar created a committee comprised of administrators and student leaders with whom he was familiar to facilitate moving swiftly to complete a permanent memorial.

The only member of the committee that Tillar did not know intimately beforehand was John Lee, President of the Korean Student Association, who was selected strategically as a means of representing the perpetrator's ethnic community. Tillar explains

> I had this thought to include a representative of Korean students… and I didn't know the student but he was a graduate student who was head of the Korean Student Association. I don't know what inspired me to add John Lee to that committee, but I thought it would be important to have a Korean member [of the committee]

[101] Giovanni interview. When I asked what she remembered about being on the committee, she said "I don't think I have a lot to say [about being on the committee]… there was the speech I gave at the Convocation…I did not envision [the memorial we came up with], I liked this clump of trees. If you stand at Burruss facing the Drillfield, to the right there is a whole bunch of trees that I think is really beautiful, and I thought [we should put] something there… What I remembered was liking that grove, but I like being in trees so much."

> who understands the culture of his country and how [the Korean people] feel about this.[102]

The multiple acts of violence perpetrated against Virginia Tech students of Asian heritage by other Virginia Tech students in the weeks and months after the shooting are evidence that Tillar was not the only person at Virginia Tech to assume that the ethnicity of the perpetrator mattered. But as Loyola Marymount professor Edward J. W. Park noted in his powerful op-ed "I Hope He's Not Korean" for the *Chronicle of Higher Education's* Special Issue on the Virginia Tech killings, for minority groups "given our past experience, we knew that, if the shooter had been white, the responsibility, blame and anger would have begun with the individual. But for us, the responsibility, blame and anger also implicated our racial and ethnic identity."[103] The nationality of the perpetrator was deeply problematic because he was born and raised in the United States. He was not Korean, he was an American citizen who happened to have parents of Korean heritage. John Lee was the only person added to the memorial committee that Tillar had no personal knowledge of beforehand, and his inclusion was based wholly upon the fact that he had the same ethnic background as the perpetrator.

Early research by Jack Davis, the Dean of the School of Architecture and Design, on other recent memorials to mass murder and tragedy hah a significant impact on the goals and membership of the memorial committee. Davis researched over a dozen memorials, but paid specific attention to the memorials at Oklahoma City, Columbine, the University of Texas, Flight 93 (9/11) and the Texas A&M bonfire memorial. Davis emphasized three themes. First, he emphasized that it took a long time to complete many

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[102] Tillar interview.

[103] Edward J. W. Park, "I Hope He's Not Korean," *The Chronicle for Higher Education Magazine*, Special Issue: "Aftermath of a Tragedy: Reflections for Virginia Tech's Class of 2007," May 2007.

of the memorials, especially in the cases of Texas, Texas A&M and Columbine. Second, the simplicity of a number of the memorials was noted, and in the case of Oklahoma City specifically, it was pointed out that the site was "powerful in the day and at night (due to lighting)."[104] Lastly, it was highlighted that for the Flight 93 committee the decision to include "the families [of the victims] resulted in a very emotional/personal process that complicated the effort."[105] Tillar later commented that Davis' research "was helpful, I wouldn't have thought to do that."[106] Davis' findings, presented at the first committee meeting, lent an air of credence to the administration's desire to move quickly and exclude family members from the commemorative process.

Tom Tillar began the first committee meeting, held just two weeks after the killings, by stressing the importance of doing everything necessary to rapidly complete what he called an intermediate memorial. Tillar began by distributing copies of the recently published coffee table book *Virginia Tech: Cut in Stone* to all the committee members, an act that wordlessly conveyed the importance of the task ahead. Tillar then conveyed President Steger's "desire to act swiftly to memorialize" and suggested that such action would "stand in stark contrast to other efforts to memorialize victims of tragic events [which took so long to complete], such as Columbine."[107] Matt Gart, the University Landscape Architect, explained his surprise in learning that the administrative objective was to have "a memorial in place by the time the students come back in August,

[104] Andy Hall, "Permanent Memorials Committee Minutes of the May 2, 2007 Meeting," Minutes of the Memorials Committee, May 2 2007. Tom Tillar' Memorial Committee File, copies of the entire file in the possession of the author, originals in 4/16 Archive, Special Collections, Virginia Tech. (Hereafter, "May 2 Memorial Committee Minutes" and "TTMCF," respectively.)
[105] Ibid.
[106] Tillar interview.
[107] Tillar, May 2 Memorial Committee Minutes, TTMCF.

and it was May! So we had [only] three months to design and construct."[108] Because there was no precedent for such a rapid commemorative process, the administrative rhetoric of an 'intermediate memorial' was a significant commemorative innovation in the history of mass murder memorials. Throughout the process, the administration justified this decision publicly by promising that, at some point in the future, the university would pursue a "permanent memorial." Most significantly, the rhetoric of pursuing an intermediate memorial enabled the administration to exclude many demographics of the local community from the committee, most notably, the family members of the victims. Tillar explained,

> we specifically didn't [include family members on the committee]… because they are too close to it, they are too emotional. And it probably inhibits some of the discussions you could have. If you're getting on the subject of cost, [for example], and somebody says 'that's too much' and a family member [responds] 'no money is too much to acknowledge my child's death'... So, you really didn't want to include somebody who was that close to [the killings].[109]

The fact that the memorial committee was pursing an intermediate memorial was shared publicly, but the membership and plans of the committee were explicitly withheld from public knowledge. BOV Rector Jake Lutz and President Steger instructed Tillar to inform the committee that they were not allowed to "publicize the names of the committee nor publicize its deliberations as doing so is likely to result in a great deal of discussion and questions."[110] The first committee meeting established the administrative plan to conduct a closed commemorative process and rapidly complete an intermediate memorial that, they promised, would be replaced by a permanent memorial in the future.

[108] Matt Gart, Interview with the Author, December 10, 2013.
[109] Tillar interview.
[110] Tillar, May 2 Memorial Committee Minutes, TTMCF.

One committee member, BOV member Bobby Freeman, had decades of experience with public artwork, which enabled him to more objectively understand the potential pitfalls of such a rapid and closed memorial process. Speaking about the proposed speed, Freeman explained: "there is an overwhelming feeling of wanting to create closure as quickly as possible, and that is what drove this [memorialization process at Virginia Tech]. We weren't going to get bogged down in the process, we were going to get it done [fast]."[111] Freeman understood from experience that memorials normally didn't move forward so quickly because "there is a timeline for these things. Most current memorials don't happen until a significant amount of time after the event, and there is a reason for that. It takes a community such a long time heal, and such a long time to be able to stand back and reflect."[112] From Freeman's perspective, the emphasis on speed was the reason that "there was no process in place to have the families [of the victims], the students and the [other members of the] university—to have all these groups come together. It was all too raw, it was all too fresh to think like that."[113] Bobby Freeman's knowledge of public artwork helped him understand the significant commemorative deviations taking place in Virginia Tech's memorial process.

As the discussion shifted to location, the committee's quick selection of the west end of the Drillfield illustrated how members' ideas were significantly circumscribed by the established memorial landscape of the campus. Scott Hurst gave a presentation "highlighting the end of the Drillfield opposite the War Memorial [Pylons] as a possible site. Tillar and many others pointed out that this location was the obvious choice. No

[111] Freeman interview.
[112] Ibid.
[113] Ibid.

one disagreed."[114] Why was the west end of the Drillfield seen as the obvious location of the memorial? The reason was spatial. The Virginia Tech Drillfield had been designed on the early twenty-century model of the National Mall in Washington D.C. that had also been replicated in the Oklahoma and Texas State Malls. Yet unlike these spaces, the VT Drillfield had no significant structure or monument on its west end, making it the "obvious" location of the permanent memorial. Constructing a memorial at the west end would complete the installation of significant memorial structures at all four cardinal directions of the Drillfield. As Gart explained "the question really came to: what is the interim memorial and where does it go? We debated sites…and one that we really focused on was the lower, [west end of the] Drillfield."[115] From the first meeting onward, the established memorial landscape of the campus played an active role in dictating the committee members imaginations about what was commemoratively possible.

