

TREASURE HOUSES OF THE MIND
PUBLIC PLACES AS TEACHERS
OF HISTORY

by

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DEDICATION

To my wife, Vickie.

If the search for meaning is the question,

Love is ultimately the answer.

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With regard to the feelings I have for my wife, I must quote the most famous Doctor of them all: "She knows."

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ABSTRACT

The following manuscript explores the means by which historic sites act as teachers of history. Historic sites occupy an important role in both public space and collective culture. Such places serve as “hyperreal” objects through which a collective historic memory is retained and transferred. The public historians who are responsible for the management of such places must balance the competing agendas of providing access to reliable historical information with prevailing political and cultural interpretations of the past. This manuscript provides a pedagogical study of the interplay of historian, historic site, and the public in order to propose a theoretical model for how these relationships create and transmit knowledge.

1. PREFACE

My doctoral work and the accompanying production of this dissertation feels far more like a journey than a scholastic exercise. Having consumed the better part of the last decade of my life this has been a voyage that I feel, at times, somewhat reluctant to complete. When I began this "trip" my life was very fixed and orderly. I had recently been appointed to the position of Deputy Land Commissioner of Texas - at age 33 I was the youngest person to occupy that position in recent memory; the culmination of a decade of upward mobility in state government.

My wife and I had surrounded ourselves with the trappings of fixedness: a large home, stable social connections, careers built on an established network. Et cetera. I intended my PhD work to be the penultimate phase of my career, before eventually leaving government work and transitioning to academe. What this project eventually became was a total reevaluation - and in many ways - a repudiation of my career. As I write these words eight years later I am sitting in Washington, DC, a very different person from he who enrolled in this PhD program. The program, itself, was very much a part of that personal transformation.

My original intention was to complete this

dissertation within a year. Shortly thereafter a diagnosis of Type II diabetes brought about an extreme midlife crisis that changed my perspective on life, my career, and my values: all for the better. Our staid lives transformed into a whirlwind. Reevaluating the ephemeral nature of our existence, my wife and I hit the road, took a year off from work, and wandered. We sold our house, we moved around, and upon being offered a job with the U.S. Department of State, we landed in Washington at the start of the first Obama administration.

All the while this dissertation project remained the anchor to my "old life." I was able to visit great museums and monuments and take time to contemplate my ideas and their potential impact. The leisure with which I was able to pursue this project has been a rare gift - and a tool for helping me adapt to the changes in my life. I began my career as an historian, but the exploration of these new ideas has allowed me to evolve.

I began this project with one question in mind: how do people learn about their history through direct encounters with historical objects? But this pursuit led me to ponder deeper questions regarding how people relate to information more generally. My overall conclusion - the conclusion that has been driving my career for the past several years

- is that people have a lot more *choice* regarding what information they learn and incorporate into their personal worldview than traditional pedagogy might lead us to believe. I stumbled upon that blurred area of intellectual space in which *education* and *enculturation* are fundamentally mingled. Learning, in this space, is a matter of choice - information is absorbed only when that information is desired and it is filtered through a socio-cultural-political filter.

Though my project was focused narrowly on historical sites - so-called "memory places" - this revelation has fundamentally altered my analytical approach when encountering an information management strategy. My outlook has changed and is changing. No longer am I capable of seeing the "facts" as immutable things - or history as a single path of revelation; "right" and "wrong." Now I tend to conceive of information as being "accurate" and "inaccurate" and when one offers a passionately held inaccurate interpretation I am motivated to understand *why* rather than merely being dismissive.

In the way that my disease upended my staid lifestyle and caused me to embrace a more chaotic state of being, this project has caused me to look at the way people learn about the world around them - most particularly their past

and their cultural story - in a more mutable way. Now, as I approach a question of analysis, be it historical or related to a legal question or a question of foreign policy, I am more interested in understanding why differences in interpretation exist rather than advocating solely for my own "right" position. So much of what we think we know about our history is actually a position of advocacy, no matter how passionately we might believe we are merely defending "the facts." Even if that is the only lesson I learned from this project it has made me a better historian and a better researcher overall.

Ultimately, I believe that I succeeded in my quest to answer my essential question - how people learn from "memory places." But I also believe I have exposed a few deeper revelations in the bargain. I shall leave any final conclusions as to the value of this paper to you, the reader. However, to me, as the author, the value has been inestimable.

And now the time has come for me to, finally, let it go. For these many years this project has been my anchor. The time has come to cut it loose and sail over the next horizon.

2. EXPLORING THE VISCERAL PAST

Yes, I see wonderful things!

- Howard Carter

Upon the discovery of Tutankhamun's tomb
(November 22, 1922)

It is the purpose of the following manuscript to achieve a conceptual understanding of how we as a people, living in a modern Western society, are able to learn about our collective history from direct encounters with public places. Historic sites that function as both monuments and museums - imbued with the power of institutional credibility - serve as the focus for this study. Such places are tangible, *visceral* representations of the past and, as such, act as primary loci for the education of members of the general public in the story of their own history. It is hoped that through this research a new picture will emerge of how our collective identity is shaped by education through public history.

Statement of the Problem

Whether sitting in a classroom or around the family dinner table, the history of our nation, people, and culture is imparted to us as if it were absolute truth. With the certainty of a mathematical equation, we are taught that Christopher Columbus discovered America, that

the American Revolution was fought for freedom, and that our place in the history of humanity is unique, special, and important. While our parents and our grade school teachers might express these notions as articles of faith, few historians would argue that history is so simple, and indeed, so totally objective.

We know few of the true "facts" of history. While we might be able to amass enough documentary evidence to state with a degree of certainty that, for instance, the Alamo fell on March 6, 1836 or that Napoleon was defeated at Waterloo on June 18, 1815, these facts in themselves, are really useless bits of trivia. The historians' stock-in-trade is not mere fact, but educated *interpretation*. What is the significance of the Alamo's fall and what impact did the defeat of Napoleon have on the world? Why are March 6, 1836 and June 18, 1815 *more* than just simple dates on the calendar? It is these questions that historians seek to ask and it is their subsequent *answers* that are taught as the true "facts" of history.

Every nation and every people write their own history. Collective history is a key component of shared culture. When we are taught our history, it is given to us as "truth." With our pabulum we are told that "George Washington could not tell a lie" and that "World War II

made Europe safe for democracy." At a very young age, as these truths are imparted to us, we are in no position to question their veracity as we digest them heartily.

In modern America, the co-mingling of myth, power politics, and popular culture has created a "hyperreal" version of our collective history - a situation in which the reality of history has become hopelessly confused with our own, often fantastical, interpretations of it (Ecco, 1986). We are heavily influenced not only by what we learn in school, but from the more informal sources we encounter in everyday life. While it can be taken as a given that the formal education process is designed to impart a message that has been "approved" by the prevailing hegemony, more informal sources of historic knowledge - that found in the public sphere - are less understood.

At present we are lacking a pedagogical paradigm for understanding how the public space serves to inform the broader populace. Unlike public education, there is no regulatory authority in charge of curricula - the governing bodies that control the public space are solely responsible for its content. Their agendas may be more than simply telling an "accurate story," but telling a specific story in a self-serving manner. We are aware from the number of visitors that attend such places that they have an

influence on how our collective history is remembered, but we lack a deeper understanding of the educational mechanism by which these places *deliver* their message.

When a person visits an historical site, what do they learn? Who is in control of the message and what version of history are they trying to tell? According to the French philosopher and historian Pierre Nora, places of historical significance, such as monuments, battlefields, and museums (which store important artifacts) act as carriers of human culture. Nora has dubbed such sites "memory places" (Nora, 2001). These are tangible, physical sites that we can visit as a means of experiencing history through direct contact.

Nora argues that memory places have a powerful influence on people. Such places, as tangible representatives of our deeply held cultural values, impact us emotionally as well as intellectually. Historic places and artifacts carry with them a tremendous weight of authority. As such, lessons taught by curators and educators within the context of that authority are likely to be remembered and deeply internalized.

On the surface, this might seem benign, but how can we be certain that the lessons taught at such places are accurate? To what extent is their *message* crafted to

represent a given agenda? In short, as androgogous learners and consumers of information how can we be sure of the veracity of what we are being made to learn?

More than 4 million people visit Mount Rushmore each year (National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, Mount Rushmore n.d.). About 3.7 million people visit the Vietnam Veterans' Memorial, while a similar number make their way to the national Holocaust Museum. The site that will feature as the case study for this dissertation will be the Lincoln Memorial, which receives approximately 6.5 million visitors per year, according to the National Parks Service's 2013 estimates. (National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, Vietnam Veterans Memorial n.d.; United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, n.d.; National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, Lincoln Memorial n.d.) Such numbers are significant; equivalent to more than the entire population of Oregon visiting these places each year!

While ample (and justifiable) energy is expended to understand how children learn history in school, virtually no work has been done to evaluate how history is taught within the context of "memory places." Each year, tens of millions of Americans are learning about their past and their culture while strolling the grounds of an historical

monument or hiking a Civil War battlefield. In what way do they acquire the knowledge that they learn and what affect does that learning have on them? That is the essential problem proposed by this study.

Project Methodology:

Uncovering the Pedagogy of Memory Place

A proper exploration of the learning experience of visitors to public history sites - Nora's "memory places" - requires a multifarious approach. The experience of such visceral historical loci is both intellectual and emotional. It would be a grave error to gauge only what one *learns* at such sites without taking the further step of understanding the sites' impact on the overall human psyche.

This study required a comprehensive review of literature resulting in the creation of a theoretical framework through which the final results of field data may be understood - a pedagogical model. An interlocking theoretical bridge had to be built between the theories of memory place and hyperreality and the disciplines of public history and community education. The individual components of such a bridge were extant, awaiting only the architecture of practical application to link them together.

This study used the discipline of narrative inquiry, a sub-discipline of knowledge management, as a means of understanding the role of human behavior in telling and assimilating the stories conveyed by memory places and the pedagogical strategies employed to disseminate them. First and foremost this study is meant to be a means of gaining greater insight into the process by which these places act as institutions of *public education*. Though this text draws on a wide range of disciplines - from public history to anthropology - these are being brought to bear as tools to explore a pedagogical paradigm.

The theoretical framework of this study views history not as a fixed point in time and space, as a *fact*, but as mutable and subjective. History, rather, is *story*; told and retold and modified in the telling. As such, to understand the impact of these stories on human behavior and human culture, the research technique of narrative inquiry served as the primary means of engaging this study.

Site Selection - The Lincoln Memorial

The subject of United States history alone presents the researcher with tens of thousands of potential candidates for study. The region around Washington, D.C. provided me with an "embarrassment of riches" for sites to

study. After a careful evaluation of locations this study was limited to one broadly encompassing site, the Lincoln Memorial.

A number of potential sites were rejected simply because site managers had no interest in hosting a study which they could not control. The Lincoln Memorial presents a number of advantages: its history is well-documented in both primary and secondary sources; both the monument and its subject (Abraham Lincoln) have been studied via a wide range of disciplines; it serves as a "master symbol" of American culture; it is one of the nation's most visited tourist attractions; it serves "dual purpose" as both a monument and a museum; the National Parks Service has an extremely liberal policy with regard to research being done at the site; and the site is proximal to my home and work. The study itself was carried out at the site throughout the summer and fall of 2013.

The work of Nora (2001) suggests that though monuments and museums may have a different mission, they have a similar purpose. The museum's primary function is to serve as an educational institution; it achieves this goal by creating in the visitor a highly visceral experience. The monument, commemorating a personage or event, is expressly *designed* to create a visceral, highly emotional reaction

within the person experiencing it. However, in order to do so, the monument must take on an educational role similar to that of the museum in order to convey to the user the importance of what is being memorialized. Lacking context, the visceral nature of the experience loses all meaning.

The Lincoln Memorial serves as the true embodiment of memory place. It draws upon the visceral nature of its subject matter and its distinctive location and architecture to transmit its educational message. Through careful study of this site and via interviews with its staff and visitors it was possible to construct a pedagogical model of public education via memory place.

Evaluation - Narrative Inquiry

The study of human history is not an objective science - it *cannot* be. While historians are able to take advantage of the so-called "hard" sciences as well as the social sciences in order to build a picture of the past, ultimately history is a wholly interpretive activity. The very name of the discipline, from the Greek root *ιστορία* - meaning "to inquire" - implies as much. Historians make observations, drawing together a rich array of data from a myriad of sources, which they ultimately interpret into a collective *story*. Informed storytelling is the essence of

the discipline.

As such, the qualitative method of study that best suits the task of uncovering how these stories are created and transmitted through a memory place is the discipline of narrative inquiry. Narrative inquiry focuses on understanding the very act of knowledge transfer – the means by which data is communicated and instilled into the individual. According to Leonard Webster and Patrice Mertova (2007), two pioneers in the use of narrative inquiry for the purpose of investigation in the field, the discipline “provides researchers with a rich framework through which they can investigate the ways humans experience the world depicted through their stories” (p. 1).

This research project was carried out in five phases, each of which represented a systematic evolution in data collection and evaluation:

Experiential Assessment

During this phase of research, I visited the site “cold,” without having conducted extensive background investigations or interviews with site staff. During this initial assessment phase, I functioned like any other visitor – not yet an “expert” on the site at hand. As

such, my perceptions of the site were wholly shaped by the institution's controlling forces and my own personal knowledge base.

I recorded my impressions of the Lincoln Memorial, creating a "thick" description of the facility based purely upon how it presents itself. In collecting this data, I employed a narrative approach, seeking to obtain an "essential" overview of the Memorial in the hopes of better understanding the means by which it creates an emotional/intellectual/spiritual impact on the visitor. My own impressions, following extensive data collection, were then compared and contrasted to those of both interviewed visitors and those responsible for creating the site's narrative.

Historical Overview and Operational Assessment

This phase of the project provided an understanding of how the Lincoln Memorial operates: how it came to be, how it is governed, and how it conducts its business. The historical overview not only further enhanced my "thick" description of the facility at hand it also provided clues as to its given agenda. An understanding of how the site came to be, who operates it, and who visits it provided important information regarding what story the place

intends to tell. This data was then compared to the data collected during the visitor interviews to determine if visitors' impressions of the site were those that were intended.

Park Ranger Interviews

Following the collection of experiential, historical, and operational data a series of interviews were conducted with Memorial staff. Interviews focused on those responsible for delivering the facility's message to the general public. This series of interviews provided an understanding of how those responsible for maintaining and interpreting the site view their role and the role of their facility. Rangers were queried regarding the message of the Memorial and the techniques used to portray and broadcast that message. This effort was designed to uncover the facility's *intended* pedagogical approach.

Visitor Interviews

I conducted recorded interviews with visitors to obtain an understanding of what they learned from their visit to the Memorial and evaluated how that information reconciled with their understanding of American history and culture. A random sampling of volunteer visitors was

queried during multiple site visits upon their egress from the facility. Though these interviews collected pertinent demographic data, they were largely qualitative in nature and designed to determine the visitors' impressions of the site, what they learned, what learning strategies left the biggest impression and were most effective, and how that new knowledge affected (or failed to affect) their overall outlook. This gathered data helped to determine to what extent the site's overall pedagogical strategy was effective.

Overall Conclusions

The evaluation of the data collected in this study was utilized to determine the level of consistency between the Lincoln Memorial's *intended* pedagogical model and the means by which site visitors were *actually* processing the information presented to them. From these data an observed pedagogical model was created which provides a concise understanding of how memory places serve as teachers of history. By achieving insight into how we as a collective society obtain knowledge from memory places we will come to better comprehend the role their constructed historical realities play in shaping our shared cultural knowledge.

3. OF MEMORIES

Of Memory. It is the treasure-house of the mind,
wherein the monuments thereof are kept and preserved.

- Thomas Fuller
The Holy State and the Prophane State
(1642)

I became a historian at the age of four. It happened on a windy fall morning, as my grandfather and I stood in a pasture overlooking the banks of what had once been the Blackwater Draw in the Panhandle of Texas. He was telling me a story about how the Draw long ago was full of water and would often flood, blocking passage out of our little town of Fieldton. That never happened anymore; the Draw had been dammed and was now dry.

I knew from his other stories that we were standing in the vicinity of where "Bad Hand" Mackenzie had crossed the Blackwater Draw chasing a last stand of Texas Comanche toward their final battle in the depths of Palo Duro Canyon. Ranald S. Mackenzie, I knew, was a Yankee from New York who had fought in the Civil War and come to Texas to fight Indians and open the Panhandle for what my grandfather called "white settlers."

I looked around. I could not see any "settlers" from where I stood. There were only about six families in our

town and perhaps 2,500 people in the county seat of Littlefield, miles over the horizon. As far as the eye could see there was nothing but cotton, where once there had been buffalo and *Comancheros* and Spanish *Conquistadores* in their gleaming armor, roasting under a white hot sky.

I learned about these things from my grandfather who had a handful of serious looking books in a little case in my grandparents' den. He was the only person I knew who read books for fun and he had bought me my first book only that year - a big colorful tome filled with pictures of giant lizards that he called "dinosaurs." I often wondered if these big lizards once roamed the cotton fields with the buffalo. Maybe old "Bad Hand" had driven them off, too.

I was pondering such things when I saw it, at my feet, lying in a patch of short grass. It looked as if someone had dropped it there that morning. I reached down and picked it up, rolling the little white and pink chunk of rock in my hand.

"That looks like an arrowhead," said my grandfather.

And so it was. It was a beautiful thing, long and white and intricately flaked, with lines of red and pink running throughout it. My grandfather had an ancient White Owl Cigar box in the den filled with similar points along with a collection of little lead bullets he called "minis."

This would be my first arrowhead, but certainly not my last. Over the past thirty years I have teased thousands of these little points from the earth, inscribing them with tiny numbers in precise black ink, categorizing them by type, and filing them in long shelves in the basement of a college laboratory or in my own sprawling collection at home. I have brought other things out of the earth as well - even helping to uncover one of those dinosaurs I read of as a child.

But a lifetime of work began with that first arrowhead. I knew from our trips every Sunday to the shabby church in Littlefield that to love a thing - to covet it - was a sin. But at that moment I coveted that chunk of stone, gripping it in my hand so tightly that its still sharp edge cut into my flesh.

That night I slept with it under my pillow. As I lay in my bed I imagined that this point belonged to one of the Kiowa or Comanche who fled from Mackenzie all those many years ago. Maybe it had been loosed from an Indian bow and struck a blue-clad cavalryman. Were those red streaks running down the side of the stone flecks of dried blood?

I would learn only a few years later that, of course, my first point had nothing to do with "Bad Hand" and his men or the Indians he was chasing. Rather, my little point

was older. *Much older.* It had been knapped by a person who had walked the plains around Blackwater Draw some nine thousand years before Jesus Christ walked the Galilee.