Most committee members remembered Jack Davis' proposal of a Vietnam Veteran's Memorial-like memorial design that adhered to the administrative mandate that the site not overshadow the other Drillfield memorials. Davis explained that his design

> cut into the earth so that the memorial did not have a significant height above ground. You step into this world. It was Vietnam Veteran [Memorial]-like, but it is a design that really works with Hokie Stone in such a way that it is more Virginia Tech…it was intended to be a quiet, reflective space.[116]

Davis designed a small memorial for the west end of the Drillfield because

> some rulings came down, some rulings from on high—probably Steger in particular and possibly the Provost [McNamee] and maybe Tom Tillar and others—that this is a tragic event and it should be memorialized, but it should not equal the second world war memorial [War Memorial Chapel & Pylons], and it should not

[114] May 2 Memorial Committee Minutes, TT
[115] Gart interview.
[116] Davis interview.

> equal the first world war memorial [War Memorial Hall]—it should not be as [physically] significant as these memorials. We have to understand the scale of what's happened [in comparison to these wars]. So their intent was that memorial would not be a major structure.[117]

Davis' popular design illustrates how the centrality of the two War Memorials to the identity of the university led administrators to mandate that the April 16 Memorial should be proportionally (and thus, the hope initially was, symbolically) smaller than the other Drillfield memorials.

The committee's initial attention to the west end of the Drillfield led Sumeet Bagai—the vocal leader of the student representative in the meetings—to begin a discussion about the role of the Hokie Stone community memorial, a discussion that quickly intensified. At the end of the first meeting, Bagai asked "what [should be done] in the immediate future regarding the current memorials on the Drillfield [and] a discussion of maintaining these memorials and possibly incorporating them into the temporary memorial resulted."[118] The discussion, however, changed at the beginning of the second meeting. Tillar began the meeting by thanking "Sumeet Bagai and all of Hokies United leaders for their swift and appropriate efforts" in constructing the Hokie Stone memorial, before suggesting that "the current Burruss site may not be ideal, [but] as we transition from site to site, though, there must always be a focal point."[119] Bobby Freeman stepped in and encouraged the consideration of a timeline as opposed to specific memorial ideas or locations and suggested "that we consider the current spontaneous

[117] Ibid.
[118] May 2 Memorial Committee Minutes, TTMCF.
[119] Andy Hall, secretary, "Physical Memorial Subcommittee Minutes of the May 9, 2007 Meeting," Minutes of the Physical Memorial Subcommittee, May 9 2007, TTMCF. (Hereafter, "May 9th Physical Memorial Subcommittee Minutes")

memorials as the ‘bones’ of what…may become the intermediate memorial.”[120] Tillar then informed the committee that “the tents [covering the message boards and other aftermath memorials] on the Drillfield are to be removed on Monday.”[121] This was news to everyone on the committee, but was particularly disturbing to the students because, as Bagai explained, “several student-oriented meetings had taken place in recent days, particularly relating to whether or not to remove the Hokie Stone memorial and tents.”[122] The Drillfield had become the central commemorative space on campus, and the administration’s decision to flex its authority on the alteration of this space significantly upped the emotional stakes for many of the still traumatized committee members.

In the discussion that ensued, Bagai lobbied hard for the Hokie Stone community memorial as the intermediate memorial, and after lengthy discussion, the committee moved towards consensus on this opinion. Bagai urged the committee to understand that the “general feeling of the students is a desire that the stone memorial stay in place at least until an intermediate memorial is complete.”[123] Tillar argued that time would change people’s memory if and when a new memorial was constructed. As Bagai recalled,

> Tom said to the committee ‘one morning we are literally going to pick up those Hokie Stones and the Hokie Stones will be gone and people will become accustomed to the new memorial [that we create].’ That is where Tom and I went back and forth and butted heads. It wasn't the first time. I said to Tom, 'you can't take away something from the community that was created by the community.'[124]

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[120] Ibid.
[121] Ibid.
[122] Ibid.
[123] Ibid.
[124] Bagai interview.

Despite significant challenges, Bagai passionately stood up for the Hokie Stone memorial that had become sacred ground for countless members of the local community. The committee spent the remainder of the second meeting discussing the existing memorials and considering other memorial ideas. At the end of the meeting Bagai concluded by urging the committee to understand that "students have become attached to the current [Hokie Stone community memorial] and that feelings of reverence for, and attachment to it, have developed."[125] After a brief deliberation, Tillar concluded the meeting by acknowledging that

> consensus is moving towards considering the current [Hokie Stone] memorial being integrated into/modified for the creation of the intermediate memorial [and] he charged Hurst and Gart with developing ideas, with input from Davis and Freeman, of how to make this transition.[126]

A mere three weeks after the killings, the memorial committee coalesced around the idea of transforming the community memorial into the intermediate memorial that they were charged with creating.

What neither Tillar or Bagai knew at the time was that Bobby Freeman had been actively soliciting the architecturally trained members of the committee to support the Hokie Stone community memorial as the intermediate memorial. Two days after the first meeting, Freeman sent a private letter to Davis and Hurst about the architectural and design realities of project. "We three know its going to take time to design…so it is perhaps important that we think about how we can use the spontaneous memorials that are already on campus to the fullest."[127] Freeman concluded by advocating that the

[125] May 9th Physical Memorial Subcommittee Minutes.
[126] Ibid.
[127] Bobby Freeman, Personal Correspondence with Jack Davis and Scott Hurst, May 5, 2007. Copy of the letter in the Author's personal collection.

> most prominent spontaneous [memorial is] … the 33 stones in the semicircle near Burruss…I also think that those 33 Hokie Stones that were, as I understand, placed near Burruss by the students, are important and should be incorporated into this constructed [intermediate] memorial and perhaps even as a required element in any future permanent memorial. These stones could be the 'glue' that connects all the memorials. I think that as much connectivity as we can create to what folks are seeing now would help everyone buy into what is done on a temporary basis.[128]

Freeman later reflected, "I think that because of the student's unique kind of reaction, after we explored all these other memorial ideas, we said 'this is really pretty good. Let's embellish this.' [The committee] didn't start there, but we kind of ended there."[129] The final decision to make the Hokie Stone community memorial the intermediate memorial was decided officially in a meeting. Yet the architects on the committee privately began discussing its aesthetic merits at the outset of the process.

The adoption of the community memorial brought about the far more complex issue of the 32/33 debate. What is most striking about the role the debate played in committee deliberations is the radical disparity between its near-absence in the meeting minutes despite the strong yet divergent memories of the members of the committee. Andy Hall, who was on Tom Tillar's university staff and was appointed Secretary for the physical memorial committee, took the meeting minutes. On the one hand, the 32/33 debate is mentioned only two times in the minutes of the five meetings that took place, and in both instances, very briefly. The May 9th minutes indicate only that a "discussion took place later in the meeting,"[130] while the May 16th minutes talk about the debate in three succinct bullet points. On the other hand, every single member of the memorial committee whom I interviewed spoke at length about his or her memory of the 32/33

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[128] Ibid.
[129] Freeman interview.
[130] May 9th Physical Memorial Subcommittee Minutes, TTMCF.

debate as having been robust and contested. For example, Jack Davis called it "the only controversy to what [the committee] was doing," while Ennis McCrery said simply, "oh, it was a controversy."[131] What is clear is that the 32/33 debate was a vital part of the memory of all the committee members, yet it is nearly absent from the university's official records of the group's deliberations.

While memories are mixed about how the 32/33 debate entered committee discussions, the consensus is that Sumeet Bagai simply brought up the topic because of the reality of the changing number of stones happening daily at the community memorial. Bagai's memory of what was happening a the Hokie Stone memorial was that

> there was clearly some back and forth, and it was hard to ever really know how many people stood on either side of the issue...but we decided [as the student leaders of Hokies United] to let the community dictate whether it was 33 or 32…from a community perspective, there was some backing for [some kind of representation of 33]. I don't know if people knew what they should feel.[132]

Some on the committee claimed that Bagai had actively lobbied for the inclusion of a 33rd stone. Bagai found this accusation very troubling and responded straightforwardly: "I did not advocate for the 33rd stone. I know that 100 percent."[133] Bobby Freeman's memory represents the general consensus of how the 32/33 debate came up in the committee: "I do remember that the students spoke up about the 32/33 debate out of deference to [the community memorial's fluctuating number of Hokie Stones]…I don't remember any of the students involved saying 'we've got to have a 33rd stone.' I don't remember it that way."[134] The reality of the changing number of stones at the community memorial on the

[131] Davis and McCrery interviews, respectively.
[132] Bagai interview.
[133] Ibid.
[134] Freeman interview.