Called a Folsom point and named for the New Mexico town where the first examples were found, my arrowhead was carved from Alibates flint, excavated from a quarry near Fritch, Texas. The flecks of red in the stone were not blood, but striations of color peculiar to this particular form of stone. The object, further, was not an *arrowhead*, but a *projectile point*, which tipped a spear used to hunt bison.

My childish hypothesis about my new treasure was wrong, but I was engaging in history nonetheless. I was learning the process of inductive reasoning that allows the archaeologist, anthropologist, and historian to build a picture of how the people who once carried these tools lived their lives. In time I would learn how to engage in this kind of thinking in a more rigorous fashion and I would learn to use other artifacts as evidence from which to draw conclusions; in particular, the written word - humanity's own diary of the past.

Despite a passion for history stretching more than three decades I have never grown tired of living in close proximity to the past. I have climbed the Pyramids of the

Sun and Moon at Teotihuacan, stood in the freezing rain on the battlefield of Culloden, sank in the mud in a Mithras temple in the shadow of Hadrian's Wall, and ridden for miles through the jungles of Yucatan to crawl about Mayan ruins. My wife and I have learned to collect such places the way some people collect stamps.

Yet each time I visit these sites and enter into proximity with an object of great history, I recapture that same childhood feeling of covetous awe and wonder that I experienced with that first arrowhead. My pulse quickens, my eyes flood with tears, and my imagination runs wild. It is a feeling, I imagine, akin to that experienced by religious people in the throes of spiritual ecstasy. From my first climb up the steps of the Lincoln Memorial to the last time I set my eyes on the *Venus de Milo*, history has become my religion, and the places where it is contained are my temples.

The sun is rising over the great city of London as I write these words. I cannot sleep. A tea cart is rattling down the halls of the Grosvenor House Hotel, the shops are still closed at the arcade in Old Bond Street, and the first commuters are arriving in Victoria Station. I am restless, throwing myself into work. Though my wife and I wandered the streets until midnight, I am up before the sun

scribbling in my diary. I am too excited to rest any further.

Later today we will visit the British Museum, one of the finest storehouses of human history in the world. For the first time in my life I will see the Rosetta Stone; the chunk of granodiorite covered in hieroglyphics, Demotic script, and Classical Greek that unlocked the writing system of the ancient Egyptians, giving us the world of the Pharaohs. (SEE ILLUSTRATION 1.) I know when I see it I will be awash in emotion - overcome with that sense of ecstasy.

I have seen photographs of the Rosetta Stone a thousand times. It was one of the first artifacts of consequence to which I was introduced as a freshman anthropology student. Every archaeologist worth her salt dreams of unearthing a new Rosetta Stone - an object that will singlehandedly crack open our understanding of the past.

Despite this academic familiarity, I want to see it in person. I could study it to my heart's content from my home, but I have a need to assert myself in its presence. And we will do more. We will make a pilgrimage to the tomb of Charles Darwin, we will climb the steps to the Tower of London to see the British Crown Jewels, and we will ride

the tube to Whitechapel to retrace the footsteps of Jack the Ripper. We will have done these things simply for the sake of having been there.

At this point in my career as a scholar, it is that "ecstatic" connection with the past that I want to better understand. Why do we travel the world to see the Great Pyramid rising above the Giza Plateau? Why do tourists crowd the Grassy Knoll at Dealey Plaza overlooking the site of President Kennedy's assassination? Why can a visit to Gettysburg or a glimpse of Mount Rushmore through a spyglass move us to tears?

The same person who was bored to sleep by their high school history teacher will drive halfway across the continent to take their children to Colonial Williamsburg or to visit the Smithsonian Institution. Some of the most visited places on planet earth are historical attractions - the places where important events took place and where monuments and artifacts are preserved. There is a reason why we, as cultural animals, crave a visceral connection to our past.

Historical objects, artifacts, monuments, and memorials telegraph *meaning*. They stimulate an emotional response and they are a source of information. They help us to connect with our collective story in a tangible

manner in the same way that paging through your grandmother's old photo albums helps you to connect to family members you never knew.

The person on the street need never visit the Washington Monument to learn everything they might want to know about America's first president - yet they come every year in the millions. They pay the money to travel, fight for parking on the National Mall, and struggle up the hillside in all manner of weather to gaze upon that 555 foot heap of marble. (SEE ILLUSTRATION 2.) And they leave satisfied, some perhaps, even inspired.

I have spent the bulk of my professional career working as a historian in a branch of the discipline that caters to the public. I am a *public historian* - I help to make the artifacts of past events easily accessible and understandable to the general population. Each day I encounter people who have traveled great distance and spared no expense to place themselves in close proximity to some object to which they feel they have a personal connection. I am fascinated by this peculiar cultural phenomenon.

Why do we do it? What are we learning from these places and these objects? What do they tell us and why do we spend so much time and money to protect them? These

questions are at the very heart of what it means to be a *public* historian and, as yet, no one has provided answers. I want to do that - I must do that - to not only better understand my profession, but to better understand *myself*. We shall throw open the doors of our collective memory - that great treasure house of the human mind.

4. THE UNDISCOVERED COUNTRY

The undiscovered country, from whose bourn
No traveler returns, puzzles the will,
And makes us rather bear those ills we have
Than fly to others that we know not of?

- William Shakespeare,
The Tragedy of Hamlet
(c.1599)

It is a typical enough occurrence in any university history class. The young freshman raises her hand on the first day of her state-mandated introductory United States history course: "Professor," she asks, "why do we have to study this stuff? We had it all in high school. I'm an engineering major. Why do I *need* to sit through a year of history?"

It is a relevant question. Though many people make their living by practicing the historian's craft, in one manner or another, it is hardly the most financially attractive field. Yet, a small schedule of history classes is a part of the standardized curriculum in the United States. To some students, no doubt, historical knowledge seems esoteric, dead, and useless.

The more flippant professor might be tempted to allow her young scholar's question to go unanswered, dismissing it with an aside, but for the purpose of this paper we

cannot. Our history is an essential component of our identity, both individually and as a unified social group. In short, our *history* is our *story*.

Let us suppose that this same student rises from her desk at the conclusion of the class, passes out of the lecture hall, into the university quad, and into the street. She is then immediately run over by a careless bicyclist, late for her next class. And though our student is not seriously injured she has sustained enough head trauma to suffer some memory loss. She cannot remember anything that has happened to her over the past year, including her senior prom, her high school graduation, an accepted marriage proposal, and her entrance into the university.

What would be our student's first action upon leaving the hospital? Previously uninterested in the tradecraft of history, this student would likely engage the subject's methodology stringently. She would begin to reconstruct her forgotten past immediately. She would ask questions. Why does she have a ring on her finger? Where did it come from? Why is she no longer living in her parents' house? Who are all these new people listed in her phone? Why is she suddenly reading Tolstoy?

These questions are the basic components of historical

analysis - an attempt to reconstruct, from available evidence, some story of past events. The word "history," from its Latin root, means simply: "finding out" (Soanes and Stevenson, 2005). Indeed, our amnesiac student would launch herself on an immediate quest to "find out" what events had transpired during her lost year. Her past - as with all of us - forms the core of her identity. Cutting away a year of that past would take away a piece of what makes her a whole person.

In the same way that our personal identity is a composite of our individual life story, our overarching cultural identity is a narrative of our collective social history. All peoples have a "story" that relates how they came to be. The Jewish people encapsulate their origin within the *Torah*, just as the *Book of Han* outlines the ancient history of China. The Aztecs of Mexico claimed to have migrated from the fabled city of Aztlán, while the Latin historians Plutarch and Livy recorded the tale of the twins Romulus and Remus founding the great city of Rome.

These stories, admittedly embellished and arguably mythical, nevertheless serve as a core component of the identities of their respective cultures. Though we in the United States, a young country, our own history serves as a primary cultural unifier. The tales of the American

Revolution, fought by scruffy citizen soldiers commanded by an iconic "Father" in the form of General (later President) George Washington is our national secular gospel. Thus, we are taught that a great nation was born from humble origins out of a people's thirst for liberty and freedom. *Novus ordo seclorum*.

Our hypothetical engineering co-ed, though doubtless more interested in the Law of Cosines and the methodology for calculating the tensile strength of an A36 steel bar, will be forced by her university to sit through a couple of semesters of United States history. The purpose of these classes is not to transform the budding engineer into a historian, but to steep the student in our shared cultural story.

In his much-reprinted essay "The Three Reasons We Teach History" the Pulitzer Prize winning historian Walter A. McDougall (1998) outlined a tri-fold rationale for a consideration of historical subject matter. First, he argued that history is a training tool for the logical and investigative processes. It teaches students how to *think*. The second reason for teaching history is the "civics" function - the use of historical pedagogy as a means of transferring to the next generation our cultural knowledge and values. McDougall accepts the notion that a shared

history is a vehicle for cultural knowledge and that its teaching is essential "to impart a reverence for the values and institutions of the creed of state."

The final reason for teaching history is closely aligned with the second. History is meant to provide a moral education. McDougall writes: "...history is the only academic subject that inspires humility...a course in history ought to teach wisdom - if it doesn't, then it is not history but something else."

Thus the formal teaching of history is presented as a tool for expanding critical thinking skills, for imparting critical cultural knowledge to maintain social cohesion, and as a means of creating a more humble, "wise" student. Further, the education pioneer John Dewey (1938/1998) provided us with a fourth reason for putting history into the classroom. Dewey argued that a solid knowledge of history would help the growing citizen to avoid the mistakes of the past:

The institutions and customs that exist in the present and that give rise to present social ills and dislocations did not arise over night. They have a long history behind them...The way out of scholastic systems that made the past an end in itself is to make acquaintance with the past as a *means* of understanding

the present. (p. 94)

Dewey and McDougall are only two recent voices encouraging the teaching of history in a tradition dating to Herodotus, the so-called "Father" of the discipline. General George S. Patton claimed that a careful study of military history made him a better commander (Farago, 2005). Likewise, an exploration of Romanian history and legend led Bram Stoker to write one of the most enduring works of English literature, the novel *Dracula* (Belford, 2002). The study of history has its defenders, both in academe and in the practical, popular world. Regardless, this institutionalized pedagogical strategy is open to critique.

Lead chiefly by Continental thinkers of the mid-twentieth century such as Michel Foucault, a post-structuralist argument has been launched against the teaching of history as a vehicle for the transmission of cultural knowledge. Within this realm of philosophy, history is seen as a tool not of critical thinking or of creating a more moral and enlightened citizen, but as a means of wielding power.

At the extreme of this argument we find George Orwell's dystopian novel *1984*, in which the nefarious leaders of the "The Party" frequently manipulate the

historical record as a means of indoctrinating the population of "proles" into submitting to the will of a totalitarian state (Orwell, 1949). Though a work of fiction, Orwell's concerns have been mirrored in the scholarship of the past sixty years. It has been well documented that the German Third Reich and the Soviet regime in Russia actively (and, it can be argued, grotesquely) altered the historical record to justify the excesses of the prevailing power structure (Lott, 1999).

The Soviets practiced a system of layered educational indoctrination, wherein first the teachers were schooled on a curriculum most advantageous to protecting the power structure of the state. Subsequently, this army of educators was utilized, *en masse*, as a means of rearing a new generation of compliant Soviet citizens. Such practices were overt and intentional and the re-writing of history was a common tool for maintaining national authority (Vogel, 1959).

However, the use of history as a means of manipulating power is *not* solely the practice of totalitarian regimes. In a two-year study of ten educational programs in the United States, Joel Westheimer and Joseph Kahne (2004) found that students were provided with a very narrow definition of citizenship that stressed perceived Western

democratic virtues. While most Americans might well agree that these are *positively* instilled values (after all, we Americans are products of this same educational system) it is difficult to deny that the formal educational system has been utilized to indoctrinate students into a pro-democratic worldview.

Why not teach the merits of socialism, or communism, or, for that matter, monarchism? Such systems, it could be argued, are just as efficient and beneficial (if not more so) than American-style democracy and capitalism. Simply, the positive virtues of these other systems are not taught because they are not *ours*.

Linda Gordon, David Hunt, and Peter Weiler (1987), in a comprehensive article for *The History Teacher* uncovered a long tradition of formalized historical education in the United States being utilized as a means of indoctrinating students in pro-Western, pro-American values. Their target of inquiry was the so-called "Western Civilization" course most American undergraduates must take as a part of their university education. These classes, though intended to be a values-free means of exposing students to non-American cultures, in fact stress the *success* of Western culture in the face of world history.

The post-structuralist thinkers argue (as does the

present author) that the notion of values-neutral, objective history is, in fact, impossible. Historical events are far too susceptible to interpretation to be presented fully without bias. Foucault credited the philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche with being the first to make this observation. Foucault (1984) wrote:

Historians take unusual pains to erase the elements in their work which reveal their grounding in a particular time and place, their preference in a controversy - the unavoidable obstacles of their passion. Nietzsche's version of historical sense is explicit in its perspective and acknowledges its system of injustice. Its perception is slanted, being a deliberate appraisal, affirmation, or negation; it reaches the lingering and poisonous traces in order to prescribe the best antidote. (p. 90)

Thus the argument that history is objective is turned upon its head. In the Nietzsche/Foucault milieu, the historian dispenses with the pretense of objectivity and proclaims her personal bias. History becomes a means of critiquing and correcting social wrongs - a way of speaking truth to power. Our hypothetical engineering student from the beginning of this chapter, then, might well be justified in questioning the reasons for her

formalized education in historical subject matter.

Historical knowledge - that is to say, *cultural* knowledge - is a useful means of indoctrinating this student into a select way of thinking, especially when it is disguised behind a veil of objectivity.

The anthropologist Clifford Geertz (1973, p. 46) argued that cultural knowledge formed the basis for humankind's structure, regulation, and governability: "Undirected by culture patterns...man's behavior would be virtually ungovernable, a mere chaos of pointless acts and exploding emotions, his experience virtually shapeless." Indeed, a shared history - a shared *story* - functions as one of these "cultural patterns." The pro-Western bias discovered by Gordon, Hunt, and Weiler (1987) in "Western Civilization" classes is a sublime example of the expression of cultural knowledge as a means of achieving an organized society.

Anthropologist Larry L. Naylor (1996) argued that cultural knowledge is essentially taught as "Truth." This is a sensible assumption. Why would a mother and father teach their children otherwise? Why invest teaching the forthcoming generation the value of one's own culture only to stipulate that someone else's cultural values might indeed be superior?

As an example, the present author, a Southerner, was taught by both his parents and the local school system that the American Civil War was a war of "Northern aggression" fought over the subject of "state's rights" and not slavery. No doubt, a young person of my generation raised north of the Mason-Dixon Line would have been presented with a different view of events. Both perspectives have some historical validity. Historians have made their careers in laying claim to one side of the argument or the other - for them the Civil War is never over.

Such debates infect our present tense - our culture and our politics - with a continually evolving historical dialectic. The subjective nature of historical knowledge allows for such debate, as each generation reviews its understanding of the past and revises it in the light of current events.

Thus we are presented with a view of history as a discipline that is more complicated than we might wish to believe. More than simply a chronicle of past events, the historians' work is fraught with layers of diverse perspectives, multiple agendas and potential power relationships. We must keep in mind, however, in its simplest form that the work of the historian is to study evidence related to past events and offer an *interpretation*

of that information. The degree to which that interpretation is a reflection of what really happened in the past or to which it is accepted by the prevailing culture as "Truth" is subject to debate.

Beyond Formalized Education - The Undiscovered Country

To this point we have only dealt with the *formalized* teaching of history, a subject of considerable study. This is meant to serve as an introduction to the greater subject of this manuscript: an inquiry into the *informal* transmittal of historical knowledge, primarily in the public, non-academic sphere.

We have established, albeit in brief, the goals of formalized historical education in the modern American milieu. From the passing of cultural knowledge from one generation to the next, to an attempt to improve society, to outright propagandizing and social control, the teaching of history plays a concrete role in the educational curriculum. As has been demonstrated, that role is multifarious and often what we might not expect. Does our amnesiac engineering student suspect that a simple course in history might, at its underlying core, have the goal of shaping (and, indeed, manipulating) her outlook on the world?

This short review of select literature indicates that

over the past sixty years scholars have concerned themselves with analyzing the role of formalized historical education. From pragmatists such as Dewey who advocated historical education as a means of social improvement to the post-structuralists in the vein of Foucault who sought to deconstruct the hidden agenda behind history teachers' blackboards, academics have peered into the history classroom on a regular basis (Blau, 1960; Dewey, 1916, 1-11; Biesta, 1998). But this line of inquiry opens the door to a new and perhaps larger question.

We must acknowledge that opportunities to obtain historical knowledge lay all about us. Overt examples can be found throughout our society: historical museums, monuments and markers, on public broadcasting and basic cable television, and in every bookstore and library. Opportunities to learn about history are popular with Americans and in the United States history is very big business.

At the time of this writing eight of the thirty-five books listed on the *New York Times Bestseller List* for hardcover non-fiction are overtly historical in subject matter, the most prevalent single topic. (*New York Times*, March 12, 2009). More than 4 million people visit Mount Rushmore each year (National Park Service, U.S. Department

of the Interior, Mount Rushmore n.d.). About 3.7 million people visit the Vietnam Veterans' Memorial, while a similar number make their way to the national Holocaust Museum (National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, Vietnam Veterans Memorial n.d.; United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, n.d.). The site studies for this dissertation, the Lincoln Memorial, receives over 6.5 million visitors per year (National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, Lincoln Memorial, n.d.) To place those numbers into context, there were approximately 5 million students enrolled in the Texas public school system, based on the most recent census data (Texas Education Agency, 2011).

What these numbers illustrate is that Americans' interest in history goes beyond their formal education. There are currently no books on the *Times* bestseller list dedicated to chemistry or geography and people do not relax after work with primetime programming on the Mathematics Channel. There is an avocational aspect to the discipline of history which allows people to gain personal edification and recreational enjoyment. So-called "history buffs" are a large enough segment of the market in the United States to make the historians' calling a business franchise.

Catering to this market is a class of professionals

known as "public historians." Though the practice of history began with the Classical Greek savant Herodotus, the formalized discipline of public history is a twentieth century phenomenon. Over the preceding three decades, public history has developed into a fully formed parallel discipline to more traditional academic history. Public historians work outside of academic settings, in government, in museums, archives, historic parks and tourist attractions, and private research or consultation firms. Public historians - as the name implies - direct their efforts towards service of the general public at large, primarily by seeking to educate the public about the artifacts, collections, or historic sites under their stewardship (Howe & Kemp, 1986).

The concept of public history has its origins in late nineteenth century America. Following the American Civil War historians began struggling with the notion of whether or not the United States possessed a unique culture all its own that transcended the derivative amalgamation of the many ethnic cultures of individual Americans. From this discourse, a movement was born to protect and celebrate the public spaces, artifacts, and documents that existed as the by-products from the forging of the young nation.