Drillfield led students to bring up the raw and contentious 32/33 debate in the committee meetings.

Opinions about the 32/33 debate among the committee members ranged from vehement opposition to thoughtful understanding, and everything in between. Jack Davis said, "I think that I would argue that there probably should not have been 33, but it's only a personal choice—I'm comfortable with the fact that it is 32."[135] Graduate student and BOV representative Ennis McCrery's "personal stance was that I [understood] 33, but I was not vocal on the committee. I understood the perspective that [the perpetrator] was a student and that he was one of ours."[136] Bobby Freeman spoke at length about the committee dynamic and his personal feelings on the debate due to his long involvement with public artwork.

> I remember being on the fence about the issue of 32 or 33. I think I was the only one of the older members who was open about [the possibility of representing 33 in some way], but most of the faculty and staff people on the committee felt that there was just no way they could include [a representation of] 33. I could have gone either way on [the 32/33 debate], I understood both sides. But in the end, I think the vast majority of the committee felt strongly—some very, very strongly—that there is no way in the world that we can put a 33rd stone out there.[137]

Nikki Giovani spoke for herself, but represented the feelings of many other members, in stating, "if we had decided to do 33, then someone like me would have had to have resigned from the committee."[138] In the near-aftermath of the killings, the emergence of the 32/33 debate elicited a number of opinions from committee members that were reflective and varied in how they grappled with this difficult issue.

[135] Davis interview.
[136] McCrery interview.
[137] Freeman interview.
[138] Giovanni interview.

In the third committee meeting Tom Tillar argued against any representation of 33 on the grounds of legal, aesthetic and commemorative propriety, all of which he stressed by reminding the committee that they were charged with creating a "university-sanctioned intermediate memorial."[139] As the committee wrestled with how to transition from the current spontaneous memorial to the intermediate memorial, Tillar suggested that the original stones should be presented to the families, which he pointed out "would help deal with the sensitive, and possible legal, issue associated with the fact that the 33rd stone was added (not by Hokies United)."[140] In addition to the university's concerns about the legal ramifications of the committee's memorial decisions, Tillar also argued against representing 33 on aesthetic and propriety grounds.

> As long as the university [makes] it clear that its [intermediate] memorial includes [only] 32 stones, any addition of a 33rd [stone] by another entity [will not be] the responsibility of the university. In fact, no additions to the memorial [will] be allowed, as is the case with the War Memorial [Pylons]. Additions only defile a memorial.[141]

After having stressed in the first meeting that the committee was to "memorialize the victims,"[142] Tillar reiterated emphatically "the university-sanctioned intermediate memorial would have just 32 stones, which is the charge of the committee—to honor the victims of the shooter."[143]

What happened next illuminated the stakes of the commemorative politics in Virginia Tech's memorial process. Despite their charge, the committee felt it necessary to take the 32/33 debate to a vote. Tillar explained

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[139] Andy Hall, secretary, "Physical Memorial Subcommittee Minutes of the May 16, 2007 Meeting," Minutes of the Physical Memorial Subcommittee, May 16 2007, TTMCF. (Hereafter, "May 16th Physical Memorial Subcommittee Minutes")
[140] Tillar paraphrased in May 16th Physical Memorial Subcommittee Minutes, TTMCF.
[141] Ibid.
[142] May 2nd Physical Memorial Subcommittee Minutes, TTMCF.
[143] May 16th Physical Memorial Subcommittee Minutes, TTMCF.

> before we had a vote, I got out of my chair—everyone [in the committee] was seated around a table—and I went and stood behind the Korean student and put my hands on his shoulders. He did not know I was going to do this. I said 'before we vote, I would like to hear John [Lee] discuss the presence of a 33rd stone,' and I did not know what he was going to say. He did a beautiful job of saying 'it would be an insult to his country, [that the Korean people] were ashamed [of the perpetrator].' He was emotional. He probably hadn't spoken that many words in all of our meetings. [Then I said] 'now we can vote.'[144]

Reflecting on this moment years later, McCrery questioned both the position John Lee had been put in and the tactic that Tillar had utilized in the moments before the vote. "How could one student represent the Korean people? And [the perpetrator] wasn't even Korean, he was American…He was born here; he was as American as I am American. He was American."[145] In that moment, however, Tillar's gambit carried the vote. Interestingly, the meeting minutes only refer to this entire episode in one sentence: "after further discussion, Tillar solicited input from the group with consensus, albeit a few [members] with reservations."[146] There was never any significant support for a representation of 33 on the committee, only a discussion of its reality at the community memorial. Despite this, Tillar's extensive lobbying to ensure its erasure suggests that, for the VT administration, discussion of the 32/33 debate on the committee was a serious threat, and led him to use tactics that far outweighed the reality of the commemorative situation.

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[144] Tillar interview. Tillar mentioned John Lee's role in the committee's decision about the 32/33 debate three months later in an interview with the *Collegiate Times,* but did not mention that there had been any vote. "Tillar said that John Lee, head of the Korean Student Association and a member of the memorial committee, assisted the committee in their decision by assuring them that he thought the Korean community would not want Cho memorialized with the 32 victims." Meg Miller, "Victims remembered during Drillfield memorials Sunday," *Collegiate Times*, August 21, 2007.
[145] McCrery interview.
[146] May 16th Physical Memorial Subcommittee Minutes, TTMCF.

In fact, even the vote was deemed insufficient and Tillar moved quickly to alter the design of the Hokie Stone community memorial by adding what I call "Tillar's Walls" to ensure the forever block off any representation of 33 in the intermediate memorial. Tillar "asked the architect [Matt Gart], the day that we were having our final meeting to approve the design, I said 'can we [add] a wall that prevents a 33 stone?'"[147] Gart recalls that Tillar was very concerned that "this is just going to keep happening, so lets [add] walls" that make it impossible.[148] Gart added two terminus walls next to the first and thirty-second stones in his design of the intermediate memorial which were not a part of the original Hokie Stone community memorial. The immediate aftermath memorial created in the hours after the killings by Hokies United had been a memory site that was constantly changing and that enabled the community to participate actively with commemorative agency. Although Tillar's Walls are insignificant in their physical stature, aesthetically they represent a fundamental altering of the original design because they silenced the community's fluid dialogue about the 32/33 debate concerning the memory of those who died on April 16.

The committee's resolution of its major debates resulted in the quick move toward the administrative goal of completing the university-sanctioned intermediate memorial before the beginning of the Fall 2007 semester. In the beginning of June, after less than a month of meetings, the physical memorial committee submitted its official recommendations to President Steger. Steger quickly approved the plan, and construction of the intermediate memorial began immediately. Reflecting back on the memorial years later, Freeman reminisced,

[147] Tillar interview.
[148] Gart interview.

> the longer you have to pause and reflect and think about what the event means, the more likely you are to have a more symbolic gesture. A physical edification of an idea of what it meant, rather than something very realistic about what it meant. You can make a pretty strong argument that what is [on the Drillfield] now is 32 little tombstones. And that is a very realistic way to react and respond to something [with a process that was pressured to be completed so quickly].[149]

The memorial committee's rapid completion of its charge enabled the dedication, three months later, of what Tillar called simply "a very appropriate memorial."[150]

5.6 Constructing a New Hokie Nation

Virginia Tech officials never planned on initiating a national public relations campaign in 2007, but it is retrospectively clear that the administration deftly parlayed the national attention the killings garnered into a brand-recognition campaign that transformed Hokie Nation into the new identity of the university. All universities proclaim school pride without equal, yet the use of Hokie Nation rhetoric after the killings emphasized how the trauma the community had faced resulted in an unparalleled sense of unity that was reminiscent of rhetoric used at Oklahoma City. As Bobby Freeman acknowledged simply, "there is no doubt that [after the killings] the phrase 'Hokie Nation' took on a whole other meaning."[151] The dedication of the intermediate April 16 Memorial gave the Hokie Nation a tangible space to grow in the Drillfield's ritualized assemblage that had, since the 1920s, materially manifest the identity of the university in the heart of the campus. Nationally, the university skillfully capitalized on the primetime attention given to its football team in the fall 2007 to market the

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[149] Freeman interview.
[150] Tillar interview.
[151] Freeman interview.

uniqueness of the Hokie Nation. Locally, the April 16 Memorial and the creation of a number of 4/16 related organizations enabled the university to spread the Hokie Nation ethos to prospective students on campus tours and to current students through an array of campus rituals. All of these commemorative campaigns were so successful that, in early 2008, the administration quietly made an internal decision to designate the intermediate April 16 Memorial as the official, permanent memorial. In less than a year, the administration created a new Hokie Nation that fused the memory of the killings together with the military and sports-centered history of the university, and in so doing, forged a potent and memorable new national identity for the university in the twenty-first century.

Throughout the summer of 2007, campus landscape architect Matt Gart worked tirelessly to design and build an intermediate memorial that could be quickly removed when the planned future permanent memorial was ready to be constructed. Tillar explained "our whole thought was to make this an intermediate memorial. Throughout the whole process we referred to it as 'intermediate.' It was never thought of as being final. But Matt was the one who I think had the most influence on how to embellish the site."[152] "My main consideration," Gart explained about his design for the intermediate memorial,

> was how do we decommission this thing? At that time it was going to have to be decommissioned, so that was really important…the image of a jackhammer and blasting this memorial to smithereens so you can build a [permanent memorial sometime in the future] can't happen, this is not a good image. I thought it was a big deal. Just imagine jackhammering a wall down.[153]

With this consideration in mind, Gart created a design that "literally, I could go out with four guys in a day with hand tools and decommission [the entire memorial]…and all you

[152] Ibid.
[153] Gart interview.

would have left is [Tillar's Walls] and that's it—[the memorial] would just fade back into the landscape."[154] As such, no permanent foundation for the memorial was laid and traditional architectural practices such as dowling and grouting were abandoned in the placing of the walkway pavers. An intermediate memorial is something of a paradox because, conceptually speaking, a physical memorial is meant to hold a memory in perpetuity, while something intermediate is intentionally temporary. Matt Gart solved this commemorative dilemma by designing a memorial that could be removed quickly without leaving any noticeable trace of its previous existence.

VT officials dedicated the intermediate memorial the day before classes began on Sunday, August 19 in a locally televised ceremony that sought to integrate the new memorial into the larger commemorative landscape as a symbol of the unity of the Hokie Nation. The dedication ceremony was begun, like the Convocation, "with the presentation of colors by the Virginia Tech Corps of Cadets"[155] and opening remarks by V.P. of Student Affairs Zenobia Hikes. A number of speakers followed before Tom Tillar delivered a speech he titled "The world now knows Virginia Tech." Tillar explained to the assembled crowd of over ten thousand

> Virginia Tech has drawn and will continue to draw strength from unity…as the eyes of the world peer at us, they see what makes us truly a Hokie Nation. They see what makes us the proudest alumni in the world. And they will come to understand that this feeling is so very powerful that it never, never can be violated or destroyed. WE are Virginia Tech. Virginia Tech*forlife*.[156]

[154] Ibid.
[155] Mark Owczarski, "Virginia Tech to dedicate April 16 Memorial on Sunday, August 19," Virginia Tech Office of University Relations, August 15, 2007.
[156] Tom Tillar, "The world now knows Virginia Tech," *Virginia Tech Magazine*, Memorial Issue, Vol. 29, No. 3

In an interview with a local news anchor after the ceremony, Sumeet Bagai said simply that the memorial "is a reminder of those we lost, but it is [also] a symbol of how strong our community is."[157] The intermediate memorial, which was officially named the "April 16th Memorial," was dedicated in a ceremony that highlighted the incomparable unity of the Hokie Nation.[158]

At the dedication, an official narrative of the origins of the April 16 Memorial began to circulate that effectively erased the complex history of the memorial by suggesting that the site was simply a permanent version of the "original student memorial." The official narrative was unveiled formally on the dedication ceremony flyer which explained "in the hours following the April 16 tragedy, the student driven volunteer organization Hokies United placed 32 Hokie Stones on the Drillfield."[159] The problem with this narrative was that it effectively obscured the reality of the different forms of the original Hokie Stone memorial as well as the ways that the committee and administration had subtly yet significantly transformed the final site. The first iteration of the memorial was an hourglass shaped memorial consisting of Hokie Stones and wooden message boards. After the message boards were relocated, the memorial began to fluctuate between 32 and 33 stones as the result of students and community member interaction. When university administrators complained to Hokies United about the 33rd stone, the student leaders responded forcefully that this was not their memorial, it "[is]

[157] Sumeet Bagai, interviewed by Jamie Curott, "News at 11," WHRV Channel 3, August 19, 2007.
[158] The April 16th Memorial was, and continues to be, referred to colloquially as the "4/16 Memorial." The families of the victims have reached out to the university, however, and asked that the university not refer to any memorials and related events at "4/16" because of its similarity to the national trend of referring to the Twin Tower bombings of September 11, 2001 as "9/11." Out of respect for the family's wishes with regards to this discourse, I refer to the memorial throughout as the "April 16 Memorial." It is important to acknowledge, however, that discussions on campus about the memorial and the killings, more generally, are still routinely referred to as "4/16."
[159] Flyer, "April 16th Memorial Dedication," August 19, 2007.

the community memorial and we [want] to let the community dictate the discussion on whether it should be 32 versus 33."[160] In the committee meetings, administrators initially pushed for a site on the west end of the Drillfield, and it was only after vigorous student lobbying that the Hokie Stone memorial at Burruss was adopted. Lastly, the addition of Tillar's Walls into the intermediate memorial design radically transformed the original student design. Tillar's Walls forever blocked the fluid and continually changing community memorial that had been built by the students and transformed it into a static, university-sanctioned memorial. In light of the actually history of the community memorial, there is a sad irony in the administration's decision to promote the memorial as the "student memorial." The university's story, however, was a cunning rhetorical move that successfully initiated public amnesia about what the community memorial had actually been, in favor of a public memory that the April 16 Memorial represented the unity of the Hokie Nation.

The final location of the April 16 Memorial rooted it spatially in the long history of Virginia Tech due to its intentional integration as part of the ritualized assemblage in the heart of the campus. In working to finalize the memorial's exact location, Matt Gart explained that he and the other architects on the committee "did studies where we looked at the axis lines [of the campus] lengthwise and crosswise. That was a consideration, and the symmetry [on the Drillfield] was pretty obvious. We were definitely aware that we were working with the primary axis lines [of the campus]."[161] The north-south axis of the campus bisects both Burruss and War Memorial Hall, while the east-west axis does the same to the War Memorial Chapel and Pylons. Under Gart's supervision, the April 16

[160] Bagai interview.
[161] Gart interview.

Memorial was constructed on-axis so that the north-south axis of the campus runs between the 16th and 17th stones—perfectly dividing the half-circular memorial into quarter circles. Viewed collectively, these four structures are geometrically connected by a near-perfect isosceles triangle that frames the east end of the Drillfield (Fig. 4). The importance of the ritualized assemblage is not simply spatial. It is recognized widely by people on campus and exemplified officially on all current maps of the campus that label only these four structures out of the over dozen buildings that surround the Drillfield.

The integration of the memorial into the campus landscape enabled the university administration to redirect its commemorative efforts in the fall semester to promoting Hokie Nation nationally during the college football season. On September 1, national attention returned quickly to Blacksburg when ESPN's College Gameday selected Virginia Tech's opening game against the relatively unknown East Carolina University as the inaugural game of the 2007 season. Asked why he selected this game over others to start the college football season, ESPN senior coordinating producer Michael Fountain said, "it's the story of college football this year…it's a show of support for a school that's been quite good to College Gameday and ESPN… [and] a proud university that's synonymous with college football."[162] The *Collegiate Times* suggested that on this day "college football fans across America did not don their usual team garb. Instead, they briefly became a part of the Hokie Nation."[163] Commenting on the uniqueness of the unity of the Hokie Nation, Gameday anchor Kirk Herbstreit said "out of all the communities I've gone and visited, this one is a little different than all the others."[164] The April 16 Memorial was featured in a number of cutaways throughout the game, but it

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[162] Quoted in T. Rees Shapiro, "Emotional day for Gameday," *Collegiate Times*, September 4, 2007.
[163] Ibid.
[164] Ibid.

more importantly entered the national public memory as a place of sacred pilgrimage when fellow Gameday anchor Chris Fowler shared "today had a different feel…I walked the memorial…I thought that the energy around it was palpable."[165] National attention had returned to Virginia Tech. Only this time the university's football program became the stage upon which April 16 commemorative rituals were held.