This movement finds its roots at the turn of the last

century in the work of Benjamin Shambaugh, a pioneer of what he referred to as "applied history." Shambaugh was a university-trained political scientist who chartered his career both as a professor and as the head of the State Historical Society of Iowa (Conrad, 2002). In that latter role, Shambaugh sought to apply professional standards to the practice of history outside of the academy. To that point in time, the work of historical societies was dominated almost exclusively by antiquarians and amateur historians. Shambaugh felt that the *professional* historian had a role to play in what had previously been the singular purview of the avocational (Conrad, 2002, p. 148).

Shambaugh was the first of an avant-garde of professional historians who came to dominate the practice of history - in its many guises - in the United States from World War I through the 1920's. The First World War stimulated interest in formalized military history, which culminated in epic projects on behalf of historians to document not only the Great War, but the American Civil War as well. Once historians were able to acquire employment conducting work formerly undertaken by amateurs, the discipline as a profession began to grow (Conrad, 2002, p. 149-151).

The coming of the Great Depression and the interwar

years brought a tremendous opportunity for historians throughout the United States. In 1933 President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 6166 which transferred the administration of all federal parks, monuments, historic forts, battlefields, and other historic sites to the newly created National Parks Service (NPS). The following year Robert D.W. Connor, a colleague of Shambaugh and founding member of the North Carolina Historical Commission, became the first Archivist of the United States, heading up the newly created National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) (Conrad, 2002, 148, 152). From this point forward, the federal government would provide a fertile and stable career path for professional historians, including the present author.

Popular interest in history began to grow within the United States during the Depression years as well. In 1929 Henry Ford, founder of Ford Motor Company, built a massive museum and park complex at Dearborn, Michigan dedicated to the history of American industry and invention. At the same time, John D. Rockefeller spent \$80 million to reconstruct colonial-era buildings in Williamsburg, Virginia creating an interpretive folkways amusement park. Both facilities remain popular national attractions to the present day (Conrad, 2002, p. 153). With the establishment

of these enterprises the *business* of American heritage tourism was born, providing yet another avenue for historians to practice their craft outside of academe.

The Great Depression also changed the direction of history itself, both in the public sector and the university campus alike. Historians turned their interests away from the "Great Men/Great Battles" model of history which focused almost exclusively on the role of elites and epic struggles in the evolution of history. A new interest in the role of the proletariat in historical events emerged as Americans suffering the woe of the Great Depression looked to their ancestors for inspiration (ibid.).

These changes culminated with the advent of the Second World War. FDR, cognizant of the scale and importance of the war, ordered the preservation of wartime records for use by later scholars. This initiative provided the groundwork for the archival retention of American government documents. Agencies and departments needed to be established to achieve this goal, expanding historians' role in public service.

Further, the years following the end of World War II saw a dramatic upswing in the construction of public monuments in the United States, many of which fell under the auspices of the National Park Service. These realms

emerged to commemorate a wide array of American triumphs and tragedies, dedicating public space to historical commemoration. For example, a majority of the monuments constructed on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. were built following the World War years (Conrad, 2002, p. 154-164). Americans sought to do more than simply study history - they began to crave *remembrance*.

With these developments, the symbology of Americana entered the prevailing public *zeitgeist*. A class of professionals was thus needed in order to manage and care for this newfound public trust. Agencies such as NARA, the NPS, and the Smithsonian Institution served as the "on-the-job" training ground for this incipient breed of professional (Howe & Kemp, 1986).

Following World War II, increasing numbers of college students sought degrees in history, while the job market for academic positions in this field remained static. Thus, a multitude of trained historians began working outside of the university in order to practice their trade. By the 1970's an ancillary class of professional had evolved practicing the profession of public history but isolated from their colleagues in academia.

As a result, these new professionals recognized the need for the addition of rigor and collaboration to their

emerging field. Under the leadership of Robert Kelley at the University of California at Santa Barbara a small group of historians throughout the United States began training their students for careers outside of the college campus.

Kelley himself coined the term "public history" at this time. In 1978, UCSB launched publication of the peer-reviewed journal *The Public Historian* as a professional outlet for this burgeoning field. In September 1979 the National Council on Public History (NCPH) was formed, providing public historians with a credible professional organization within which to engage in collegial fellowship and develop the practice of their craft (Conrad, 2002, p. 164-168).¹

In the present, defining the concept of public history makes for a lively debate among its practitioners. NCPH currently has no set definition for the term. In 2007, at the organization's annual conference, a draft definition was proposed by the NCPH board:

Public history is a movement, methodology, and approach that promotes the collaborative study and practice of history; its practitioners embrace a mission to make their special insights accessible and

¹ The National Council on Public History, in conjunction with the University of California Press, publishes *The Public Historian* today. Both institutions remain the premier outlet for public historians in the United States.

useful to the public (Stanton, 2007).

When faced with this proposed definition a portion of the NCPH's membership objected, stimulating a lively internet user group debate. Contrarian voices took umbrage with the notion that public history is in any way a movement or even a methodology. Rather, to their thinking, it is more of a collection of approaches that facilitates the use of historical practice in the service of the public. An alternate definition encapsulating this sentiment has also been proposed: public history is "where historians and their various publics collaborate in trying to make the past useful to the public" (Stanton, 2007).

At the time of this writing, the NCPH has yet to arrive at an agreed upon definition for the discipline which their members practice. This fact illustrates the evolutionary nature of public history as a theoretical paradigm. Shambaugh conceived of the practice of applied history and, nearly a century on that is precisely what has evolved.

Professionals, trained as historians are capable of applying their skills to a wide array of fields outside of academe. But this discipline has emerged during a period of unprecedented revision of how people think about their history, as has been previously discussed. A historian

arranging a collection of archival papers and a historian researching the construction of a new war memorial are seemingly united in only their shared goal of serving a public cause.

As public historians it is incumbent upon us to go further and deeper than this. We must ferret out the theoretical underpinnings of our practice and seek to formulate a model that begins the task of unifying our discipline. This is our undiscovered country - an understanding of precisely *how* the public learns through our collective practice.

The Historian as Teacher and the Public as Student

The relationship of the history professor to students and the history author to readers is preserved in the association between the public historian and the public. If the job of the historian at its core is to study, interpret, and tell the story of the past (with all of the aforementioned pitfalls implied), the same applies to the task of public historians as well. For instance, a curator working in a museum has the same task as a historian working as a part of a monument committee - to research their subject and interpret it within a public space.

Whereas the professor and/or author produce a written and spoken summary of their research the public historian

most often produces an *artifactual* exemplification of their results. These take on a wide array of formats, from public exhibits in museum galleries that are temporally ephemeral to carved marble monuments meant to rival the pyramids of Giza in durability. Regardless, all of these are the products of the same process that produces the textbook or classroom lecture.

Yet the public historians' work has the potential to be far more equivocal than a summation of results in a book or paper. In that respect, the work itself takes on the flavor of art. The public historian may have an intention when their work is created, but to what extent is that intention telegraphed to the public, who function as the historians' collective student body? And what is the precise mechanism by which that transference of information is achieved?

In probing the nature of this relationship between public historian and public, teacher and student we shed light on the theoretical processes that undergird public history as a discipline. That is the purpose of the following chapters - to establish the means by which the public historian utilizes the public space to transfer their select interpretation of historical knowledge. In achieving this end, we will explore a wide range of topics,

from the nature of history itself to the role of public space in our modern Western culture. Like Shakespeare's Prince Hamlet, we stand on the brink of an undiscovered country which puzzles the will, but with each step into this new land we shall achieve fresh understanding.

5. TRAVELS IN AN ANTIQUE LAND

I met a traveller from an antique land
Who said: Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert. Near them on the sand,
Half sunk, a shatter'd visage lies, whose frown
And wrinkled lip and sneer of cold command
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive, stamp'd on these lifeless things,
The hand that mock'd them and the heart that fed.
And on the pedestal these words appear:
"My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:
Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!"
Nothing beside remains: round the decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare,
The lone and level sands stretch far away.

- Percy Bysshe Shelley
Ozymandias (1818)

The statue's torso is taller than a man, some eight feet from chest to head. It was once a part of a pair, now it stands alone, cut off at the midriff. It is a beautiful wreck housed in a place of pride within the cavernous British Museum in London. The statue depicts the Nineteenth Dynasty Pharaoh Ramesses II, known, for good reason, as "Ramesses the Great."

Ramesses was a builder king, a man who spent his people's blood and treasure to glorify both his nation and himself, the two being inseparable in ancient Egypt. Ramesses ruled for sixty-seven years, living to an age, which at the time must have seemed an eternity. We know him today from the artifacts he left behind. His image is

one of the most prevalent to be passed down to us from the ancient world (Caygill, 1999, p. 264; personal observations, November 2008).

The iconography of the bust is atypical. The king wears a wry smile on his face and his eyes are cast down, instead of sternly forward, gazing pleasantly upon his subjects as they approach from below. He wears the customary *nemes* headdress and serpent crown, the symbols of a god-king's office (ibid.). (SEE ILLUSTRATION 3.) But his is not the face of a tyrant - it is not the look of a man who wishes to be feared. It is a handsome face, dancing with humor and confident contentment. It is the face of a lover.

It is, after all, good to be the king.

This hunk of granite, brilliantly carved into the likeness of one of history's great leaders, was the first piece of ancient Egyptian art to be widely recognized as a masterpiece among the European artistic cognoscenti of the nineteenth century. Its arrival in Britain in 1818 inspired the poet Percy Bysshe Shelley to pen his famous poem *Ozymandias*, which attributes the following line to the pharaoh: "My name is Ozymandias, king of kings: Look on

my works, ye Mighty, and despair!" (ibid.)¹.

The theme of Shelley's work is one of hubris and the impermanence of human endeavor. Yet Ramesses' story survives down the corridor of three millennia, as travelers in this modern land flock to his feet like his royal subjects of old. We know his work through his face and we know his face through his work. The god-king's super human efforts to preserve his own memory in stone have succeeded.

Today the most famous of Egyptian rulers is Tutankhamun, yet nothing was known of him until the discovery of his tomb in 1922. The memory of Ramesses seems eternal - even before we could read hieroglyphics we knew of his reign, for we knew his face. His colossus on display in the British Museum is the ideal case study of a historic artifact.

It has served many purposes: a monument to a living god, a paycheck for its artist, a reminder of power to the subjects under the rule of the Egyptian kings, an object of disdain to seventh century Islamic conquerors, a treasured prize to Napoleon's soldiers, a muse to the poet Shelley, a work of art to Victorian museum goers, a textbook to Egyptologists, and, finally, a tourist attraction to modern

¹The name Ozymandias is a Greek transliteration of Ramesses II's throne name: *User-maat-re Setep-en-re*.

Londoners. Ramesses' story is not yet at an end. His likeness, carved in stone, is priceless - it has a value beyond money. Considered a national treasure by the British Crown it is housed in a climate controlled facility, safe from the elements, protected even from Hitler's bombs during the Second World War. Through his image, Ramesses the Great's memory shall live on, even when the present manuscript (and all others, for that matter) has turned to dust.

Perhaps a new sentient species or an alien visitor, in a million years, will excavate the ruined, flooded city of London and find the stone. Ramesses will still be there, his eternal comforting smile, his downcast eyes, peering forever across the ages. And his story will begin again. He will be *remembered*, as these aliens look upon the works of humanity and despair.

Such displayed artifacts, occupying the public space, are a means of capturing a community memory of the past. The French historian Pierre Nora coined the term "memory place" to describe such artifacts and their encompassing role in the public sphere (Ho Tai, 2001). The primary function of the public historian is the stewardship of such memory places - acting as a bridge between the past and the concurrent public memory. In order to better understand

the concept of memory places and how they impact our modern culture, let us first review in some detail the development of the theory surrounding them and how the role of the public historian has evolved into its present form.

Public History, Memory Place, and Meaning

Public history is a discipline born largely out of practice. However, over recent years it has developed a theoretical basis in order to better engage and inform the members of the general public who interact with materials under the care of the public historian. In many respects, public history has evolved into a branch of education. As millions of people from all over the world visit important historical attractions, they come to learn about history not from the classroom, but from the historical artifacts themselves; the "primary source material." As such, public history has become more than simply stewardship, it is now a vibrant tool for learning (Howe & Kemp, 1986).

The work of public historians bridges a wide gap in community education. Scholars of the practice of lifelong learning, such as Field and Leicester, would recognize public history as fulfilling many converging educational roles in lifelong learning. Field and Leicester state: "Because 'lifelong learning' is used both normatively and widely, to include liberal, vocational and social aspects,

we would suggest that it goes beyond a blurring of boundaries to a recognition that these aspects of learning/education are, in practice, interrelated" (2000, p. xvii).

The work of public historians may be drawn upon throughout a person's educational experience, from children taking a school field trip to a local museum to senior citizens researching their genealogy at a county historical archive. Public history represents a complex interaction of learning strategies, combining both andragogy and self-directed learning with more formalized teaching. The learning experience is almost unique by the way it literally takes place through a kind of tactile, sensual interaction with the subject matter. This conclusion has led recent scholars to attempt to quantify how this relationship between the individual and historic artifacts occurs.

One of the more compelling ideas to emerge out of the study of public history, the concept of "memory place" (also called "site of memory") has developed into a fully formed sub-discipline in recent years. In 1981, the French historian Pierre Nora published his masterpiece, *Lieux de mémoire*, which framed the original concept of sites of memory. Nora argued that memory places are sites such as

battlefields, monuments, museums, and other such public "shrines" to history where people go to remember and learn about their national and cultural identity (Nora, 2001). Such places are not always particularly accurate in the way they present their story - myth and folklore are as much, if not more, a part of the way we "remember" history as is objective fact. Often, it is the myth we choose to believe and we discard the facts in favor of a remembered history that supports our national/cultural ideals (Ho Tai, 2001).

Memory places have always been a part of how a people maintain and celebrate their collective beliefs and identity. For instance, one can only marvel at the effort placed in constructing Stonehenge as a place where ancient peoples gathered to engage in mutual cultural affirmation. However, in modern, highly mobile societies such as Nora's France or the United States, a visitation to a memory place has become not only a mechanism for affirmation, but also for education and recreation.

In a world of increasing globalization, in which the distinctions between nation states blur (e.g. the European Union) such tools for maintaining cultural identity will doubtless become even more relevant. Elayne Harris has observed: "Global, national, and international spaces may be emphasized by globalization but these locales do not

provide the engaging and validating social relations based in the consciousness of local specifics. The satisfying sense of place and identity in a physical community or neighbourhood cannot be found in the electronic and virtual communities" (1996, p. 12).

Indeed, memory places offer a "globalized" society an opportunity to disconnect from a mass media world and reconnect with an authentic experience from another age as a means of reaffirming its unique cultural identity. There is ample evidence that even in a world of high technology "infotainment," citizens are choosing to spend their time and money investigating their cultural heritage.

When Tom Uhlenbrock of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* sat down to compile a list of the most visited tourist attractions in the United States he was surprised to find just where Americans were traveling to spend their tourist dollars. According to Uhlenbrock's list of top tourist attractions per state, out of the fifty states, thirty-three states ranked as their top attraction a site with some direct historical significance. It is clear that millions of travelers, from every spectrum of society, are choosing to spend their money and their recreation time in order to experience memory places first hand (Uhlenbroack, n.d.).

The impact of this phenomenon on the work of public historians is tremendous. Rather than being the dusty denizens of tiny, rarely visited facilities, public historians are at the head of a major "heritage tourism" industry. As such, they have a responsibility to approach their charges as true educators. A well-visited site or collection, such as the National Archives, the Statue of Liberty, or the Alamo, has the potential to serve as a teaching tool for literally millions of people. As Nora believes, the persons visiting these sites are not merely encountering them as "tourists," but as members of a shared human culture attempting to extract meaning from what they see, feel, and experience (Nora, 1989).

Although the work of public historians as managers of memory places has been a part of the profession since its emergence, it has only been in the wake of Nora's work that a true recognition of this role has appeared in scholarly literature. Public historians have become engaged in building conceptual, theoretical understandings of how the places they manage truly impact the audience that visits them. Though this literature is vibrant and evolving, it is worthwhile to track its history in order to better understand how the role of memory places has emerged in the mind of scholars.

In Theory

The study of "memory place" as a distinct concept of historical theory is a recent phenomenon growing out of the study of collective memory and its role in creating a community identity. As Klein points out, the study of collective memory is of very recent origin, dating only to the early part of the twentieth century. In 1925 Maurice Halbwachs, a student of Emile Durkheim, published *The Social Framework of Memory* as a critique of Henry Bergson and Sigmund Freud. Halbwachs argued that memory functioned purely as a social construction. While his ideas had an immediate impact in the field of psychoanalysis, it took several more decades for the concept to find its relevance to public history (Klein, 2000, p. 127).

In 1973 Hayden White, in his book *Metahistory*, proposed a radical notion that would allow the concept of public memory to transcend from the field of psychology into the realm of history. Although White's work did not directly deal with the concepts of collective memory and memory place, he revolutionized the field of history by deconstructing its linguistic foundations. In analyzing how the historical narrative is created, he concluded that history is a far more subjective discipline than earlier historians had dared to admit. Indeed, White concluded,

the culture, politics, biases, and ideology of the historian informs the historian's narrative at an almost subconscious level. The historian can never be a purely neutral, unbiased observer. As a result, what we "know" about history is really what we "interpret" from the historical resources that are left behind to us. These resources, themselves, are charged with politics, ideology, belief, and bias (White, 1973).

White's work dovetailed with that of the post-structuralist, Continental philosophers. In 1976, Foucault published his groundbreaking work *La Volenté de savoir* (*The History of Sexuality*), which steered the role of the historian in a bold direction. With this manuscript, Foucault rendered his ideas regarding the subjectivity of history into *praxis*:

Briefly, my aim is to examine the case of a society which has been loudly castigating itself for its hypocrisy for more than a century, which speaks verbosely of its own silence, takes great pains to relate in detail the things it does not say, denounces the powers it exercises, and promises to liberate itself from the very laws that have made it function. The question I would like to pose is not, Why are we repressed? but, rather, Why do we say, with so much

passion and so much resentment against our most recent past, against our present, and against ourselves, that we are repressed? (Foucault, 1990, p. 8-9).

Following the work of the post-structuralists, coupled with the writings of White, a new kind of historian emerged more radicalized and self-aware of her own role in the creation of the historical narrative. Gradually the focus began to shift from the "facts" of history to the "meaning" we draw from our collective story. As such, by the 1980's an intellectual climate had developed which was susceptible to the introduction of Pierre Nora's theories.

With the publication of *Lieux de mémoire*, public historians were suddenly granted a theoretical framework to synthesize their emerging ideas. Prior to the publication of this groundbreaking work, little of public history existed in the realm of theory and would more properly be described as a discipline founded upon "evidence-based" research (Dirkx, 2006). Key to Nora's understanding of memory places is the notion that history is explicitly *not* objective, but, rather an act of what can be called the "sacred" (Klein, 2000, p. 127).