The university carefully prepared for the nationally televised pregame show with a six-minute tribute video that mimicked the commemorative atmosphere of the major memorial events in the days after the killings. VT quarterback Sean Glennon pointed out before the game that "it'll probably be the first time [the Virginia Tech community] have been together since the convocation ceremony,"[166] and he was right on a number of levels. The pregame show involved a moment of silence and, like Columbine's public memorial service, the flyover of a formation of F-15 fighter jets. The tribute video followed and started with a montage of ribbons on trees, the Corps of Cadets, the Pylons, and many spontaneous memorials that had been constructed on campus. The end of the video featured a long freeze-frame of the now iconic photograph of the first Candlelight Vigil facing Burruss, which segued into the final and powerful lines of Nikki Giovanni's equally iconic speech. Upon the conclusion of the excerpt of Giovanni's speech the entirely sold-out stadium of more than 66,000 people erupted—exactly like they had at the Convocation and the Candlelight Vigil—in the "Let's go…Hokies" chant. While the crowd chanted, 32 orange balloons were released into the sky. At the conclusion of the video, the broadcast cut to the Gameday set where Chris Fowler said to the nation: "they have needed this day, they have needed this chance to come together…and I think that all

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[165] Ibid.
[166] Aaron McFarling, "Emotions run deep," *Roanoke Times*, September 1, 2007.

of us feel that we are Virginia Tech today."[167] Shortly thereafter, the VT football team stormed the field in its normal ritual of a blaring rendition of Metallica's "Enter Sandman," and the pregame show concluded with Fowler's explanation that "it is absolutely deafening as the passions are released and the Hokie Nation says 'this is a very appropriate way to honor the victims.'"[168] The pregame show provided Virginia Tech with a national stage upon which to share the memorial rituals developed in the days after the killings with the rest of the country.

National attention remained high throughout the season and inspired "Hokies Thank the World"—a spectacle staged on the Drillfield that was filmed from space and broadcast nationally during the football game against the University of Miami. The event involved thousands of people assembling their bodies on the Drillfield to spell out "VT Thanks You" large enough to be filmed from space by the IKONOS earth imaging satellite.[169] In his book *There is a Gunman on Campus,* Tim Luke, the Chair of the Political Science department at Virginia Tech, questioned the motive behind this and other nationally televised commemorative events that continued to happen long after the killings.

> This contingent assemblage of bodies explicitly paid tribute to the thirty-two murdered students of April 16; but, the Hokie Nation implicitly also reaffirmed it own spectacular self-representation as produced so often for so many other national television events before, during, and after other ACC gridiron showdowns…this event typifies how much of the Hokie Nation continues to march in place to mark one more recognition of the April 16 event's loss—

[167] Chris Folwer, ESPN College Gameday broadcast, September 1, 2007.
[168] Ibid.
[169] Lynn Davis, "Hokies Thank The World message to be recorded from outer space," Virginia Tech Office of University Relations, November 14, 2007.

> especially if it can be recast as extraordinary remote sensing imagery from outer space in another new televisual spectacle.[170]

Luke also discerned how the decision to stage the space photo spectacle on the Drillfield was filled with ambiguity because Burruss Hall, Norris Hall and the April 16 Memorial were all at the top of the photograph. "Is Virginia Tech thanking all who have cared? Are the fallen victims and their survivors speaking somehow through another tangle of bodies…or, at the end of the day, is anyone ready to stand in formation for a media event anonymously garnering his or her fifteen minutes of fame?"[171] The nationally televised space photo-op took place exactly seven months to the day after the Convocation, and culminated a fall semester in which the university-sanctioned commemoration of the dead and college football were intimately intertwined.

Throughout the fall semester the university also worked locally to establish three new campus organizations inspired by April 16th that collectively began to change the meaning of the university's motto "Ut Prosim/That I May Serve." Inscribed on the War Memorial Pylons, Ut Prosim had, for much of Virginia Tech's history, explicitly meant military service. Before 2007, the university began transitioning to a new meaning of service and engagement with the community. But the aftermath of the killings facilitated both a reason and a motive to hasten efforts in this direction. VT-ENGAGE was originally the envisioned by Brian Cloyd, a professor of Business whose daughter Austin was murdered. Officially begun by a kick off event on the Drillfield in October, the university's "goal of VT-ENGAGE is 300,000 hours of community service to be performed by students faculty and staff by April 16, 2008 [and] the Virginia Tech

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[170] Timothy W. Luke, "APRIL 16, 2007 AT VIRINGIA TECH—TO: MULITIPLE RECIPIENTS: "A Gunman is Loose on Campus," in Ben Agger and Timothy W. Luke, *There Is a Gunman on Campus: Tragedy and Terror at Virginia Tech* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2008). 23.
[171] Ibid.

Alumni Association…would donate an additional 300,000 hours…for a total of 600,000 hours."[172] The Center for Peace Studies and Violence Prevention (CPSVP) was created in December by an ad hoc task force brought together in August to "develop recommendations for the future use of the space in Norris Hall [where a majority of the people were killed during] the April 16 tragedy."[173] Professor of Horticulture Jerzy Nowak, whose wife Jocelyne Couture-Nowak, a faculty member in the French department murdered on April 16, was selected as the first director of the CPSVP. Lastly, the Center for Student Engagement and Community Partnerships (CSECP) was created "to coordinate partnerships, service and experiential learning activities and develop…capacity for community-university engagement."[174] Each of these organizations was charged, in different ways, with facilitating the transformation of the university's motto of service into a new institutional identity that would position "Virginia Tech [as] a national leader in community engagement."[175]

As the first anniversary of the killings approached, these new groups and other campus organizations created "Ut Prosim Month" as a means of fusing new commemorative events with previously established campus traditions throughout the month of April. Officially organized by the Office of Engagement, Ut Prosim month kicked off in early April with a ceremony on the Drillfield. Two old campus traditions were incorporated, The Big Event and Relay for Life. The Big Event was started in the early 2000s as a day in which VT students and faculty engaged in service throughout the

[172] Susan B. Felker, "Virginia Tech launches VT-ENGAGE volunteer initiative to honor April 16 victims," Virginia Tech Office of University Relations, September 7, 2007.
[173] Larry Hincker, "President Steger accepts recommendation of Norris Hall Task Force," Virginia Tech Office of University Relations, December 20, 2007.
[174] Susan B. Felker, "University creates new Center for Student Engagement and Community Partnerships, names founding director," Virginia Tech Office of University Relations, September 10, 2008.
[175] Ibid.

community, but it quickly became a central feature of Ut Prosim Month. An important change in The Big Event was, as Tillar explained, that it had previously started with a ceremony at the War Memorial Pylons. But, starting in 2008, the event commenced with "people standing on the walkway in front of the [April 16] Memorial."[176] The annual Relay for Life was also incorporated into the commemorative calendar and from 2008 to 2011 Virginia Tech raised more than half a million dollars each year and became the highest grossing "of any collegiate Relay for Life in the country all four of those years."[177] On April 16, 2008, over two-dozen events were held on campus and throughout the nearby community, including the dedication of two small memorials and another Candlelight Vigil at dusk.[178] Ut Prosim Month dispersed memorial events throughout April and was the format that the university administrators used to commemorate the first five anniversaries of the killings.