Nora argues that memory places are physical manifestations of our history - places where human beings can go to interact with the past and draw out knowledge,

meaning, and understanding. Nora writes: "The *lieux de memoire* are primarily remains...museums, archives, cemeteries, festivals, anniversaries, treaties, depositions, monuments, sanctuaries, fraternal orders - these are the boundary stones of another age..." (1989, p. 12). In short, memory places are the closest human beings can come to experiencing the past directly for themselves.

In the wake of Nora's work, Klein has argued that the dual concepts of "history" and "memory" have become almost synonymous (Klein, 2000, p. 128). Where once history was believed to be purely objective, historians have grown to recognize their own role in the creation of the narrative. Further, they have come to recognize the explicit role of the politics of power in forging and creating the historical narrative within popular memory.

In 1983 Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger published *The Invention of Tradition*, a work that explored the methods by which political leaders had consciously manipulated public rituals, celebrations, and commemorations in such a way as to create a specific form of national identity. In short, they found that political leaders had simply fabricated traditions in order to bolster the power of the nation-state (Hutton, 2000, p. 537).

Social critics such as Paulo Freire have argued that

such overt actions are the means by which a dominant culture is able to institute a unifying hegemony. The sanctioning of certain rituals is a means of giving voice to a specific culture, while "silencing" that of another (Freire, 1998, p. 503). This discourse has become central in the debate over what role memory places and the historians who manage them play in society.

Jeffrey Olick argues that the concept of the nation-state is itself dependent upon the explicit creation of a certain form of popular memory. He writes: "Neither the nation nor memory is 'natural,' nor are their relations straightforward" (Olick, 1998, p. 386). The creation of a national identity through the wholesale manipulation of history proves the point of thinkers such as Halbwachs, White, and Nora - memory, itself, is *ahistorical*. Though human beings are isolated from their past temporally, history - as it exists in the popular memory, regardless of objective fact - is the defining point of a people's culture.

Jan Assman and John Czaplicka, analyzing the process by which memory serves to create and reinforce cultural identity, have identified the characteristics of cultural/historical memory. These authors argue that for historical memory to take hold, it is necessary for it to

be embodied in the physical space. Key to our understanding of memory place is Assman and Czaplicka's definition of "organization." They refer to "organization" as "a) the institutional buttressing of communication...and b) the specialization of the bearers of cultural memory." (Assman & Czaplicka, 1997, p. 131). Thus historical memory is made manifest by human beings assuming the role of "gatekeepers" of cultural memory. Those persons then fulfill their role through a sanctioned form of communication.

Memory places, therefore, serve the further purpose of giving face to what Assman and Czaplicka refer to as the "organizational" aspect of cultural memory. They serve as sanctioned, institutionalized gathering places, staffed with experts whose job it is to tell the story of the human narrative. Those "bearers of cultural memory" - the public historians - play a dual role. Not only are they the keepers of the sites which they manage, they are also the stewards of those sites' public narrative. They are the people whose task is to keep and interpret the "story" of a given memory place.

Understanding and accepting this function as a public historian, forces us to ask several questions. Are public historians purely tools of the sites which they guard? Are

they simply there to tell the "story" of such places, uncritically, simply because that story serves to reinforce a broader cultural narrative? Researchers such as David Thelen have struggled with the enormity of this problem. Indeed, for Thelen history and memory can serve as great tools for wielding power: "The struggle for possession and interpretation of memory is rooted in the conflict and interplay among social, political, and cultural interests and values in the present. The actors appeal for popular support by claiming the sanction of the past" (1989, p. 1127).

Thelen draws forth the ominous specter of George Orwell's Big Brother, the personification of political power in the dystopian novel *1984*. Big Brother and the forces of English Socialism control the lives of their subjects by controlling history. While Big Brother cannot change the past, his total control over all information allows his Party to control the way that history is *remembered* (Thelen, 1989). Thus, the discipline of public history - through the administration of memory places - runs the risk of becoming simply a tool for power and social control.

As scholars such as Frank Coffield have pointed out, any kind of institutionalized "education" runs the risk of

becoming a tool of prevailing authority in order to maintain control. Coffield argues that this means of control can extend well beyond primary education into the realm of lifelong learning. Public historians, like all educators, run the great risk of becoming not a means of achieving a true understanding, but a tool for indoctrination (Coffield, 1999).

Throughout the 1990's, as public historians, especially in the United States, acknowledged the notion that their discipline had a tremendous impact on the formation of the national mindset, an effort was made to transcend the boundary between the theoretical underpinnings of memory place and how that theory could be used in practice. The chief tool for this discourse was (and remains) the journal *The Public Historian*. Much like Nora's influence on the discipline in the early 1980's, the work of a single scholar, David Glassberg, served to revolutionize the way public historians approached the dual concepts of memory and memory place in their everyday work.

In Praxis

In 1996 David Glassberg published a paper of modest length in the journal *The Public Historian* entitled "Public History and the Study of Memory." This essay was conceived out of a desire to synthesize what at that time was a

firestorm of debate over the concept of "memory" and its impact on the practice of history. Glassberg, an expert on public history, attempted to orient this theoretical maelstrom into a collection of concepts that could be applied to the actual job of public history within an institutional setting. Glassberg sought to deconstruct the ongoing debate into a cluster of key concepts and articulate how they applied to the role of the public historian working as a steward of a memory place. So ground breaking was this initial project that within a year, an entire issue of *The Public Historian* was dedicated to an expansion of Glassberg's work (Glassberg, 1996).

Glassberg recognized that the work of the public historian is caught up in an ongoing dialogue between political culture, popular culture, and place consciousness. Memory places are a tangible representation of all three of these. Glassberg concluded that as sources of political culture, memory places serve the dual role of "telling the story" of a place and its role in the prevailing hegemony, but also as a source for linking people to one another by embodying the so-called "imagined community." Glassberg argued that this process is really more organic than monolithic - public historians, in creating educational programs, are often more informed by

their own knowledge or that of their immediate community than the policies of power brokers in places like Washington, D.C. While memory places certainly serve the role of representatives of "the establishment," they can and should be more than that.

Further, as a tool of popular culture, Glassberg recognized that the historical narrative is often far removed from an academic dialogue and has a life of its own in the popular mindset. For instance, the popular American icon of "Davy" Crockett is that created by nineteenth century fiction writers and the 1950's Walt Disney Company. This conceptualization is truly ahistorical and bears little resemblance to the real life of Congressman David Crockett. For Glassberg, this is a problem of grave concern - will public historians be tempted to shape the narrative of their institutions in order to attract more visitors? In times of uncertain financing, the temptation is great and growing. As much as the forces of political power, the narrative needs of popular culture also serve to influence the work of the public historian.

Finally, Glassberg argued that public history, itself, serves as a kind of place consciousness. In the same vein as Nora, Glassberg found that "places" are defined by their history. More than just imagined communities, for a

community to exist in the physical realm it is necessarily anchored to certain buildings, structures, and artifacts. Members of that community often seek to "preserve" the essence of a community by preserving their artifacts through heritage programs and conservation strategies. There is a feeling that if certain places cease to exist then the community itself is lost. In many communities, then, so-called "historic districts" are seen as the center of that community - the place from which that community's identity flows (Glassberg, 1996).

The impact of Glassberg's initial article and subsequent research and writing is manifold. He took a series of complex theoretical ideas and related them directly to the "business" of public history using the language not of philosophy or psychology, but of the practicing historian. As a result, since Glassberg's initial writing, a plethora of scholars have attempted to revolutionize their own branch of practice in light Glassberg's theories and their relationship to the practice of good public history.

Of the scholarship that has followed in the wake of Glassberg's initial musings, that which relates to the practice of public history in the context of the museum is some of the most compelling. Museums are complex

institutions which not only care for and catalog often highly divergent collections of artifacts, they are also the keepers of a select historical narrative. Museums tell a story which is drawn, as Glassberg suggests, from a complex interaction of academic knowledge, political maneuvering, popular culture, and place consciousness. Museums are also in the "business" of attracting visitors and have dual loyalties both to the objective "facts" of history and to the prevailing mindset of the people who seek to visit it.

In critiquing Glassberg's work, Barbara Franco, herself a museologist, argues that persons who encounter a museum's collection do so not through an objective, academic lens, but through that collection's relationship to them as individuals. In short, museum visitors ask themselves the question: "what do these artifacts tell me about myself?" Therefore, abstract, complex ideas are most successfully presented to visitors when done so through the perspective of an individual. Franco argues that this is simply the way people learn history - they relate their personal story to that of the world around them (Franco, 1997).

To go further, Jo Blatti argues that because of this peculiar interaction between individuals and their

institutionalized history, those persons responsible for preserving the narrative of history risk doing a spectacularly bad job of portraying their message. Blatti recalls an episode in her career in which she played a role in planning a forum celebrating the work of nineteenth century African American women writers. The forum ended with a collection of songs and dances which were supposed to highlight African American culture. However, members of the audience were horribly offended by the way in which the musical performances were presented, seeing them as mocking the culture they were meant to celebrate (Blatti, 1997).

This, Blatti argues, is the great danger of public history when it goes awry. Individuals are not empty reservoirs whose knowledge basin is filled up when they enter a museum or other historic site. Rather, they enter such places with many preconceived notions and their own internal understanding of events. Memory places serve to both reinforce these preconceived notions and challenge them.

In 2002, American Studies scholar Richard Flores explored the notion of how this debate has taken form in practice. His book, *Remembering the Alamo: Memory, Modernity, and the Master Symbol* serves as an example of how a historical icon - in this case the Alamo - serves as

a tangible representative of a people's collective culture. However, Flores argues that the narrative presented by the Alamo and the heritage organization that operates it is deeply flawed. Flores, as a young child of Mexican heritage visiting the Alamo, found that his Anglo childhood playmates were taught, through their visit to the shrine, to view Mexicans as "the enemy," even though the Texas Revolution had ended more than a century before. As such, the Alamo's prevailing narrative did not represent a modern, multi-ethnic Texas (Flores, 2002).

As we have explored, memory places are politically charged and can often propagate myths and stories that are hurtful to a segment of society. The curators of such places, as argued by Blatti (1997), have a tremendous responsibility to put events into the context of the present day. Public historians cannot escape their responsibilities as educators and that role often requires them to be critical of the narrative over which they have stewardship.

From Here

Over the past three decades, our understanding of the impact of the theories related to so called memory places have had a tremendous impact on the study of public history. This avenue of scholarship has helped public

historians not only develop a theoretical framework for their work it has also helped them understand their role as educators in a broader context. As such, the field of history in both academia and the public sector is rapidly changing. From a focus on an attempt to tell the objective narrative of history to the more subjective practice of helping individuals extract meaning from their cultural identity, the very consciousness of the historian has shifted in the wake of this profound body of work.

Curators of memory places are coming to recognize not only their role as managers of collections and/or sites, but also as participants in a public conversation. Memory places tell a story. That story, as much as the collection or site itself, is the "product" of the memory place. Caretakers of memory places must come to recognize the impact of the stories they are imparting. They can no longer remain the passive "vendors" of what was formerly thought to be an objective truth. We now know that the historical narrative is far more complex - power, politics, race, gender, and even money play a role in the way history is written and retold.

How we "remember" history, it must be understood, is not always the way historical events played out. As a simple example, we like to believe that George Washington

"could not tell a lie," that his dentures were made of wood, and that he was powerful enough to throw a silver dollar across the Potomac River. These tales are not true, but their presence in our popular memory informs us about the "cult" of our Founding Father that is important to us as a people. In fact, it could be argued that these myths of folklore have become *more important* to us than reality.

What is the role of the historian-as-educator in all of this? To tell the "Truth" or perpetrate the "myth?" Or is there a third path somewhere in the middle? The theoretical understanding of memory places allows some insight into how to proceed. We have come to recognize the pitfalls of the discipline of public history - we can too easily become the tool of hegemony. As Flores has shown through his study of the narrative presented at the Alamo, memory places often support the dominant culture while denying a voice to what Freire calls the "culture of silence" (Freire, 1998).²

Perhaps the most important role we as public historians can play is that of critical theorist. In short, it might be wise for us to maintain some distance from our subject. Objectivity should still be the goal,

² As a point of fact, in order to address this criticism, the Alamo hired an academically trained historian whose job it is to expand the story told at that particular memory place.

but objectivity informed by our own positionality in relation to the subjects we study and the sites we manage. We can function as both advocates for our memory places, but also as scholars who think critically about those sites' relationship to the broader historical narrative.

The challenges faced by public historians managing memory places have become more readily understandable in the light of recent scholarship, however, there remains far more work to be done. A greater synthesis of the theoretical underpinnings of history, psychology, and education needs to be achieved. This can only be successful if historians are willing to expand their primary field of study and embrace other disciplines. They must recognize that they are more than just the authors of a narrative, but the tellers of a story and the teachers of a broader populace. Such recognition is key to maintaining the relevance of our discipline, less we yield the management of memory places wholly to the representatives of the hegemony found in government and industry.

In addition, there remains a lack of scholarship which relates theory to practice. While Glassberg has started this project, the discussion still remains largely abstract. What is desperately needed in the field is memory place management heuristics.

In future chapters we shall explore what are the public's expectations of a memory place when they visit and what knowledge they take away from that experience. In so doing, we will attempt to better understand the relationship between the site visitor and the story being told. We will build a model of interactivity between the public historian, their site, and their audience.

The work of public historians is presently at a crossroads. The theoretical implications of memory place have helped us to achieve a greater understanding of the work we do, but it has also brought new challenges. The way we approach these challenges will determine the future of our discipline. Do we embrace our new role as arbiters of a cultural conversation or do we retreat behind the walls of faux objectivity? These and other questions must be asked. However, in the asking, we continue to expand the conversation and enhance the relevance of the work we are doing.

From here, we must begin an exploration of history, itself, as a cultural *object*. "History," as a word, has thus far been bandied about throughout this manuscript. Now we must seek to understand what that word *means* and how it is encapsulated within the notion of memory place.

6. HISTORYLAND

I don't want the public to see the world they live in while they're in the Park [Disneyland]. I want them to feel they're in another world.

- Walt Disney on Disneyland
(c. 1955)

My feet hurt and I am sweating profusely. The Florida sun in June bakes our little family as we suck on greasy chili dogs in front of The American Adventure pavilion. I wanted to try the sushi at the restaurant in the Japan pavilion, but my father will not eat "baitfish." I resolve to separate from my family later and go there myself to spend some of my pocket money.

This is our second day at Disney World in Orlando, Florida. My mother, father, sister, and I are in Epcot Center - a so-called "world of the future." Pavilions relating to some of the world's major countries are laid out around a central structure in the shape of a geodesic sphere called "Spaceship Earth." By lunch time we have explored approximately half the countries' pavilions. It is 1987 and I am thirteen years old. Ronald Reagan is president and the end of the Cold War is still four years off. There is no Russia pavilion.

My sister is getting bored with the educational aspects of Epcot Center and wants to ride more amusement

park-style rides. I am bored with the whole experience and wish we were back on Santa Rosa Island where I could run barefoot over the white sands and climb through the ruins of Fort Pickens, where the Apache chief Geronimo was once held prisoner. My parents - "Baby Boomers" reared on a steady diet of "The Mickey Mouse Club," "Zorro," and Davy Crockett movies - are having a wonderful time. They have dreamed of scraping together enough money to make a pilgrimage to a Disney theme park since Disneyland opened its doors in 1955. The fact that their children hate the place does not dull their excitement.

As a precocious newly-minted teenager I could not fully comprehend the purpose of Disney World. The rides were entertaining but nothing special - the Texas State Fair would be around in the fall and its rides were even better. Plus the famous amusement park "Six Flags Over Texas" was a thirty minute drive from our house. Epcot Center made no sense to me. Why had we driven more than a thousand miles and spent a year of savings to see a place made to look like bits and pieces of foreign countries? Surely, I reasoned, for the money we had spent we could catch a pond hopper and spend a week in the real Britain, France, or Germany?

But that is the whole *point* of the Disney experience.

You can visit one park at one fixed price and taste a bit of the culture of the entire world. Things are sanitized - the Mexico pavilion presents a nation of spicy (but not too spicy) *frijoles* and precisely made tortillas served hot within the romantic setting of volcanoes, pyramids, and lovely Mayan waitresses. Everything is cleansed to perfection - no poverty, no threat of kidnapping, no *Zapatistas*, and the water is pure. Every country presented at Epcot Center is much the same and Russia and the old Eastern Bloc have been conveniently removed to gently reinforce an Amerocentric view of the globe.

Disneyland and Walt Disney World are *simulacra* of authentic experiences. They are stand-ins; exquisitely perfected copies of the real thing, as if the ideal of the Platonic form had been manufactured and marketed. One can dine on fish and chips in a simulated English pub without having to worry about the television blaring the "footy" or lads full of too much Carling Lager getting into a shoving match. It is a safe, comfortable, and easily digestible experience. (SEE ILLUSTRATIONS 4 & 5.)

Scholars have come to dub these realms of simulacra "hyperrealities." That is, they are not merely a copy or an imitation, but something *more*. They are a *bona fide* attempt to not only recreate an actual experience but to

perfect it.

The cultural theorist Jean Baudrillard, awed by his own visit to Disneyland, connected the Disney experience with hyperreality in his groundbreaking work *Simulacra and Simulation*:

Disneyland: a space of the regeneration of the imaginary as waste-treatment plants are elsewhere, and even here. Everywhere today one must recycle waste, and the dreams, the phantasms, the historical, fairylike, legendary imaginary of children are a waste product, the first great toxic excrement of a hyperreal civilization. On a mental level, Disneyland is the prototype of this new function. (1991, p. 13)

Hyperrealms can be found all around us. As I type these words on my laptop, I have an open internet browser window directed to my Facebook page.³ Using this commonplace application I can talk to a wide array of friends and colleagues from around the world. Only a few minutes ago I told a joke to a friend in Britain and I exchanged a photograph with another friend in Estonia. I have been able to connect with people, on an intimate basis, using our shared hyperrealm of the World Wide Web.

³ Facebook is a free access social networking internet site. It was launched in 2004 and is currently operated by Facebook, Inc.

The Web is, perhaps, the most obvious example of a hyperrealm. The personal computer since the early 1980's, has provided an immersive experience to users, from the simplest of word-based computer games, to the virtual realities of games such as World of Warcraft which allow users to build an entire new, real-time existence alongside the everyday. So immersive are games like Second Life that players actually experience "virtual marriages" separate from their true life romantic relationships.

The World Wide Web is a hyperrealm in the extreme and, today, we are all travelers in it. While for some, it may be tempting to substitute this inanimate universe for the physical one around us, only the deluded could seriously confuse it for the real thing. The same applies to Walt Disney World. While one might *prefer* a trip to Epcot Center as a means of experiencing the taste of enchiladas or fish and chips to actually traveling in a foreign land, no one could seriously confuse these simulacra with the original. Not so with all hyperrealities.

Into the Imagined Realm of History

Every American knows something of United States history. By the time one has reached high school, they have been presented with a basic (if overly simplistic) outline of our national story. Who discovered America?

Christopher Columbus. Who were the first settlers? The Pilgrims. Who was the first President? George Washington.

Wrong. Wrong. And wrong.

The Americas were "discovered" by human beings wandering from the steppes of Europe and Asia at least 15,000 years before the present day. Prior to Columbus "sailing the ocean blue" the Vikings had already discovered North America in the ninth century A.D. and founded a colony. The Pilgrims were late comers to the continent. Aside from Amerindians and the Vikings, the Spanish had already been colonizing the Americas for a century prior to the arrival of the British. As for George Washington, he took office as President of the United States in 1789, while the Second Continental Congress was formed in 1775, with independence declared the following year. It is, in fact, John Hancock, President of the Congress, who deserves the honor of being denoted the first leader of the "Free World" (Loewen, 1995).

One could argue that these "corrections" (which some conservative historians refer to derisively as "revisionism") are little more than hairsplitting. After all, it is Washington who is on the dollar bill, not Hancock. It is the Pilgrims whom we *remember*, not some anonymous Paleoindian family stumbling their way across icy

Beringia on the trail of migrating mastodon. And though the Spanish once ruled half of North America (and most of the world) they do not anymore.

American history has a mythical story that we, as Americans, are in love with. Despite the Herculean efforts of best-selling historians such as James W. Loewen who, with his book *Lies My Teacher Told Me: Everything Your American History Teacher Got Wrong* (1995) attempted to correct the historical record in the popular mindset, Americans still get the facts spectacularly wrong. Daniel J. Cohen and Roy Rosenzweig, in a survey of historical literacy on the internet conducted in 2005, found that posters' basic knowledge of historical facts was quite poor. Yet, Web pages continued to proffer such information as if it were factual.

The authors speculated that as more scholarly publications and libraries of historical materials begin to become available on the internet for free, accuracy will improve. Nevertheless, historical literacy seems to remain low. In the 1990's Loewen, himself, documented a similar lack of basic knowledge among his college students, inspiring him to write *Lies My Teacher Told Me* (1995, p. 12-17).

An inaccuracy of historical understanding is not

simply a factual error similar to a mistaken understanding of Pythagorean Theorem, for instance. The person who attempts to arrive at the hypotenuse of a triangle by *cubing* the legs of that triangle instead of *squaring* will simply have a factually wrong solution. Any additional calculations processed from that error will be unequivocally wrong.

But a mistaken understanding of history is far more problematic. As has been earlier stated, historical knowledge forms a foundation of our understanding of our culture. The person who believes that Columbus truly did "discover America" has no concept of our nation's broader story. As such, they might be tempted to downplay the importance of other peoples in the creation of our national identity. From such thinking emerges an Anglocentric understanding of America that is simply false.

In terms of the way we think about history in the West we are all the children of Descartes. Arguably more than any other thinker of the last thousand years, Descartes' ideas have shaped the worldview of the common person. This philosopher gave a "proof" of a dualistic relationship between the mind and the body in his 1637 treatise *Discourse on the Method* (Descartes, 1960). The Cartesian paradigm argues that the human being is a kind of ghost in

the machine, an eternal consciousness occupying a frail human shell.

More modern thinkers have dismissed the Cartesian model, arguing for a biomechanical model of the human being. The mind and body are one - a stiff drink of Bourbon changes our brain's chemistry and therefore changes our behavior (Pinker, 1997). Somehow, this simple experiment alluded or confounded Descartes' way of thinking.

Nevertheless, most people still peer out of their skulls through Cartesian eyes. We see our minds as separate from our bodies. The Cartesian worldview infects our language: "*I* moved my hand." Who is this "*I*?" This sentence, simple as it seems, would be confusing without Descartes' way of thinking. Such a statement implies that the pronoun "*I*" and the noun "hand" are separate entities. They are not. But the conception of the self is a useful story that we must have in order to operate; it is the software that drives the human machine.

Our concept of the passage of time has also been influenced by Cartesian Dualism. Time, as understood by physicists, is nothing like that "fourth dimension" we measure with our inaccurate wrist watches, cell phones, and laptops. If one has a meeting on campus at 9:30 a.m. and

one is stuck in traffic, distance and the steady passage of time will prevent the meeting from taking place.

But in the sublime corners of the universe, such things are of little concern. Two particles linked by quantum entanglement can mirror one another's actions instantaneously, regardless of the distances between them. This phenomenon so alarmed the great Albert Einstein that he dubbed it *spukhafte Fernwirkung* - "spooky action at a distance" (Bengtsson and Zyczkowski, 2006).

Entangled neutral kaons care nothing for our meetings, our deadlines, our clocks, and our chronometers. They will happily mirror one another's rotation instantaneously, even if one particle is in Geneva and the other is on the surface of a planet orbiting Epsilon Eridani, some 10.5 light years distant. Not even Einstein's brain could easily deconstruct such a paradox. We human beings are trapped in time - incarcerated in the fourth dimension. We are complex systems, not sub-atomic particles, thus we cannot experience time without a means to measure it.

For us, our conception of history is a function of the means by which we are *forced* to measure time. In the same way that Cartesian Dualism segregates the mind from the body, our Newtonian-Einsteinian conception of time causes us to wall off the past from the present. If our bodies

functioned as quantum objects our minds would have evolved very different strategies for understanding our world.

To us, the past is a wall and the future is a veil. But what if there was a "virus" within the "software" of our minds that made this convenient conception impossible? The psychiatrist V.S. Ramachandran (1998) documented just such a patient. His patient, known as H.M., had corrective surgery for epilepsy which caused permanent brain damage. H.M. could not form *any* new memories beyond those prior to the surgery. For H.M. the past is no longer a tangible object filed away in the software of memory. H.M.'s hard drive is damaged. H.M. can learn nothing new, can forge no new relationships, and can no longer measure the passage of time. H.M. has become the human equivalent of an entangled neutral kaon: time is now meaningless. There is no signpost of memory by which to measure it.

Works of fiction such as *The Time Machine* or *Star Trek*, or *Doctor Who* create in our minds a notion of the past as a tangible realm. The past is understood to be "out there." It can be visited; it can be changed.

The reason why this type of science fiction resonates with us is because we all have a shared, collective knowledge of the past. We can conceive, in our mind's eye, of what George Washington or Abraham Lincoln looked like

and sounded like. So, for Captain Kirk to slingshot around the sun and find himself dining with the sixteenth president is no great leap of fictional faith. We *know* Lincoln in the same way that we *know* Kirk - through the power of story.

Thus, for all of us, history is an *imagined realm*. It is a hyperreality. The past exists only in our minds, even the past of my breakfast this morning. Though the calories which I ingested are currently fueling my fingers, I can only experience my bowl of cereal in the realm of memory. And, as the case of H.M. illustrates, memory can be fickle.

Psychologists have documented the phenomenon of false memory implantation, in which people begin to believe that imagined experiences are real. They *seem* real. Victims will accuse their innocent parents of childhood abuse and suffer real trauma as if those experiences had taken place (Matlin, 1998, p. 165-168).

So, for people to create in their minds a concrete view of a past they experienced only through narrative expression is not too far of a stretch. Our history is given to us as cultural knowledge - as "Truth." With enough reinforcement, we come to believe that "Columbus discovered America" as certainly as we believe that three times three equals nine. But these are *not* the same types

of knowledge. Mathematics is objective; history is subjective - the real versus the *hyperreal*.

History as Hyperreality

The concept of hyperreality has a long philosophical heritage, with its earliest origins in the nineteenth century works of Friedrich Nietzsche and Ferdinand de Saussure. Our modern understanding of the hyperreal, however, descends from the deconstructionist tradition articulated by Jacques Derrida (Derrida, 1998). Viewing the modern world through the theoretical lens of hyperreality, arguably, is the ultimate deconstructivist activity. We are able to catch a glimpse of our constructed realities - the culture of artifice we put in place to remake the world into a desired image.

Numerous thinkers have taken up the philosophical mantle of hyperreality. Chief among these is Baudrillard, who over a period of thirty years wrote a litany of books and essays which deconstructed a wide range of Western cultural ideas and institutions, from, as has been shown, the Walt Disney Company to the Gulf War. Baudrillard's work is tremendously influential for it is he that codified the *lingua franca* of hyperreality. However, it is the scholarship of the philosopher and semiologist Umberto Eco, who built upon Baudrillard's foundation that has the

greatest impact upon the present study.

Eco, in a way that few others have managed to do, applied the concept of hyperreality to the objects and institutions that we might normally consider mundane - an amusement park, a casino, what we see on television. In the early 1970's, the Italian-born Eco traveled the United States in order to "read" our country as a semiotic text. What he found was a nation and a people recreating reality around them in wholesale fashion.

Eco documented his trip in a series of essays later compiled into a book under the English title: *Travels in Hyperreality*, first published in 1973. With this work, Eco anticipated the rise of a new global cultural paradigm - the world of the hyperreal. Eco was especially interested in places such as the city of Las Vegas. Las Vegas is a paradise of water, lights, food, and sensual pleasure erected in a desert in an ecosystem where a megalopolis would otherwise be untenable. Its reliance on Nevada's gambling laws coupled with the desires of its customers, have created an artificial tourist Mecca, which subsists entirely on external life support (Eco, 1986).

Likewise, Walt Disney World is an artificial environment specifically designed to allow its visitors to experience foreign cities, monuments, and cultures without

having to actually visit those places (Eco, 1986). With *Travels in Hyperreality*, Eco predicted an emerging American cultural paradigm, arguing that we run the risk of confusing, on a massive scale, our collective preference for hyperreality with the factual world that lies beyond it.

With the publication of *Hyperreality and Global Culture* in 1998, Nick Perry largely confirmed the rise of Eco's predicted realm. Perry argued that the emergence of a fully-fledged consumer culture allowed for the "purchase" of desired reality. When reality is reduced to the base level of the market, image truly does become real, opening the door to the "selling" of a wide range of "products" from new cars to political ideology. The power of the purchase allows us to make ourselves into what we want to be (Perry, 1998). In so doing, we subject ourselves to the power and control of the hegemonic forces that create our universe of simulacra.

Constructed identity is very much a part of the modern American *zeitgeist*. Loewen (1995), as indicated, asserts that many of the foundational assumptions of American society are based on myth rather than historical fact. These myths are formalized and taught as reality within the classroom and believed as truth by hundreds of millions of

Americans.

Loewen's work is echoed more recently by that of Richard T. Hughes with his historical study *Myths America Lives By* (2003). He takes Loewen's thesis a degree further, arguing that the presence of this false history is not accidental, but consciously constructed. The forces of cultural hegemony seek to create history in the present tense. Hughes deconstructs these various myths and explains why they are important to our collective story.

The work of such researchers, exploring the hyperreality of history, teaches us that the construction of collective identity is an important tool of power. This realization caused the historian John Bodnar to write:

Fashioned from political debates and cultural exchanges, public memory was part of American political culture. It changed as the structure of social and political power changed, and its diversity and its symbolic expression were rooted in the material reality of the dominant political forces and organizations of the times. (1992, p. 246)

Bodnar examined how the mythical history of America is transmitted via the public space - museums and monuments. We come to learn that *informal* education gleaned from a tourist's visit to a historical museum or a Civil War

battlefield leaves a powerful impression on the individual due to the sensual nature of the experience. The visitor is encountering more than a dusty textbook or the rattling wheeze of an oft-repeated lecture, but the actual remnants of our shared past. Thus the learning experience is inherent because it is so visceral.

Tracy C. Davis (1995) bridged the gap between the work of Eco and that of Bodnar, arguing that, indeed, museums (and we can reasonably include historic sites) are hyperreal objects. Davis describes the emergence of the "postmodern museum," created along the same continuum as Walt Disney World. Such places are designed to do more than simply "conserve and display" artifacts, but to direct the visitor toward a specific ideology expressed through the museum's educational strategy (Davis, 1995, p. 16).

In all fairness, however, such museums and historic sites did not emerge fully formed in the "postmodern" world, although their power as teaching tools and extensions of hegemony are only now being understood. Rather, such places are engineered hyperrealities. In the same way that Menmaatre Seti I built the great temple at Abydos some 3,000 years ago as a monument to his reign, today we erect monuments to American courage in World War II or to those who died on September 11, 2001. We also

collect important historic treasures in great storehouses - museums - carrying on a tradition begun by King Ptolemy I at Alexandria in 280 BCE. Like our forebears who sought to memorialize themselves and their greatness in monuments and museums, our modern edifices also contain a message. They speak for us collectively as a culture and they serve as a powerful tool for advancing our cultural identity (Genoways and Andrei, 2008).

Unification: Hyper-history and Memory Place

The unification of the ideas of hyperreality and memory place allow us to form a more complete understanding of how public spaces transmit historical information. Public historical sites and museums are themselves hyperreal objects. When the Smithsonian Institution recreates an Amerindian campsite in display form, even when using original artifacts, they have created a hyperreal representation of that phenomenon. It is not a copy of an original; it is an amalgamation - a representation of a possible occurrence recreated in ideal form.

Thirty years ago, museologists crafted models of velociraptor dinosaurs as giant, green, scaly skinned lizards. Today those museologists must recreate the same dinosaur, but covered head-to-toe in feathers. As a child growing up watching *The Flintstones*, *Land of the Lost*, and

movies like *Jurassic Park* I have in my mind an idea of dinosaurs as giant, green lizards. Even with academic training in paleontology, I still find it hard to envision these creatures coated in downy feathers! The hyperreal creations with which I have been indoctrinated refuse to die.

By controlling the telling of history - even through its iconography - one can control our *understanding* of history. In the end, it does not matter *what actually happened*. People's understanding of the past, and the actions they take based on that understanding, is shaped by the information they are given. Thus statues of George Washington present him as a stern faced, serious eyed "Father" figure with the body of a Greek hero in dignified poses, not riding on a pony with a whisky jug in one hand and a half naked slave girl clasped in the other. Both scenarios fit the character of the actual Washington, but only the former fits with our cherished national story.

Pierre Nora, in formulating his theory of memory place, was keenly aware of the power of iconography in the telling of history. Let us take as an example one of the master symbols of Nora's own France: the *Arc de Triomphe*. The Arc stands at the Place Charles de Gaulle at the terminus of the epic avenue Champs-Élysées, where the

corners of the 8th, 16th, and 17th Arrondissement meet. The Arc forms the crux of the Parisian *Axe historique*. Only the *Tour Eiffel* serves as a more iconographic symbol of France than the Arc. (SEE ILLUSTRATION 6.)

The Arc was originally conceived as a means of memorializing those killed in the Napoleonic Wars. Napoleon Bonaparte, himself, promised his men "you shall go home beneath triumphal arches." Thus the French "Arch of Triumph" was commissioned in 1806. Since that time, like Paris itself, it has become a "moveable feast" of French history (Nora, 2001).

The Arc has evolved into a national memorial to all French wars. Napoleon's body was carried beneath it in 1840 and German troops rode between it when they conquered France during World War II. This author's own grandfather marched past it on Liberation Day on August 25, 1944. And this author attended a victory rally there following the American presidential election of 2008.

Nora points out that French Kings, Emperors, and Presidents, like Menmaartre Seti I before them, memorialized their rule through symbols designed to broadcast their grandeur forever. Such symbols exist regardless of their root in historical reality. Thus we come to understand history as a dichotomy: the "facts" of

historical events and the way in which we "remember" them (Nora, 2001).

It must be illustrated that there need not be agreement between historical reality and its interpretation through popular memory. Further, one cannot discount the hyperreality of history simply because it is "wrong." No more stark example exists than the collective German misreading of history that led many of the populace to believe in their descent from a mythical Aryan super race. People will act on their understanding of history because historical "memory" informs collective culture.

In his 1999 follow-up to *Lies My Teacher Told Me*, Loewen chronicled the misinformation of history that is broadcast through American historical sites. His work *Lies Across America: What Our Historic Sites Get Wrong* (2000), is an exhaustive chronicle of historical misrepresentations and outright factual errors broadcast at our nation's heritage tourism venues. From antebellum plantation homes that omit references to slavery to monuments that celebrate scoundrels as heroes, Loewen found hundreds of examples of public history sites - knowingly or unknowingly - misrepresenting facts and telling falsehoods.

Loewen discovered that this practice is especially common at sites where painful or controversial events took

place. For instance, Helen Keller's birthplace Ivy Green in Tuscumbia, Alabama tells very little about Keller's actual life. While the story of her triumph over disability is celebrated, all references to her political life are omitted. Keller was a lifelong socialist, member of the International Workers of the World, an ardent supporter of the civil rights movement, and in every way a force for leftwing politics. All of this history - defining characteristics of the woman's life - is omitted from the displays at Ivy Green. To add insult to injury, Keller herself flew the red flag of socialism in her home office, whereas Ivy Green flies a Confederate flag in its place near her bust (Loewen, 2000, p. 243-245).

The corrupt Louisiana political boss Leander Perez and the murdering Conquistador Juan de Oñate are remembered with hagiographic monuments that gloss over their documented crimes, while the inconvenient truths of Helen Keller's life are left out in the hopes of being forgotten (Loewen, 2000). Public history, when done in this fashion, builds and services a myth - it creates a perfected hyperreal history that bears no resemblance to the actual facts of the past. Thus Nora's notion of memory places as arbiters of our collective story is especially poignant. In changing history, our reality can be manipulated.

Nora's great contribution lies in articulating the theoretical notion of historical memory as tied to physical place. We now have a scholarly framework with which to understand the intellectual paradigm that led to the creation of Abydos, the *Arc de Triomphe*, and Helen Keller's birthplace museum. These are not monuments to history as *it happened*, but to the history which we wish to remember.

Nora's work has led an emergent generation of researchers to apply the concept of memory place to a world of created historical hyperreality. Following the initial publication of Nora's landmark text in 1984, the public historian David Glassberg adapted his work to the history of the United States and, specifically, to American historic sites and museums. In a paradigm-shifting article published as a follow up to his original piece, Glassberg argued that American historic sites and museums, in particular, are tools for expressing a desired view of history with little attention paid to accuracy and objectivity (Glassberg, 1997).

Glassberg noted that for more than a century American historians have held a great disdain for the study of myth, giving little or no credence to its veracity. Yet during all that time, historians have found themselves left out of the national cultural conversation as Americans choose to

cling to their cherished cultural hyperreality, ignoring the cries of those demanding historical accuracy. Put simply, historical myth is made real when people take action based upon it (Glassberg, 1997).