By the first anniversary, it was increasingly clear that the administration's strategic deployment of the memory of April 16 to emphasize the unity of the Hokie Nation had skyrocketed the national reputation and institutional growth of Virginia Tech. *The Chronicle of Higher Education* ran a front-page story stressing that

> by many measures the university is doing better than ever before. It enrolled a record-breaking number of students this academic year, and applications for next year are at an all-time high. The university's new capital campaign raised $83.8 million last year—11 percent more than the year before—and it expects to bring home an even heftier amount in 2008.[179]

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[176] Tillar interview.
[177] Ibid.
[178] "A tree [was] planted in memory of Austin Cloyd and Maxine Turner" on the "front lawn of Hillcrest Hall." In nearby Giles County, "a bridge over Wolf Creek, near Narrows… [was dedicated] to the memory of Jarret Lee Lane, a Tech engineering student and Narrows native." "Schedule of events: People across the region are remembering April 16," *Roanoke Times*, April 13, 2008.
[179] Robin Wilson, "We Weren't Going to Let the Events Define Us," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, April 18, 2008.

The record-breaking financial and enrollment statistics at Virginia Tech in the year after the tragedy did not sit well with many people. Janice M. Abraham, president of United Educators Insurance, noted that "the idea that in just a year anyone is thinking about the good that's happened would just seem to add more agony to those involved."[180] Gordon K. Davies, a former director of the State Council of Higher Education and member of the state review panel of the university's handling of the killings, was more blunt in his critique. "They've made it a public-relations coup. They've turned it into a positive."[181] Yet the marketing campaign that the university waged was exactly what other people saw as the genius of Virginia Tech's administrators. Teresa M. Flannery, vice president for marketing and communication at the University of Maryland pointed out that "when you do a good job in branding, people who are among your stakeholders do not see what happened as a crisis…they stick with you and the loyalty gets stronger."[182] Donald Munce, president of an educational-research organization, said, "virtually anything that gets a college's name in the news every day can bolster its image. It normally ends up being good news for the campus even though the event is a horrible tragedy."[183] University administrators were initially deeply concerned about the killings negatively impacting the image of the university, but a year later their deft marketing of the Hokie Nation had resulted in record-levels of national recognition, financial profit and institutional growth at Virginia Tech.

[180] Abraham cited in ibid.
[181] Davies cited in ibid.
[182] Flannery cited in ibid.
[183] Munce cited in ibid.

In fact, the success of all of the university's commemorative campaigns in the previous year led President Steger and Tom Tillar to make the unilateral decision to declare the intermediate memorial the permanent memorial. Tillar recalled

> President [Steger] called me six months [after the August dedication] and said 'Do you think there really can be a permanent memorial?' And I said 'No. This one is the one people photograph, that people come and visit, I don't think we can ever remove the one that is there and I don't think we could create another one, or should.' And [Steger] said 'Let's announce that this is the permanent memorial.' So we got a [press] release out sometime in that six to eight month period that said that the intermediate memorial had really accomplished what we had hoped it would in terms of it being an appropriate tribute to the loss of life.[184]

Institutionally speaking, this decision made sense because the intermediate April 16 Memorial had become the epicenter of the community's mourning and memory. Tillar acknowledged that the administration eventually came to understand that "the simplicity of the memorial created its power…we [later] realized that it was sacred ground."[185] In the midst of administrators' preparations for the first anniversary and the subsequent resurgence of national media attention, a single phone call between lifelong friends Charles Steger and Tom Tillar created the permanent April 16 Memorial.

Commemoratively speaking, however, the executive decision to quietly transform the intermediate memorial into the permanent memorial was an administrative coup that deftly circumvented public involvement. Virginia Tech's idea to pursue an intermediate memorial was an unprecedented innovation in the history of creating a mass murder memorials. However, throughout the spring and summer of 2007, the administration continually justified this move by promising that the university would have a more inclusive memorial process for the permanent memorial at some point in the future. By

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[184] Tillar interview.
[185] Ibid.

pursing the creation of an intermediate memorial, the administration saved millions of dollars and blocked the involvement of any family members of the victims, survivors, university staff or any one from the Blacksburg community. Aside from Nikki Giovanni's self-admitted role as an observer on the committee, faculty members were also excluded. What is most notable about the students who were hand-selected to serve on the committee—with the notable exception of Sumeet Bagai's ongoing and courageous challenge of the administrative majority—was their silence throughout the process.[186] The administrative abandonment of the promise to pursue a permanent memorial should be understood, commemoratively, for what it was: a brilliant institutional sleight of hand that completely circumvented the meddling of any groups that might have interfered with the rapid production of an official, university-sanctioned memorial.

The overnight conversion of the April 16 memorial permanently anchored the institutional narrative of the unity of the Hokie Nation on campus and enabled the killings to become a central and triumphant element of the new identity of Virginia Tech in the 21st century. The most profound expression of this new institutional identity is reenacted every weekday at 9:30, 12:30 and 2:30 on the prospective student campus tour. Ennis McCrery noted the significant difference between the original charge of the memorial committee and the reality of campus life at Virginia Tech today.

> In every memorial committee meeting the refrain was 'we will not be defined by this, so how do we move forward as a university

[186] In the meeting minutes for the Physical Memorial Subcommittee, not a single student aside from Sumeet Bagai was credited with having said anything that was recorded. The omission of John Lee's on-the-spot testimony before the 32/33 vote from the minutes illustrates that this does not mean that other students did not participate, but rather that no student except Bagai contributed significantly enough to have merited mention. Additionally, no administrative or staff committee member who I interviewed mentioned any student other than Bagai, with the exception of Tillar's mention of John Lee's testimony. Ennis McCrery, one of the four student members of the committee admitted, "I was not vocal on the committee."

> without letting 4/16 be our defining moment?' But at the same time we are looking to build a memorial that does exactly that, that says 'this is who we are.' I mean, you go there now and you see prospective students and their parents walking through that memorial everyday. First they stand in front of Burruss for a campus tour, and next they walk through the memorial. We did make 4/16 who we are. That's powerful.[187]

Tim Luke also saw the early move towards this new identity in his analysis of the university's staging of the space photo on the Drillfield. "Ironically, 'the university' was the focus of the image by presenting itself as/of the Drillfield, and then the Hokie Nation drew the outlines of its sports logo and words of thanks at the base of the broken monumental circle of stones memorializing the dead."[188] Since the 1960s, collegiate sports had joined the university's military origins as the two fundamental components of Virginia Tech's identity. In the year after the April 16, 2007 killings, VT administrator's commemorative efforts integrated the memory of the killings together with the university's past history and inscribed it permanently in the heart of the campus' sacred landscape.

Hokie Nation was the new national identity of Virginia Tech.

Institutionalizing Mass Murder Memorialization

The long history of Virginia Tech coupled with its ability to study the previous memorial processes of communities like the University of Texas that occurred before April 16, 2007, enabled the university to institutionalize the process of mass murder memorialization. For the first eighty years of its history, Virginia Tech was a military institute that established its institutional identity by constructing the Drillfield and its many war memorials as the core of the campus landscape. In the 1960s, military service

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[187] McCrery interview.
[188] Agger and Luke, *There Is a Gunman on Campus: Tragedy and Terror at Virginia Tech*. 23-24.

in the Corps became optional and President Hahn's administration worked tirelessly to transform collegiate sports into the new identity of the university. In the week after the April 16 killings, administrative and community efforts created countless commemorative rituals and sites including Convocation with President Bush, the Candlelight Vigil and the Hokie Stone community memorial. By the second week, however, the university administration took steps to control the construction of the memorial narrative of the meaning of the killings. Tom Tillar's committee created a memorial in an unprecedented time of just four months by dubbing it "intermediate," only to later make a unilateral administrative decision to declare it "permanent." Compared to the years of effort of all previous communities processes, Virginia Tech institutionalized the memorialization of mass murder by creating a new commemorative convention that swiftly and efficiently completed a memorial just under two decades after the widespread emergence of this new national tradition.

On campus, the new identity of Hokie Nation manifested spatially the intentional design of the April 16 Memorial as a fundamental component of the ritualized assemblage of War Memorials surrounding the Drillfield. The War Memorial Pylons were the symbol of the university and had traditionally been the focal point for campus events. However, the April 16 Memorial shifted the campus orientation northward towards Burruss Hall, the seat of administrative power. The new Hokie Nation that appeared after the killings was first mentioned publicly in Nikki Giovanni's Convocation speech and is remembered by all who were present as having emerged viscerally in the experience of attending the first Candlelight Vigil. Since that time, the photo of the vigil has become an important means by which the memory of April 16 is continually

reproduced around campus and on Facebook Cover Photos near each anniversary. Every previous historical transformation of the identity of Virginia Tech had been accompanied by the construction of a new Drillfield memorial, and April 16 continued this longstanding architectural tradition.