Over the past decade, the unification of the compatible ideas of the hyperreality of history and memory place have led a number of scholars to deconstruct the edifices of historical memory in an attempt to plumb the depths of their meaning and tease out the power structure that lies behind them. A wide range of historic sites have been opened to study. For example, in 2002 Charlene Mires chronicled Independence Hall in Philadelphia's changing role in shaping and describing the American psyche. She concluded that Independence Hall functions as a kind of master symbol of the American world view, reifying and confirming our most cherished mythos.

Likewise, Richard R. Flores applied this same technique to the Alamo, long identified as the very essence of Texan identity. In the case of the Alamo, little is known about the true facts of the battle that took place in 1836. For the Texans, ironically, the battle was a defeat at the time. Yet the cultural iconography of the place, and the Texans' phoenix-like rise from defeat to victory, has served as a powerful tool for shaping the modern Anglo-

Texan identity, often at the expense of their Hispanic neighbors (Flores, 2002).

We find that memorializing history is as much about conveying a message to the present generation as it is about recognizing the grandeur of those who came before. A case in point is Thomas J. Brown's study of the public art of Civil War commemoration. We discover the children and grandchildren of Confederate soldiers erecting monuments to their ancestors at the height of the Jim Crow era. Such memorials were designed not only as a remembrance of the South's "lost cause," but also as a tool for reinforcing white hegemony in a racially segregated social landscape (Brown, 2004).

Lest one have cause to think this is purely an American (or Western) phenomenon, the work of scholars such as Yaron Z. Eliav (2005) who applied the concept of memory place to the Temple Mount at Jerusalem illustrates the universality of the power of historic memory. The Temple Mount is, arguably, the most contentious public master symbol in the world. Ownership and control of the Temple Mount plays a role on the international political scene. Numerous cultures draw their collective identity from events that happened - or allegedly happened - at the Mount. The lesson of Eliav's work is that the power of

historic sites, and the ties to cultural identity that they evoke, cannot be underestimated. Right or wrong, human beings will open their veins to defend a cherished notion of identity.

The role of memory place and the means by which it contributes to collective identity remains at the forefront of historical debate at the present. The continued evaluation of historic sites and museums has created a body of data from which theoretical generalizations can be drawn. In 2001, Glassberg expanded the ideas presented in his earlier articles into a book-length treatment designed to create a better understanding of how Americans draw their identity from a wide range of public media - from historic sites to film.

In 2006, Laurajane Smith took this exploration a step further and sought to find how our history and heritage are consciously *used* to shape identity, culture, and politics. Smith pulled back the curtain on the formalized public display to reveal the structural relationships and the power plays that exist behind the creation and use of our collective history. She found that it is not merely master symbols like the Alamo or the Temple Mount that act as nexuses of public discourse, but more nuanced presentations of historical heritage that serve to create our identity at

an almost subconscious level (Smith, 2006).

The last two decades have radically changed the way historians approach their work and understand their discipline. Where once they concerned themselves with researching and writing analyses of historical events, today a new generation of scholars is pursuing a greater understanding of history's role in shaping our collective culture, our politics, and our power relationships. Historical places - these hyperrealms of the past - serve as powerful teaching tools for the reification of our collective mythos. Understanding their role in our society and the means by which we learn from them is an important next step in the evolution of history education as a discipline. In the following chapter we shall put our theoretical hypotheses to the test as we utilize one of America's most prominent master symbols - the Lincoln Memorial - as our case study for understanding how we learn from history from public places.

7. IN THIS TEMPLE

IN THIS TEMPLE AS IN THE HEARTS OF THE PEOPLE FOR WHOM
HE SAVED THE UNION THE MEMORY OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN IS
ENSHRINED FOREVER.

- Royal Cortissoz (1869-1948)
Inscription above the Statue of Abraham Lincoln,
Lincoln Memorial, Washington, D.C.

Winter had lingered heavier than usual over the city of Washington, DC on that day in early March 2009 when I arrived to interview for a position at the Department of State. Two feet of snow was on the ground, the sky hung low, and a bitter wind blew through the wide streets. My wife ill with swine flu, slept in our hotel room as I was grilled by a review panel deep inside Foggy Bottom.

When the interview had ended and I was changed from winter wool suit into jeans and a sweater, our hotel suite could not contain me. Despite the snow and my lack of proper boots I was compelled to wander the city - my possible future residence. I had an almost infinite list of destinations in front of me: it would be warm in one of the Smithsonian museums; Arlington National Cemetery offered a poignant and picturesque winter scene; the Capitol tours would not be crowded on such a blustery day.

I set out on foot and found myself drawn like a magnet

to one place in particular: the National Mall and the memorial to America's Sixteenth President, Abraham Lincoln. The sidewalks and pathways leading up to the Memorial were still deep with snow. As my socks grew ever damper inside my shoes, I trudged on, finding myself face-to-face with the monumental statue of the Sixteenth President.

I thought I would be the only person brave (or silly) enough to make the frigid trek, but I was wrong. The memorial was full of tourists just as it is - I would later learn - at almost any time day or night, regardless of the lateness of the hour or the quality of the weather. Only a complete closure (for instance in the event of a presidential speech) can keep people away from "Lincoln's place."

The similarities between the Lincoln colossus and the great statue of Ramesses II immortalized as *Ozymandias* is not lost on the observer. The President is majestic, kingly, enshrined on a throne. But like that former Pharaoh, his gaze is both forward facing and downward - eyes toward both the future and those in the present who come to look upon him. Lincoln is presented as a man of the people above the people - to paraphrase George Washington, a first among equals. The Lincoln Memorial, like all memory places, is not merely a shrine to a man,

but a tangible representation of a culture.

In the way that Yaron Z. Eliav (2005) has argued that the Temple Mount is a master symbol among Christian and Semitic cultures, or in the way that Pierre Nora proclaimed the Arc de Triomphe to be a master symbol of France, a strong case can be made for the Lincoln Memorial as a master symbol for the United States. Across a wide range of polls - from professional historians to the "person on the street" - Lincoln is consistently ranked as America's greatest and/or most influential president (Silver, 2013). The United States Parks Service estimates that currently six million people visit the Lincoln Memorial each year - a number that ranks it as one of the world's most visited tourist attractions (U.S. Department of the Interior, Lincoln Memorial n.d.). In addition, the Memorial itself has played a direct role in American history as a backdrop for the Civil Rights Movement, beginning almost the day it was inaugurated.

Thus the Lincoln Memorial presents the researcher with the ideal memory place for actively studying the role of public space in educating and influencing the public mindset. The Lincoln Memorial can be defined as a master cultural symbol - an epitome of not only the ideals of American culture (unity) but also the more controversial

aspects of our story (slavery, emancipation, and the continued crusade for minority civil rights.) The memorial is both monumental space and educational space. It contains interpretive exhibits and is staffed by trained park rangers who act as sanctioned interpreters. Its displays and public education messages are the result of a conscious strategy - an attempt to teach on a truly epic scale. Thus the Memorial is not merely designed to represent one man's achievement, it is also meant to tell a story. As such, the Lincoln Memorial serves as the ideal laboratory in which to "test" the theoretical underpinnings of the present dissertation. At this site it is possible to analyze, in real time, the key factors underlying the role of monuments in the education of the public, through the process of narrative inquiry (Clandinin, 2007.)

As I will demonstrate, the Lincoln Memorial is the physical embodiment of multiple evolved narratives. However, the facility is not isolated and alone on its little peninsula in the Potomac - it is managed space. It was designed to tell a story. To the present day, the agents of the government that operate this very public space have constructed a narrative they want the space to telegraph to the public. If the site managers and the political interests behind this narrative are successful in

doing so, they have the power to influence the thinking - through overt public education - of millions of people per year. However, if as Nora and others have speculated, the Lincoln Memorial represents a more collectivist shared identity, the structured narrative presented at the site may well be irrelevant. The visitors may bring with them their own narrative which is reified through their contact with the Memorial.

The tools of qualitative analysis presented through narrative inquiry allow the researcher access to a deeper understanding of this dynamic. It is first necessary to determine the Memorial's primary or "Presented Narrative" - the story the "place" is attempting to tell. This is achieved through a deep analysis of the site itself, its online educational materials, its interpretive displays, interviews with staff members, and even the items sold in the gift shop. Through further deep interviews with actual site visitors it was possible to gain insight into "Auxiliary Narratives" and determine to what extent these converge or diverge with the Presented Narrative. Questions and conversations during the interviews will be sculpted to determine what educational strategies were being used by Memorial staff to transmit the Presented Narrative and to what extent those were actually affecting

the site visitors. Do these strategies work? Are visitors influenced by what they see or does their own Auxiliary Narrative override what they are being "taught?" And if they are achieving a direct education experience what methodologies are most effective?

The Lincoln Memorial - An Historical Overview

The public desire to commemorate President Lincoln began almost immediately after his death. In 1868 a statue of Lincoln by Lot Flannery was erected in front of what was then the District of Columbia City Hall (today the DC Court of Appeals located at Judiciary Square). (SEE ILLUSTRATION 7). Other monuments soon followed, including one portraying Lincoln as slave liberator designed by Thomas Ball and placed in Lincoln Park on Capitol Hill. (SEE ILLUSTRATION 8). However, as the memory of Lincoln loomed ever larger, the desire to memorialize his memory on the same scale as George Washington increased.

By the turn of the twentieth century - after the much delayed completion of Washington's monument - the federal government began to take large scale public memorialization of Lincoln seriously. Between 1901 and 1908 five separate Lincoln Memorial appropriations bills were considered but died in Congress. On December 13, 1910 Senate Bill 9449 passed, finally authorizing the creation of a Lincoln

Memorial Commission. The following year this commission was placed under the chairmanship of President William Howard Taft (Thomas, 2002).

On December 5, 1912, the Commission recommended a building plan for the Memorial, to be constructed in grandiose style on a spit of land reclaimed from the Potomac River in what was then known as Potomac Park. The Memorial's design, as it was presented in this report, is virtually unchanged from the design of the structure as it was actually executed. Designed by famed architect Henry Bacon (his last public project before his death) the Memorial takes the form of a Greek Doric temple, constructed of Colorado Yule Marble. It is 189.7 feet by 118.5 feet square and 99 feet tall. Thirty six Doric columns are meant to represent the thirty six states of the Union at the time of Lincoln's death. The interior features a monumental statue of Lincoln himself by sculptor Daniel Chester French. Lincoln's statue is banked to the sides by transcriptions of his Gettysburg Address and his Second Inaugural Address (Taft, 1913).

In 1913 Congress approved the committee's designs and appropriated \$300,000 for construction. The West Potomac Park location was controversial. At the time it was considered swampy and remote. However, construction of a

monument at that site was in keeping with the city's master plan and the committee remained determined, refusing to move the Memorial to a more heavily trafficked location such as Union Station (Thomas, 2002). The Memorial remains remote to the president day, standing a mile distant from the Foggy Bottom Metro Station. There is limited parking along the National Mall and even tour bus access requires a walk.

The Memorial, however, served as a modern "anchor" for the National Mall with the Washington Monument standing in the middle and the Capital at the opposite extreme. A walk between the Lincoln Memorial and the Capitol takes one past the majority of the most significant national Memorials (excluding the ones dedicated to Thomas Jefferson, Teddy Roosevelt, Martin Luther King, Jr., and Franklin D. Roosevelt) and the primary Smithsonian museums. Though the National Mall was originally intended by its designer Pierre L'Enfant to serve as a residential district and though it spent its first century covered in a canal, railroad tracks, barracks, and public markets, today the Mall is considered a national tourism showcase. The Lincoln Memorial stands as a visceral reference point along an avenue that plays host to not only America's treasure chest (the Smithsonian) but its seat of democratic

authority (the Congress) (Savage, 2009). (SEE ILLUSTRATION 9.)

The Lincoln Memorial was dedicated on May 30, 1922. This ceremony was presided over by sitting president Warren G. Harding and former president Taft, chairman of the Lincoln Memorial committee and, at the time, the sitting Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. In 1922 the United States was experiencing the greatest extreme of Jim Crow - the legal segregation of blacks into a separate and second class of citizenry. This was at a time in American history when Ku Klux Klan membership was approaching its zenith, the lynching of blacks was a common crime in the American South, and an African American could not publically eat a meal in the same room as a white person (Litwack, 1998).

Thus in a trick of cruel historical irony, the Memorial dedicated to the life and death of the man who did more to emancipate African Americans from slavery than anyone, opened before an audience that was, itself, segregated. Washington, D.C., surrounded on all sides by the Southern states of Virginia and Maryland, was a segregated city in 1922 despite its massive African American population. Those African Americans attending the opening ceremonies were forced to remain in a roped-off seating area separated from the main audience by a road

(JBHE Foundation, 2009).

The only African American chosen to speak at the Memorial's dedication was Robert R. Moton, the successor of Booker T. Washington as president of the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama. Moton was conscious of the near-comic irony of the circumstances and drafted a speech which proclaimed: "I say unto you that this Memorial which we erect is but a hollow mockery, a symbol of hypocrisy, unless we can make real in our national life, in every state and in every section, the things for which [Lincoln] died." Of course the Memorial committee did not allow Moton the freedom to give this speech and he was forced to take a conciliatory tone, promising the crowd that African Americans were loyal citizens (ibid.).

Thus the Lincoln Memorial began its public life as a symbol of "national unity" - a monument built by whites dedicated to the white president who preserved the union and who granted blacks their freedom - but not too much freedom. This theme of "national unity" was the first Presented Narrative of the Lincoln Memorial, and it remains the dominant theme of the site to the present day. The intended message was to let bygones be bygones and come together to celebrate the man who held the nation together in its darkest hour.

In "Lincoln: A Sketch," an essay included in first generation promotional material for the memorial, the historian Helen Nicolay (daughter of Lincoln's secretary and biographer John Nicolay) firmly established this narrative: "Who but a man with passions purged by long suffering as Lincoln's had been would have felt neither triumph nor vindictiveness as the war drew to a close, but only a great new anxiety, that he might be able to make his countrymen see as he saw the need for helpful kindness in order to 'bind up the Nation's wounds, and achieve a just and lasting peace'?" (Concklin, p. 14, 1927).

Nicolay's biography of Lincoln is the opening essay in the United States Parks Department's official commemorative book on the Lincoln Memorial. This biography of Lincoln - which presents a man who stood outside his time looking in, guiding a divided nation as a kind of messianic redeemer - was presented as the government's official stance on the man for the 1920's. Emancipation in this form of the narrative is presented as a necessary evil which finished the job of holding the union together.

President Harding proclaimed as much in his remarks at the opening of the Lincoln Memorial, a speech prominently highlighted in the Parks Department's publication. Harding stated: "The supreme chapter is not emancipation, though

that achievement would have exalted Lincoln throughout the ages. The simple truth is that Lincoln, recognizing an established order, would have compromised with slavery that existed if he could have halted its extension...Emancipation was a means to the great end - maintained union and nationality" (ibid., p. 87). As such, evidence of arguably Lincoln's greatest achievement - the manumission of American slaves - is almost utterly absent from his memorial. His statue is flanked by the text of his Gettysburg Address and his Second Inaugural Address - nothing of the Emancipation Proclamation is present within the main body of the monument.

Thus, from the mouth of the sitting president at the time was derived the initial Presented Narrative of the Lincoln Memorial: this is a place of "union and nationality;" a symbol of Lincoln's attempt to maintain the nation, not a harsh reminder of the divisive institution of slavery which tore it apart. The Memorial was dedicated to the "white Lincoln" - the union's salvation. A monument to the "black Lincoln" was to be found on the opposite side of town in Lincoln Park: Thomas Ball's liberator of slaves. The "official" Lincoln Memorial, however, was never meant to serve as a backdrop for the American Civil Rights movement, as the segregated audience and Harding's own

words made clear. That was not to remain the case for long.

Abraham Lincoln, for all his flaws, was the man who achieved the end of American slavery. He was also the first president to be elected on the Republican Party ticket, a party founded on an anti-slavery platform. So, despite the attempt to quite literally whitewash Lincoln's story, the African American community was unwilling to let him go. In his critical inquiry into the role the Lincoln Memorial has played as a symbol of the American Civil Rights movement, Scott A. Sandage (1993) has argued that the Memorial, though it was long "contested space", has emerged in American culture as sacred ground for the memorialization of not only Lincoln's life and legacy, but for the emancipation and continued empowerment of African Americans that Lincoln's role in history initiated. The Memorial has become - like all memory places - a "moveable feast," symbolizing far more than its original intent. Sandage explains how this evolution occurred (p. 165):

This was the essence of the politics of memory: activists brought politics into the temple, but in a way that preserved the temple's holiness and conferred upon them its power as a national site...By transforming the memorial from a symbol of consensus

into, in Rauh's [an African American editorialist present at the memorial's 1922 dedication] words, "the protest place," black activists claimed it as their own, very powerful memory site...White Americans' persistent tendency to see national unity rather than protest in symbols like the Lincoln Memorial suggests that conflicts over public memory were integral to protestors' tactical shift in the late 1960's from a universalist, coalition-based approach to more militant and particularist strategies. It was not so much that blacks's early tactics had led to co-optation [sic], but rather that activists' sophisticated attempts to co-opt dominant symbols could never fully overcome irreducible differences between black and white ways of remembering the American past.

Though Moton attempted to take a stand at the opening ceremonies of the Lincoln Memorial, it was in 1939 that the site as a backdrop for the African American civil rights movement began in earnest. In that year, after being denied a venue by the Daughters of the American Revolution, the African American contralto Marian Anderson performed at the Lincoln Memorial to an integrated audience, at the behest of first lady Eleanor Roosevelt. On August 28, 1963

Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. delivered his evocative "I Have a Dream" speech on the same site as Anderson's performance, an event often lauded as the culminating event of the American Civil Rights movement (Savage, 2011).

Through the use of the site for such iconic events, the African American community has expanded the public narrative at the Lincoln Memorial. To a greater or lesser degree, the government managers of the site have followed suit - in 2003, King's speech was memorialized with a plaque on the space where he gave his speech. King himself now has a monument in Washington, in close proximity to Lincoln's. Additional interpretive materials related to Lincoln as "Great Emancipator" and to the Civil Rights movement as a whole can now be found in a small museum space in the base of the Memorial. The monument has and continues to serve as the staging point for protest action, from the anti-Vietnam war rallies of 1970 to Louis Farrakan's 1995 "Million Man March" (Christopher, 2002).

Sandage (1993) has argued that this embrace of Lincoln and his memorial by the African American community is one that has evolved out of necessity, not choice. In the way that the Lincoln Memorial was meant to be a "consensus memorial," Lincoln himself became a consensus hero. Sandage writes: "In 1927 a black teenager wrote

W.E.B. Du Bois that youths at her Illinois town opposed celebrating Lincoln's Birthday. What, she asked, had Lincoln ever done for blacks?...Martin Luther King, Jr. called Lincoln 'vacillating' but also saw him as the only president who had ever earned blacks' confidence."

Sandage (p. 150) cites James Farmer, the founder of the Congress on Racial Equality, for an understanding of African Americans' collective embrace of the Lincoln Memorial: "'It doesn't say anything about what we thought about Lincoln,' Farmer explained. 'It says something about how great the image of Lincoln was, and it was something we could use to achieve our noteworthy objectives, that's all.' Black leaders regarded public appeals to Lincoln and national memory as the only symbolic language available to them to communicate with white America."

Barry Schwartz (1997) expanded upon this theme arguing that African Americans deliberately embraced Lincoln as a kind of white conscience. He states: "African American media reinforced this new conviction. On the front page of the Chicago Defender, a cartoon Lincoln covers his face in despair as Republican Barry Goldwater makes known his sympathy for the John Birch Society." Schwartz highlights the embrace of Lincoln (and his memorial) by African Americans as reluctant but concrete. He writes regarding

the use of Lincoln as a symbol for civil rights: "Each event construed Lincoln through symbolic resources - visual and ritual apostrophes, metaphors, hyperbole, personification, antitheses - that formed an image to which African Americans turned to make sense of their changing place in history."

Thus the history of the Lincoln Memorial is the story of a contested symbol: one in which the African American community, in a crusade for civil rights, have challenged the Memorial's initial Presented Narrative of inclusiveness and union to demonstrate in sharp contrast the true state of race relations in the United States. Each protest event asked the same question: how can we have a monument to national harmony and unity, when the races are forced to remain legally divided? The words of the editors of the journal *Art and Progress* rang hollow when they wrote of the proposed memorial to Lincoln in 1911: "To have politics or partisanship enter into the erection of a memorial to Lincoln would be a national disgrace." Indeed, the very history of the Memorial has been defined by its ability to inspire political discourse - often heated and divisive.

We should expect no less from a great master symbol as we understand the role of memory place in the retention and transmission of culture, as explored by the likes of Pierre

Nora. The anthropologist Michael Rowlands (1993, p. 146) refers to what has transpired at the Lincoln Memorial as an "incorporating practice." He writes: "A second relationship between representation and remembering can be found in the way places or things become memorialized rather than standing for something to be remembered. In contexts where objects are destroyed or taken out of circulation through burial or some other form of intentional symbolism, such objects become a memory in their absence, and therefore the essence of what has to be remembered. The opportunities for manipulating the possibilities of repetition are therefore abolished in an act of sacrifice or destruction that severs connection with its original status."

The Lincoln Memorial was consecrated with a clear message by President Harding: Lincoln was the president who saved the union and he freed the slaves because he had to, not because he wanted to. But in this case the person of Lincoln - the buried object - became a prisoner of his powerful visceral memorial. The civil rights actions that took place at his memorial coupled with the use of Lincoln himself as a symbol of the civil rights movement, forced a transition of this initial narrative. Through incorporation practices the Lincoln Memorial became a

memorial to the American Civil Rights movement. This process was made manifest by the powers of officialdom when in 2003, at the 40th anniversary of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s great speech, a memorial to that event was incorporated directly into the Lincoln Memorial itself (U.S. Department of the Interior, Lincoln Memorial n.d.).

Sandage eloquently describes the Lincoln Memorial's transition as follows: "This was the essence of the politics of memory: activists brought politics into the temple, but in a way that preserved the temple's holiness and conferred upon them its power as a national site...By transforming the Memorial from a symbol of consensus into, in [editorialist] Rauh's words, 'the protest palace,' black activists claimed it as their own, very powerful memory site." As such, the Lincoln Memorial stands today as something very different from what it was intended at its dedication in 1922. In 1922 the United States was a nation in which African Americans could not freely eat a meal in Washington, DC - today our president is himself an African American. The Lincoln Memorial's narrative has evolved - yet it still has a story to tell which is sanctioned, official, and communicated via an educational strategy. Armed with an understanding of the history of the site, we will now explore the Lincoln Memorial's presented narrative

as a means of understanding the educational message which the National Parks Service is attempting to project.

In Search of the Presented Narrative

As Clandinin explains (2000, p. xv) one of the most difficult aspects of narrative inquiry is the analysis of collected data. Stories take many forms, from direct anecdotes to more intricate metaphors. As Clandinin writes: "The created story is a narrative explanation of the phenomenon being studied" (ibid). This would normally be achieved through collation and analysis of collected stories. However, in exploring the Presented Narrative projected by the Lincoln Memorial, a significant portion of that analysis has already been done. Abraham Lincoln is well-studied, both as an historical figure and a cultural icon.

In their 2005 article for *American Sociological Review* Barry Schwartz and Howard Schuman performed an analysis of Lincoln as a cultural symbol within American popular memory. Their work built upon an earlier study (1994) by Merrill Peterson, published as "Abraham Lincoln in American Memory." This collection of researchers analyzed more than a century and a half's worth of Lincoln representations, from histories and biographies to monuments and commemorations. In so doing they identify five narratives

of Abraham Lincoln, quoted from Schwartz and Schuman (p. 186) below:

1. "Savior of the Union" refers to objects that express Lincoln's belief in the indivisibility of the American state.
2. "The Great Emancipator" represents Lincoln's efforts to abolish slavery.
3. "Man of the People" reflects writings and commemorative devices depicting Lincoln's identification with ordinary Americans.
4. "The First American" is Lincoln the frontier youth, symbolized by log cabins and axes and highlighting a personality that combines folksiness with dignity and vulgarity with kindness.
5. "The Self-Made Man" refers to Lincoln as the exemplification of upward mobility.

It should be noted that it is largely irrelevant whether or not the historical Lincoln, within his own personality and context, actually corresponded to any, or all, or a portion of these narratives. What we know of Lincoln the man is that he was a complex person who, like all politicians, was concerned with the construction of a projected image. When he needed to be a "Man of the People" he could easily do so, when he needed to project an

image of cunning and intellectual sophistication (often when dealing with elitist generals who looked down on Lincoln's humble roots) he could do that as well. Lincoln, like all American presidents, was a politician - a complicated persona of reality mixed with myth. As we have learned from Nora, it is not the job of a master symbol like the Lincoln Memorial to tell the "truth" - its job is to tell a story. Herein we wish to understand that story.

For the purposes of this project, I spent approximately 100 hours at the Lincoln Memorial, observing its physical outlay, exploring the facility in its entirety, interviewing staff, interviewing visitors, taking note of all display items and items on sale in the bookstore, and making general observations. I was given considerable freedom to conduct interviews and to wander the grounds and make observations. The Lincoln Memorial is open all hours and is a part of the National Mall - an area generally recognized as a free speech zone.

In contacting the National Parks Service, after explaining my project and my intentions, I was told that I would be permitted the same access to the site as any journalist or researcher. No special permission or permit was required so long as I did not erect a structure, create a film of the activities, or engage in commercial

enterprise. I was free to approach any member of the public or on duty staff member with a request for an interview so long as I did not use video recording equipment, behave in a harassing manner, and the persons granted their consent to be interviewed. Beyond that, no additional special permission was required.

The primary "face" of the Lincoln Memorial is National Parks Service Rangers - icons of the National Mall, dressed in green uniforms and "Drill Sergeant" hats. Over the course of the project I interviewed seven park rangers - subject matter experts known as "interpretive rangers" - whose primary duty station is the Memorial itself. The average length of these interviews was one hour. The conversations were open-ended but structured around the following questions:

*What's the story that the Parks Service is trying to tell through this Memorial?

*Do you think that story is reflective of President Lincoln the man?

*Does that story differ from your personal opinion of President Lincoln? How?

*What role do you think the Memorial has played in the Civil Rights Movement?

*How is (answer above) reflected in the Memorial...or

not?

*Do you think the story you're telling here is accurate history - or would you call it propaganda?

*What do you think you do best here?

*What would you change about the Memorial if you could?

*What are your general thoughts on the visitors that come here?

*Do you think the visitors are learning from their visit here? If so, what?

In conducting these interviews I agreed to maintain the ranger's confidentiality, including agreeing to not reveal the date and time of the interview, which might correspond with their on-duty shift schedule. This promise of confidentiality resulted in a high degree of candor. I typically visited the Memorial for staff interviews on weekdays, when traffic was light. Interviewees rarely stayed on topic as the rangers proved to be highly interested in my study and willing to share their thoughts.

The following is a breakdown of my interviewees' demographics:

Table 1 Ranger Demographics			
Interview No.	Age	Sex	Ethnicity/Origin
R1	20's	M	Asian American; California Native
R2	27	F	African American; DC Native
R3	40's	M	Caucasian; Georgia Native
R4	31	M	Caucasian; Maryland Native
R5	20's	M	Caucasian; Texas
R6	64	M	Caucasian; "Navy Brat"
R7	29	F	Caucasian; Maryland Native

Of the five Lincoln narratives outlined by Schwartz and Schuman, the Memorial manages to represent all of them in one format or another. The Great Emancipator, the Man of the People, the First American, and the Self-Made Man are icons most readily on display in the Memorial's gift shop - a small, but well-stocked store right off of the main viewing area near Lincoln's statue. The gift shop is always packed with people. A lunch hour or Saturday visit typically insures one must wait outside for someone to leave before entering. On sale are items ranging from coloring books displaying Lincoln as a woodcutting frontiersman to faux stovepipe hats to biographies of Lincoln, Martin Luther King, Jr., and books on the American Civil Rights movement. The products on sale are in no way critical of Lincoln - they are designed to celebrate his life from a heroic standpoint, not critique him. Only the most hagiographic and celebratory materials are available.

Interestingly, fully half of the material on sale

deals not with Lincoln himself, but the American Civil Rights movement. Martin Luther King, Jr. is presented alongside Lincoln in stature and importance - as if the two men stand as ideological contemporaries. To a far lesser extent are materials which cover Lincoln's role in the Civil War. These materials are entirely tertiary. Other than souvenir copies of the Emancipation Proclamation, there is virtually no representation of slavery or the Confederacy. Indeed, souvenir copies of the Emancipation Proclamation were the only versions of that text represented at the Memorial during my research at the site.

The National Parks service is, demonstrably, not reticent about boldly presenting the story of the Confederacy, slavery, and the horrors of the Civil War. A visit to the Gettysburg National Battlefield and its interpretive center (which contains a massive gift shop larger than any of its single displays) shows the CSA and its heroes placed unabashedly on par with that of the Union. The NPS does not shy from controversy and the "warts" of history in its displays and presentations as a rule - but it chooses not to present these things at the Lincoln Memorial. The divisiveness of Lincoln's reign - fully on display at Gettysburg - is staunchly avoided at the President's Memorial. Indeed, though all of Lincoln's

five narratives can be found at the site, the overwhelming view of Abraham Lincoln taken by the Lincoln Memorial is that of "Savior of the Union" - a man dedicated to bringing the nation together.

Five of the park rangers I interviewed used the same language to describe the site: this is a site dedicated to "bringing the nation together." Decoding this narrative required very little depth analysis. Indeed, NPS embraces this theme in its educational materials at the Lincoln Memorial website (www.nps.gov/linc/index.html). The opening paged boldly declares:

Savior of the Union

'In this temple, as in the hearts of the people for whom he saved the Union, the memory of Abraham Lincoln is enshrined forever.'

Beneath these words, the 16th president of the United States sits immortalized in marble as an enduring symbol of unity, strength, and wisdom.

All of the educational materials at the website - which are advertised as being for teachers and visitors - stress this narrative. The Memorial's role in the Civil Rights Movement is stressed heavily, with biographies of luminaries such as King and Marian Anderson presented right alongside that of Lincoln, himself. Notably, the Lincoln

Memorial is in no way presented as a contested symbol, as our historical review above shows that it is, but as an eternally welcoming space for American union.

"I see this as a place where Americans can come together," said the young female African American park ranger. "Yeah, Lincoln is important to America, but to me personally this place is as much about Martin Luther King as it is Lincoln. That's the story I try to tell. President Lincoln - through his monument - was still doing some good a hundred years after he died."

The middle-aged white male ranger from Georgia stated: "The story we tell here is not the Lincoln I grew up with. That man was a divider, not a uniter. [He laughed, paraphrasing former President George W. Bush's famous statement about himself.] He was the man that caused the Civil War just by getting elected. He was the invader, the threat. I don't know how true that story is, but I don't think our story here is particularly true either. We tell the story of the Memorial - and that's unity. Would I change it? I'd tell more of the warts. This is probably the only place most visitors will ever encounter Lincoln."

Even for those who disagreed with the veracity of the Lincoln Memorial's message, the consistency of that message was obvious: the Memorial presents itself as a place of

national unity and it defines president Lincoln as the "Savior of the Union" - the man who held the nation together at its time of greatest crisis. The Memorial revels in its positive role in the Civil Rights Movement and ranger staff are as eager to discuss that as they are Lincoln himself. A young white male ranger said this: "Lincoln never visited this place - it was under water in his day. We get asked all the time if Lincoln's buried here. Nope, sorry. Someplace else. This is his monument. But you can come right up these steps and put your feet on the actual spot where Dr. King gave that speech. How about that? It's as much his house as it is Lincoln's. Where else can you do that? I see them every day come up those steps and look out toward the Capitol, pretending to see that mass of people that Dr. King saw. I do it myself."

We have discussed the African American community's slow embrace of this site. If their embrace has been reticent, the Memorial's embrace of the African American community has been overwhelming. This is seen in everything from the products on sale (an MLK coloring book) to the vociferous tales of the ranger staff, like the one above. It is clear the site is happy to be a pilgrim stop on a metaphorical Civil Rights history trail. This fits the site's narrative of inclusiveness perfectly.

Perhaps ironically, though the Memorial opened to a segregated audience, this narrative of unity and inclusiveness has been the intended message from its very conception. In his history of the National Mall's monuments, Kirk Savage (2005, p. 255-256) writes: "The Lincoln Memorial was supposed to resolve the question Lincoln himself had posed at the battlefield of Gettysburg: can a nation founded on one great idea - that all men are created equal - long endure? In its glorious stony permanence, the memorial's answer seemed to be a resounding, Yes!"

Savage notes that the Memorial does this by sweeping the unpleasantness of Lincoln's reign under the rug, ignoring slavery and, indeed, ignoring the role of Lincoln in freeing the slaves, in favor of a narrative of inclusiveness and national unity. The Civil War is an aside, an ideological spat between grumpy cousins, not the bloody war and the argument over basic human dignity most scholars agree that it actually was. The Lincoln Memorial was designed as a teaching tool. This was made clear in my ranger interviews. When asked if they saw the site as propagandistic, all seven of them demurred. "Our mission is education," said one. "We're here to tell a story," said another. And two both affirmed that the Memorial is a

place to "start a conversation." The staff on site gladly adopt the title of educators - though the likes of Nora might wish to call them propagandists, or at least representatives of the prevailing hegemony. So what is it the Lincoln memorial is trying to teach? My interviews coupled with my analysis of the site made that clear. The Memorial's "curriculum" can be broken down as follows:

***Abraham Lincoln "saved the Union."**

Lincoln is presented as a transcendent leader whose force of will and vision of national unity saved the Union from itself. His biography at the NPS website states: "Equating rebellion against the Government of the United States with an attack on the Constitution itself, Lincoln reasoned that his oath of office required him to take action. Lincoln wondered why those who vilified him for his actions also tolerated the actions of those who sought to destroy the Union which he sought to preserve." This biography later concludes: "An assassin's bullet converted the savior of the Union into a martyr, but failed to overthrow the man's mission."

This modern official biography remains little changed from that written by Helen Nicolay in 1927. Though historians' views of Lincoln are nuanced and the political mechanics of the Civil War are complex, visitors to the

Lincoln Memorial are meant to learn this lesson first and foremost: Abraham Lincoln, more than any other figure, preserved the United States through the Civil War.

***The Lincoln Memorial played a key role in the American Civil Rights movement.**

As we have acknowledged above, the Memorial has served as an often-contentious and, in some cases, reluctantly accepted backdrop to the American Civil Rights Movement. However, in keeping with its narrative of national unity, the Lincoln Memorial projects itself as a key affirmative player in that struggle. The NPS dedicates a significant portion of its web content to the site's role in the Civil Rights movement, projecting Marian Anderson's concert and Dr. King's speech as seminal high water events. Regarding King's "I Have a Dream" speech, NPS states:

Ask most schoolchildren today and they can identify the Lincoln Memorial as the site of Martin Luther King's "I Have a Dream" speech. The final speaker at the August 28, 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, Dr. King talked of his dream that his children would grow up in a country where they would be free from racism. The speech is such a part of the Lincoln Memorial story, that the spot on which King stood was engraved in recognition of the 40th

anniversary of the event.

***Abolition of slavery was not Lincoln's primary motivator.**

Of all the overt messages telegraphed at the Memorial this is the one which the park ranger staff most grudgingly accept. Lincoln's biography at the NPS website all but ignores the fact that Lincoln was the national nominee of the Republican Party - a political party with the primary platform agenda of the end of slavery. This biography states: "Just before taking the presidential oath, Lincoln reminded his 'dissatisfied fellow country-men' of the South, that he refused 'to interfere with...slavery' where it already existed and that they alone bore the onus of commencing civil war."

The Memorial itself makes no overt mention of slavery and only limited mention of the Emancipation Proclamation, stating only in Lincoln's biography: "This war measure freed only those slaves directly sustaining the Confederate war effort, but it helped stave off European recognition." Here Lincoln's desire to manumit blacks (which he could only legally do in the South, under his war powers authority) is equated with the more tangential cause of preventing Europe from recognizing the Confederacy as a nation. While historians continue to debate the role of

slavery as a cause of the American Civil War coupled with Lincoln's goals as an anti-slavery crusader, the Lincoln Memorial itself presents a clear message: the role of slavery in Lincoln's plans was utterly subsidiary to the desire to hold the Union together.

The Lincoln Memorial is replete with messages and subtext. However, from its display on the history of the Lincoln penny (featuring multi-ethnic children) to its website's deconstruction of Lincoln's second inaugural ("The reelected president firmly believed that the northern states should welcome their southern sisters and brothers back into the Union with open arms") these are the three primary messages that make-up the site's educational message. Abraham Lincoln saved the Union, the Lincoln Memorial itself played a key role in the American Civil Rights Movement, and abolition of slavery was not Lincoln's primary motivator. These three core ideas support the Memorial's overarching presented narrative: Lincoln was a unifying force in American history and his memorial, itself, is not so much contested space, but a symbol of American unity. A person coming into contact with the Memorial, whether in person or virtually through the website, is meant to take away these ideas. The primary methodology for transmission of these ideas - per Nora - is

the symbolic power of the Memorial itself and its roots in hegemonic officialdom. The Lincoln Memorial's story is the "official" American story.