The rapid completion of the April 16 Memorial enabled the administration to shift its commemorative efforts towards establishing the Hokie Nation as the new national identity of Virginia Tech during the fall 2006 football season. The Hokies' selection by ESPN to open the 2007 College Gameday season provided the university with an opportunity to recreate and share the commemorative atmosphere of the days after the killings with the entire country. During the fall semester, the university also created VT-ENGAGE and the Center for Peace Studies and Violence Prevention as a means to transform its motto, "Ut Prosim/That I May Serve," into a new institutional identity as a national leader in community service. The ongoing national attention on Virginia Tech throughout the football season culminated in the university's display of its technological prowess with the "VT Thanks You" space photo staged on the Drillfield during its game against Miami. Ut Prosim Month in the spring semester expanded the first anniversary of the killing to dozens of memorial events held throughout the month of April that highlighted university's portfolio of service. The university administrators' deft marketing of this commemorative activity resulted in a striking increase in the school's national reputation, student enrollment, and financial contributions by marketing the killings as symbolic of the unparalleled unity of the Hokie Nation. The new discourse of Hokie Nation expertly fused together the university's history of militarism, collegiate

sports and mass murder into the triumphant narrative of incomparable unity as the new identity of Virginia Tech in the 21st century.

Like the other communities that had memorialized mass murder beforehand, Virginia Tech emphasized unity as central to its university-sanctioned memorial narrative. Two years after its initial dedication, Tom Tillar placed a plaque at the April 16 Memorial that provided a concise rendition of the university-sanctioned narrative.

> This memorial to those lost on April 16, 2007, was inspired by a spontaneous arrangement of 32 Hokie Stones—the cornerstone of buildings throughout campus—created by grieving students following the tragedy. Today, the memorial stands both as testimony to the Hokie spirit and sense of community that arose within all members of the Virginia Tech family, and, more importantly, in remembrance of the 32 inquiring minds and inspiring lives that will be forever treasured.[189]

The conclusion of the plaque suggests, like all memorials dedicated to large numbers of people killed in war or murdered domestically, that the victims are the central focus of the memorial. Yet the fact that the victims are only mentioned at the end betrays the truthfulness of the claim of "more importantly." The April 16 Memorial exemplifies the core tenet of this new memorial tradition in the United States and its institutionalization at Virginia Tech: mass murders memorials are constructed using the blood of the murdered to promote the perception of the unity of the living.

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[189] April 16 Memorial, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Virginia.

Chapter 7 CONCLUSION - Establishing an American Memory and Tradition of Domestic Mass Murder

> The United States, it has been said, has a history but not a tradition of domestic violence. A history, because violence has been frequent, voluminous, almost commonplace in our past. But not precisely a tradition, for two reasons: First, our violence lacks both an ideological and geographical center; it lacks cohesion; it has been too various, diffuse, and spontaneous to be forged into a single, sustained, inveterate hatred shared by entire social classes. Second, we have a remarkable lack of memory where violence is concerned.[1]

--Richard Hofstadter
American Violence: A Documentary History
1970

Mass murder memorials are geographical centers that have collectively established a national public memory of domestically perpetrated violence within the United States patriotic landscape. While each of the five memorials studied promote narratives of local and national unity, viewed collectively, they are historical markers of the violence perpetrated by American citizens on their fellow citizens. More generally, these memory sites mark the increase of events of mass murder and also the ubiquity of extreme violence as a dominant form of American entertainment during this era. The Myth of the Slaughtered Citizen that emerged during the 1990s encouraged all citizens of the United States to never forget each new mass murder because the imagined bereaved community had become one of the only ways that American could have an affective experience of national unity. In this way, mass murder has become a paradoxical symbol of both the profound social disunity represented by mass murder and the exceedingly

[1] Richard Hofstadter and Michael Wallace, *American Violence: A Documentary History* (New York, NY: Knopf, 1970). 3.

brief moments of a collective sense of national unity that exist in the U.S. at the turn of the twenty-first century

Changing sensibilities about marking violence in the late twentieth century underlie the emergence of mass murder memorials at the turn of the twenty-first century. In the aftermath of World War II, expanding awareness of the Holocaust and its subsequent Americanization helped to normalize the memorialization of violence and its victims in popular culture and the patriotic landscape. The many civil rights struggles of the 1960s and 1970s brought increased national attention to the reality of domestically perpetrated violence, and universities created some of the first public memory sites that marked its victims. For most of American history, war memorials were the primary means of representing national unity permanently in the landscape, but after the controversies surrounding the Vietnam Veterans Memorial (and the war itself), the symbolic capital of fallen soldiers deteriorated and created a national commemorative void. The 1980s saw an upswing in American citizens "going postal," and by the end of the decade mass murders underwent a rapid cultural shift from events of national shame into something that American's increasingly sought never to forget. The onset of the regular construction of mass murder memorials began at the end of the Cold War in 1989, and President Clinton quickly transformed this commemorative shift into a national expectation after the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing. By the time the bombing of the World Trade Center occurred on September 11, 2001, a new American tradition of appropriating the memory of domestically slaughtered citizens as markers of both local and national unity had been established.

Since its inception, this new tradition has experienced three phases of development, the first of which was its emergence and rapid transformation into a national commemorative expectation. In 1989, the Yellow Ribbon memorial in Edmond, Oklahoma became the first memorial dedicated during this period, and was followed soon after by the completion of memory sites in San Ysidro, CA, Killeen, TX, and an early retrospective memorial constructed over sixty years after the 1927 Bath, MI, school bombing. Although the Yellow Ribbon did not directly influence any of the subsequent mass murder memorials, it exemplified two commemorative trends in this new memorial form: the incorporation of a resonant local symbol from the immediate aftermath memorials into the permanent memorial, and the inclusion of the memorial site in a ritualized assemblage. After the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing, President Clinton's unprecedented decision to intimately involve himself in framing the meaning and memory of mass murder normalized the construction of mass murder memorials. Clinton did this by creating and tirelessly repeating a script which framed American citizens' brief feeling of national unity in the aftermath of the killings as the memory that they should never forget. From the end of the Cold War in 1989 into the mid-1990s, these three commemorative trends helped to establish a new tradition of constructing mass murder memorials as a national expectation.

In 1999, the tradition entered a second phase in which other communities replicated the move towards creating a memory site, but these processes were increasingly contested and drawn out. The memorial committees at both Columbine and the University of Texas researched and made connections with other communities that had constructed mass murder memorials. At Columbine, the evangelical Christian

perspective that dominated commemorative discussions, alienated many community members, and splintered memorial efforts. The University of Texas, on the other hand, the past commemorative sensibility that memorializing mass murder was inappropriate coupled with the influence of the campus' ritualized assemblage resulted in the university failing to complete its memorial design. Eight years of contentious commemorative processes and ongoing fundraising difficulties taught each of these communities about the difficulty of establishing permanent material narratives about the many public memories of a mass murder.

The third phase began in 2007 when Virginia Tech's commemorative efforts created a template for the institutionalization of the memorialization of mass murder. As with Columbine and UT, Virginia Tech did extensive research on similar memorials, but the university's administration chose to pursue a closed commemorative process in order to retain more control over the speed and design of the final memorial. The closed memorialization process at VT was similar to the Edmond process in that it excluded family members of the victims and included only individuals who had established ties with the administration. But the university's dedication of its memorial just four months after the killings was unprecedented in its calculated efficiency. Only time will tell if other communities that have had mass murders since VT--including Aurora, Colorado, Sandy Hook, Connecticut, and the Washington, D.C., Naval Yard--will replicate this memorial model. But regardless, Virginia Tech's bureaucratic control and rapid speed of completion resulted in a process that effectively institutionalized the memorialization of mass murder.

The commemorative processes in each of these communities illuminate how memory work and ritual work were integral but often indistinguishable in the path towards dedication. The organization of memorial committee meetings routinely included moments of silence, testimonials about the emotional and familial impact of the killings, and the recitation of prayers. Group work and team-building exercises were used in most memorial committees not only to forge lasting bonds, but also as a means of transforming the commemorative process itself into a means of collective catharsis. Likewise, committee members staged public announcements and events that were treated as ritual opportunities. Presidents and Mayors routinely led groundbreaking ceremonies, for example, and press conferences for various milestones not only focused on progress, but were also used by the committees as opportunities for continued public mourning and remembrance. In working to create mass murder memorials, the line between working to create a physical memorial and the ritual practices of the process itself were often so intertwined as to be indistinguishable from one another.

After dedication, the enactment of rituals at these memorials has became central to maintaining the vitality of these sacred spaces as material expressions of local and national identity. Both Virginia Tech's "3.2 for 32 Run in Remembrance" and the Oklahoma City "Memorial Marathon" have become important local events that enliven the memorials that serve as the starting and finish lines for each race. The races, like the memorials themselves, promote the unity of the living, which the OKC Marathon expresses succinctly in its tagline, "One City. One Nation. One Resolve." Anniversaries of the killings often feature full ritual programs. At Virginia Tech, for example, a student picnic on the Drillfield and the lighting of an eternal flame for 24 hours are but two of the

annual rituals that have been established near the memorial. The case of Edmond illustrates the importance of these rituals. The local tradition of tying yellow ribbons on mailboxes for the anniversary declined in subsequent years, and mirrors the deterioration of the Yellow Ribbon memorial, which was in a state of significant disrepair by 2010. Community rituals have not only been central to constructing mass murder memorials, but their enactment after dedication is representative of the vitality of public memory of these sacred sites and the degree of their continued inclusion in the nation's patriotic landscape.

Three commemorative trends created the conditions for the emergence of mass murder memorials, the first of which was the cultural move to transform immediate aftermath memorials into permanent memory sites. The formation of archives to store the accretions of material culture has created a stockpile of primary sources that has enabled the writing of histories of each new killing. The adoption of the prominent local symbol from the immediate aftermath memorials as the centerpiece of the permanent memorial provided helped to convince skeptical citizens of the appropriateness of this new kind of memorial. While many aftermath memorials are some combination of spontaneous, temporary, performative and/or grassroots, scholars' attempts to find a definitive verb to describe these memory sites miss the reality of their latent diversity. Mass murder memorials illuminate how public and academic attention towards aftermath memorials in the 1980s and 1990s rapidly resulted in their widespread preservation. Immediate aftermath memorials are now often but the first stage of material objects that will ultimately undergo a series of alterations before being transformed into permanent markers of the historical record of violence and tragedy.

Spatially, mass murder memorials have been constructed in ritualized assemblages that are now dispersed throughout the national patriotic landscape. At the turn of the twentieth century, the redesigned National Mall created a national blueprint for fostering a sense of identity by intentionally constructing spatial relationships between memory sites and buildings of historical significance. At the turn of the twenty first century, mass murder memorials were often constructed in local replications of the National Mall, as in the case of the memorials built in Oklahoma City, the University of Texas, and Virginia Tech.[2] In suburban communities like Edmond and Columbine that have no established network of memory sites, the memorials inspired their own ritualized assemblage that reached across the local landscape. In both instances, the potency of mass murder memorials has mandated either their inclusion in established sacred spaces, or has resulted in the creation of a new sacred landscapes. Moreover, the official memorial is routinely but one of a number of permanent memorials built after a mass murder, which amplifies the fact that these memory sites have thus far been too powerful to be constructed in isolation. A century after the redesign of the National Mall, mass murder memorials inspire and invigorate the powerful ritualized assemblages that mark the history of the United States at the turn the twenty-first century in the patriotic landscape.

Like the cult of the fallen soldier that emerged after WWI, a socio-political script spread in the 1990s as a novel means of appropriating the blood of victims of mass murder to promote national unity--the Myth of the Slaughtered Citizen. Wars had been used throughout the twentieth century to unify the nation against a common enemy. But

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[2] I am referring to the Oklahoma Mall at the State Capitol, the Texas Mall at the State Capitol, and the Drillfield on the Virginia Tech campus, respectively.

in the twelve years between the end of the Cold War and the beginning of the War on Terror, national leaders had no means of drawing on this established rhetoric of unity during war. In 1995, President Clinton addressed this commemorative void by encouraging all U.S. citizens to never forget the brief period of national unity that they experienced after the Oklahoma City bombing. The President recited this script again in 1999 after Columbine, but this time other national leaders and regular citizens joined him in promoting the imagined bereaved community as the memory citizens should always remember. There was no definitive moment when the Myth of the Slaughtered Citizen was fully normalized, but we can say that by September 11, 2001 it had effectively established a national expectation in the permanent memorialization of mass murder in the patriotic landscape.

The changing nature of national public memories of mass murder illuminates countless new questions and lines of potential further study not covered herein. While this dissertation has begun to develop the relationship between memories of war and mass murder at the end of the twentieth century, it is necessary to explore how these two discourses interacted and intertwined from the late 1960s onward. The role of gender in mass murder has been consistently neglected, both in terms of the lack of recognition that perpetrators are always male, and in the purposeful erasing from public memory of some of the women killed by mass murders. [3] The commemorative connections between the mass murder memorials of the 1990s and their influence on the the 9/11 memorial is another topic worthy of further study. The increasing amount of attention given to each

[3] I presented on the later topic at the 2013. "Forgetting the Slaughter of Women: The Active Suppression of Memories of Women Killed in United States Mass Murders," Annual Meeting of the Southeastern Women's Studies Association (SEWSA), UNC Greensboro, April 2013.

new mass murder also begs the question of how various cultural and political actors use mass murders as spectacles that divert public attention from concurrent issues such as legislation, international affairs and domestic strife. Lastly, due to the recent nature of the history of mass murder memorials, it will be necessary to watch how this tradition develops in the twenty-first century. Will other communities, for example, replicate Virginia Tech's institutionalization of the commemorative process, retrospectively attempt to create more memorials to past mass murders like UT, and continue to transform local landscapes of public memory? More broadly, only time will tell if this new tradition will continue indefinitely, or if the old historical norm of forgetting and moving on without a permanent memorial will reestablish itself again at some point in the future.

In conclusion, it is important to acknowledge that, historically, the new tradition of constructing mass murder memorials became the dominant commemorative means of promoting national unity in the United States at the turn of the twenty-first century. Kenneth Foote writes that "the inescapable fact is that violence has played a critical, instrumental role in helping Americans to build a sense of state and nation."[4] Throughout U.S. history, different forms of commemorating violence have characterized changing understandings of citizenship and society. At the turn of the twentieth century, memorials dedicated to the "everyman" soldier exemplified the growing recognition of citizens instead of just generals and presidents. For the bulk of the twentieth century, a move toward utilitarian memorials marked the rise of consumerism in U.S. society in the public desire to construct pragmatic memory sites. By the end of the twentieth century, all these memory sites had created what David Chidester and Edward Linenthal call

[4] Foote, *Shadowed Ground: America's Landscapes of Violence and Tragedy*. 334.

> a national orientation, supported by specific national sites, that has been saturated with a distinctive kind of patriotic sacrality. All sacred sites in America, linked together in complex and often conflicting ways, encourage the cumulative perception that America, in all its manifest diversity, is a national unity…[however,] Americans do not in fact share the same historical geography.[5]

The emergence of mass murder memorials in the 1990s marked the rise of the phenomenon and filled the need for a means of unifying that nation after the Cold War. Since the outset of the War on Terror, Tim Luke's observation about Virginia Tech is applicable to all mass murder memorials. "[Slaughtered citizens] now serve as a rallying point to further advance the maroon and orange consciousness of this single university within the universal state of emergency hovering over the United States in general."[6] At the turn of the twenty-first century mass murder memorials represent a significant cultural shift in commemorative sensibilities about domestically perpetrated violence and, like war memorials before them, have become a powerful new means of promoting a sense of national unity in the patriotic landscape.

[5] Chidester and Linenthal, *American Sacred Space*. 29.
[6] Tim Luke, "There is a Gunman on Campus," by Agger and Luke, *There Is a Gunman on Campus: Tragedy and Terror at Virginia Tech*. 21.

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