It is not really my place here to contest this narrative. Certainly, within historical circles, this narrative is debatable. I have argued in print - using Lincoln's own words - that he was an overt abolitionist in his day and his support for that cause has been downplayed by subsequent generations of historians. This stance remains controversial among historians, who see Lincoln as anti-slavery, but not a member of the more radical Abolitionist movement. Regardless of whether or not the Memorial's narrative is objectively congruent with historical fact, subjective interpretation, or outright propaganda it is my task here to determine whether or not this message is being transmitted to the site's visitors.

The Lincoln Memorial is meant to be the official monument to the United States' Sixteenth President. As such, it has very powerful institutional support - it is where one is meant to go to experience Mr. Lincoln. As such, the Memorial's educational strategy is entirely unidirectional: visitors are meant to come here to learn, if not the "truth", the U.S. government's sanctioned understanding of President Lincoln and how our nation, as a

whole, chooses to remember him.

While the rangers I interviewed spoke of "debate," the "warts" of history, and "starting a conversation," it was clear that the Memorial itself was not the place for such things. The "conversation" is meant to take place offsite elsewhere, and out of the context of the Memorial itself. Though the Memorial's presentation has expanded since the 1920's, its underlying interpretation of Lincoln remains the same: Savior of the Union. The American Civil Rights movement has been incorporated into that message as a means of bolstering it, not challenging it.

Those who come to the Memorial expecting a debate, wide ranging historical materials, or even books for sale that do other than support the primary message will be disappointed. And, in a way, they're *meant* to be disappointed. The Memorial, its staff, and its educational materials are never meant to draw into question Lincoln's greatness. Thus the Lincoln Memorial's educational model appears as the following:

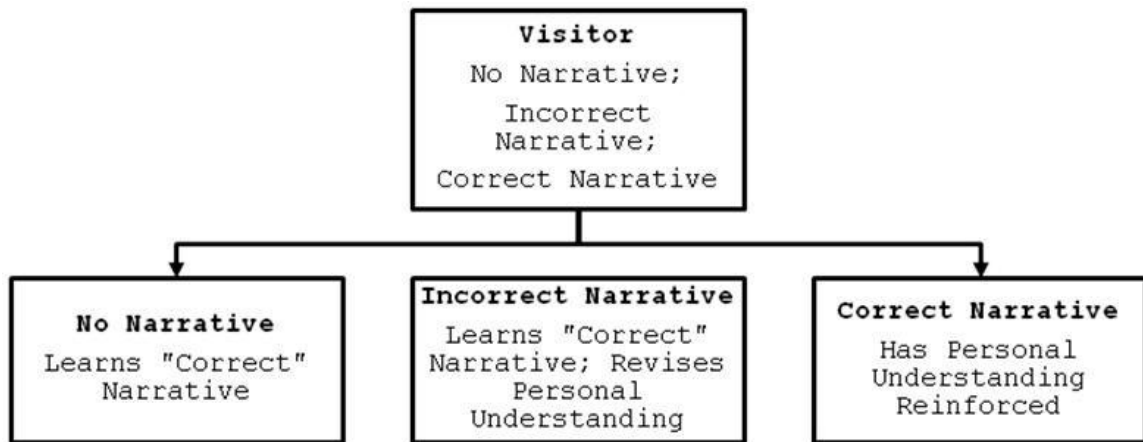


Figure 1. Lincoln Memorial Intended Learning Model

Based on my interviews with staff, it is clear that a portion of the monument's educational strategy relies upon visitors to have little or no prior experience with Lincoln. The example cited by one ranger was "foreign visitors." "They might know Lincoln freed the slaves," he said, "or was a president." Thus a person "coming in cold" with no preconceived notions of Lincoln will acquire the official narrative during their visit, as described above.

Those visiting the site with a narrative about Lincoln that diverges from the stated Primary Narrative are meant to be corrected. As the ranger from Georgia stated: "Lincoln wasn't just about the slaves. He freed the slaves because he had to." This supports the minimalization of Lincoln as Great Emancipator in favor of the unifying Lincoln, the Savior of the Union.

Finally, those who share the Memorial's outlook are meant to find their views confirmed as reified. The Memorial does not offer a space for dissenting views of Lincoln - it telegraphs a monolithic message. Those who view Lincoln in that light will find in his monument a concretization of those views. As one ranger said, "this place achieves a celebration of Lincoln." Indeed, for those who share the "official" narrative of Lincoln, it is a place for celebration - and confirmation of one's own beliefs.

This strategy is sublime in its simplicity and, I firmly believe, wholly unconscious. At no time did the rangers I interviewed lead me to believe that this strategy was the result of policy or any sort of researched and documented educational agenda. Indeed, they spoke with a matter-of-factness of persons certain of their interpretation, unapologetically. The singular dissenting voice - the Georgia ranger - dissented only in that he thought the Memorial could do more to tell Lincoln's full story. But he never let it be shown that the narrative as presented was anything other than true.

The Lincoln Memorial is, fundamentally, not a place to be understood through Socratic dialogue or Hegelian dialectic, but through direct experience and intellectual

absorption. Backed by the power of national officialdom, the Memorial tells a story that is *explicitly* meant to be accepted.

Which brings us to the ultimate question: is it? Are the 6 million annual visitors walking away from the Lincoln Memorial in possession of the intended information? Are they incorporating the stated narrative of Abraham Lincoln into their personal worldviews? The short answer - the glib answer - is no. But this is not an answer that is easy to come by. Indeed, on the surface visitors acknowledge the monument's Primary Narrative. But they seem perfectly capable of holding it in tandem with their own views. Whether from India or Indiana, visitors' responses to the Memorial and the information it provides is shockingly consistent, despite their diverse views on the president himself. In this, Pierre Nora's theory of memory place is simultaneously confirmed and rejected, with rather exciting consequences for community education via public space.

Praxis: The Lincoln Memorial as Learning Space

Understanding the extent to which the Lincoln Memorial's Primary Narrative was successfully transmitted to site visitors required in-depth contact with the visitors themselves. I needed to understand, chiefly, to

what extent visitors approach the site with their own Auxillary Narratives and to what extent those narratives are impacted by the site itself. Does the power of the Memorial serve to act as an educational authority? Is it the equivalent of the teacher in front of the classroom? Or, as Nora suspects, is the relationship between visitor and symbol more complicated?

Over a period of two weekends I conducted twenty-four interviews, of both individuals and groups, at the site of the Lincoln Memorial in the autumn of 2013. An approved permission form was taken from each interviewee and each interview was digitally recorded and later transcribed for analysis. As with my interviews of park ranger staff, I was given permission to approach and interview site visitors so long as I did not erect a structure, engage in filming, or behave in a harassing manner. No additional permission or approval was required, so long as these basic rules were followed.

I established a "base camp" immediately adjacent to the Lincoln Memorial on an open, public sports field, close to a snack stand. I used a sign and direct solicitation to attract interviewees. In exchange for their time I offered my interviewees a cold drink, a small snack, and a shady place to rest for a short span. (SEE ILLUSTRATION 10.)

The interviews were separated by an interval of one month (due to an events schedule which closed the Lincoln Memorial for repairs and presidential speeches). I achieved an overwhelming response. While interviewees were often reluctant to disclose their personal demographic information, they were more than happy to share their insights into their visit to the Memorial. My interviews were conducted with those who had just visited the site. I allowed the interviews to remain open-ended in terms of time and topic. Though guided by a set of questions, I agreed to talk as long as the interviewees wished to continue. In working two seven hour shifts I was rarely without an interview for more than ten minutes. The interviews lasted, on average, 30-60 minutes with one marathon session lasting two hours. Below is an outline of the basic demographics of my interviewees:

Table 2			
Visitor Demographics			
Interview No.	Age	Sex	Ethnicity/Origin
1A	20's	M	Caucasian American
2A	30's	F	Caucasian; Indiana Native
3A	60's	M	Caucasian; Virginia Native
3A	60's	F	Caucasian; Virginia Native
4A		F	Caucasian American
4A		M	Caucasian American
4A		F	Caucasian American
4A		M	Caucasian American
5A	61	F	African American; DC Native
6A	53	M	Indian Native, living in Belgium
6A	Teen	M	Indian/Dutch, living in Belgium
6A	Teen	F	Indian/Dutch, living in Belgium
7A		F	Caucasian American
7A		M	Latin American; Texas Native
7A		M	Caucasian American
7A		F	Caucasian American
8A		M	Caucasian American
1B	20's	M	Ukrainian on holiday
2B	23	F	Caucasian American; Pennsylvania native
2B	23	F	Caucasian American; Pennsylvania native
3B		F	African American; New Jersey Native
4B	30's	M	Indian on holiday
5B	31	F	African American; Texas Native
6B	40's	F	African American

The following are the basic questions which I utilized to guide the interviews:

* Can you please describe what stood out to you most prominently during your visit to the Memorial?

* Why did this make such an impression on you?

* Did you have a strong emotional response at any time during your visit to the Memorial? If so, do you feel you learned something new?

* Did anything you see contradict something you learned about history in school? How about from a book or a documentary?

* How did your visit to the Memorial make you feel about the United States? Did it change any of your views?

* Did any of the displays or materials you saw at the Memorial contradict your views of U.S. history? Please explain.

* Did any of the displays or materials you saw at the Memorial confirm your views of U.S. history? Please explain.

* Why did you choose to visit the Memorial? Were your overall expectations fulfilled?

* Talk about what you most enjoyed in your experience and what you did not like.

Though all interviewees were asked the same slate of questions interviewees rarely remained on topic. These questions were meant to merely guide the inquiry, not restrict it. Interviewees were excited to discuss their impressions and offered a wide range of views and impressions of the site and President Lincoln in general. In keeping with the practice of narrative inquiry I was able to glean to what extent each visitor's personal narrative was impacted by their visit. I was able to

understand what they *learned* from their experience at the Lincoln Memorial and to what extent the Memorial's strategy is successful.

A common factor among all interviewees was the "feeling" that the Lincoln Memorial has "magnetic" attraction. This is an experience I myself had during my 2009 visit to Washington for a job interview, as described above. I interviewed a young woman who had a flight layover at Reagan Airport - which is not within walking distance from the Memorial. It requires a train or taxi ride and an extended walk to arrive at the site. She shrugged her shoulders in an apologetic fashion: "I don't know how I got here, I just felt like I needed to come." She did this in lieu of having a meal.

A man and his family from India (living in Belgium) explained to me that they had only one day to spend in DC and that they planned to spend fully half of it at the Lincoln Memorial before heading on to New York City the following morning. I asked them why and the response from the teenage son was simple: "I like Lincoln." They explained they had come to the site to nurse a personal interest in the Sixteenth President. The father explained: "in India we have Gandhi, but we don't have a place like *this* for him." He went on to explain that all emancipators

are heroes, regardless of what country they come from, thus his family's interest in Lincoln.

A long married couple said: "Oh we come here every year!" They became engaged at the Lincoln Memorial and though they reside in Virginia they resolved to come back annually to commemorate the beginning of their own union. Admitted political conservatives, they like the stability of the Memorial and its unifying message.

Two young ladies who had been childhood friends came to the Memorial from Bucks County, Pennsylvania with their young children. They wanted to get their kids "started early" by seeing the site. They stated that they are liberals and their husbands are conservative - and that the Lincoln Memorial was one spot that they all could agree on as representing the best of American culture. As such, it was the first place they decided to take their children on the D.C. visit.

Of all my interviewees who experienced the "magnetic draw" of the Memorial, perhaps the most paradoxical was the young conservative lobbyist. I encountered him as my first interview on a Sunday morning wandering back from the Memorial, enjoying a cigar. After answering my questions, he asked me where I worked and I explained the State Department. He asked me if I was a political partisan and

I explained I was - a Democrat. He said he could respect that, it was the non-partisans he could not understand. He held forth at length on the notion that patriotism made no sense - that a nation should only be defined by its ideology, and if the ideology is no good, the nation is no good.

I asked him how often he came to the Memorial. "Oh, almost every Sunday" was his answer. I challenged him a bit, asking him why he came, considering Lincoln would be judged a liberal by modern political standards, though he was the first Republican President. He explained that his life was politics, and the Lincoln Memorial was, for him, a substitute for church. If political ideology is your religion, then Lincoln's place serves as your temple. In a twist of irony, though we don't share ideology, this is largely my relationship with the Lincoln Memorial as well.

Like many of the world's master symbols - the Pyramids of Giza, the Temple Mount, the Statue of Liberty, and the tomb of Kemal Ataturk - the Lincoln Memorial is not a site easily stumbled upon. Its relatively remote location within the city and lack of nearby public transportation/parking implies that people visiting it *want* to go there. No one lives nearby and even the closest offices are quite distant. Despite this, a surprising

number of interviewees described being *compelled* to visit the site, whether they had an interest in Lincoln directly or not. As one interviewee stated: "it's just something you gotta do."

As a result, all of my interviews had intended to come to the Memorial, for one reason or another, on the days I interviewed them - though some were ambivalent about the trip while others were highly motivated. Despite this like-minded desire to visit the site, the personal Lincoln-related narrative of my interviewees was highly divergent. I had only one interviewee who claimed to know nothing of Lincoln, a young man from the Ukraine.

The only consistently identifiable pattern that emerged in my interviewees' knowledge and beliefs about Lincoln broke down into a regional American divide. My interviewees from the South all consistently saw Lincoln as a divisive figure, rather than a unifying figure. My elder man from Virginia said it best: "he started the war, he freed the slaves. Some people say blacks were better off in slavery than they were after the war."

My interviewees not from the American South, including those from abroad, were far more sympathetic to the notion of Lincoln as a unifying figure. Such a divide is clearly the result of cultural upbringing and formal education. I

myself am a Southerner and was taught by my parents and teachers that "Lincoln started the War Between the States." My grandparents referred to the "Yankees" as the aggressors in the Civil War, despite the reality that a Southern state fired the first shots in the conflict.

I asked all of my visitors who held this pro-Southern stance why they felt the Lincoln Memorial presented a viewpoint so different from what they had been taught and they all made the same acknowledgement: the winner tells the story. Again, my man from Virginia said it best: "They've got to tell it that way. He [Lincoln] kept the South in the union, whether we wanted it or not. So the official story is that makes him a hero. We got our heroes. See that house over there [points toward Arlington National Cemetery]...that's Robert E. Lee's house."

Aside from this highly predictable regional pattern, visitors' understanding of Lincoln and his memorial was highly divergent and individualized. I have already mentioned the Indian family from interview 6A. This group consisted of an Indian-born father with his two children, who were half Indian, half Dutch, growing up in Brussels, Belgium. They were all fluent in English, Dutch, and French and had a basic understanding of American history gleaned through books. The teenage son had an especial

interest in Lincoln. The father, however, is a professional architect and his view of the Memorial was seen through the eye of his profession:

"We have nothing like this in Europe. This is colonial architecture, only seen in a colonial nation that has achieved independence. Only the French have this, after their Revolution. You build big to show your importance because the history's not there."

I admit to being somewhat taken aback by his interpretation, as I tend to think of the modern American state as an imperial power on a grand scale, not a nation still struggling with a colonial past. But, in fact at the time the Lincoln Memorial was built the United States was not the First World power it would become following World War II. Our Civil War still existed within living memory. Those who had known Lincoln were present at the dedication of his Memorial. And it was only the *second* great Memorial to be built in Washington, a city in which such monumentation is now ubiquitous. Indeed, my interviewee from India was right. The Lincoln Memorial, which most of my interviewees saw as a symbol of enduring power, was conceived as a symbol of aspirational power.

Over the course of this project I interviewed two African Americans, both female. This first had no

education, she confessed to not being able to read well when I offered her my permission form, so we went through it carefully together. Her job is driving tour groups around DC while a trained guide led the tours. At lunch they stopped each day at the Lincoln Memorial, where she would get off and enjoy a stroll and her meal. She is a Washington, D.C. native with a daughter attending Georgetown Law School, of whom she is intensely proud. She took her driver's job to help pay for her daughter's college.

She had no real knowledge of Lincoln, himself. "I know he was our second president," she said. "I seen him out there every day." We talked aimlessly for a while, munching chips and drinking soda, until I brought up Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

"Oh, I was here for that. I's a little girl, but I saw him. Yeah, that was a great man. I guess that's what I think of about this place." She later mentioned she did not think that is what I "wanted to hear." But in her estimation Dr. King was the greater of the two men. She had absorbed the narrative that Lincoln had freed the slaves because he had to, not out of genuine desire. Yet King was a man crusading for his own people.

My second African American interviewee had much the

same reaction, though her background was the polar opposite of my first. A college graduate and an officer in the U.S. military, she demonstrated a deep understanding of Lincoln and his life. But she saw the monument as a tangible connection to Dr. King. Lincoln never stood on the site of his monument - MLK did. "It's fitting these two sites go together," she said, "Dr. King has his own memorial, but it's not where he stood, so I think I'll always come here."

This connection was not lost on my Caucasian American visitors, as well. A number of them pointed out that the Memorial had a more visceral connection to King than Lincoln because of King's physical connection to the site. In keeping with one of the ranger's observations, indeed most all of my interviewees stated that they had stood on the MLK speech site, either during this visit or a previous visit. One interviewee described a kind of "energy" she could feel on the spot. The plaque at the site is so worn down from this activity that it is becoming illegible.

All of my interviewees, with the exception of the young man from Ukraine, entered the site with some preconceived notions of Lincoln and his place in American or world history. The Ukrainian visitor was an especially telling case, as he demonstrated the extent to which the Lincoln Memorial has the power to "teach." He stated he

spent an hour at the site, observing the place in a casual manner. Yet during our interview he was able to spout the Memorial's Primary Narrative almost word-for-word; "Lincoln, he was the president who held your country together." He likened the Memorial to the monument to Bohdan Khmelnytsky in Kiev, which he informed us was one of the few statues in his home city not erected by the Communist regime. Following his visit he saw Lincoln through the lens of Khmelnytsky, a unifying national hero - the exact objective of the Lincoln Memorial.

All of my interviewees were cognizant of the Lincoln Memorial's Primary Narrative. Even those, such as the young Hispanic man from Texas who described Lincoln as a "king on his throne," acknowledged that they understood that Lincoln was the man who "saved the Union." However - and this observation is perhaps the most important conclusion that can be drawn from this research - these visitors can be cognizant of that Primary Narrative and even agree with it while still acknowledging that within its context at the Memorial, it remains largely nationalistic propaganda.

A female grade school teacher from Texas said it best: "This isn't Lincoln's real story, this is the story we want to tell - the story we *want to believe*." The story we want

to believe.

This ideally underpins Nora's theory of memory place. Within this context the Lincoln Memorial is both a place of genuine teaching and learning - and reification. The monument is a teaching space; it is a place where a constructed narrative is successfully conveyed. But it is also a memory place in the very real sense. It is a place for those who overtly disagree with the Primary Narrative but can still come reify and concretize their own nationalist story.

Following these observations I propose a learning model for the Lincoln Memorial which looks like the following:

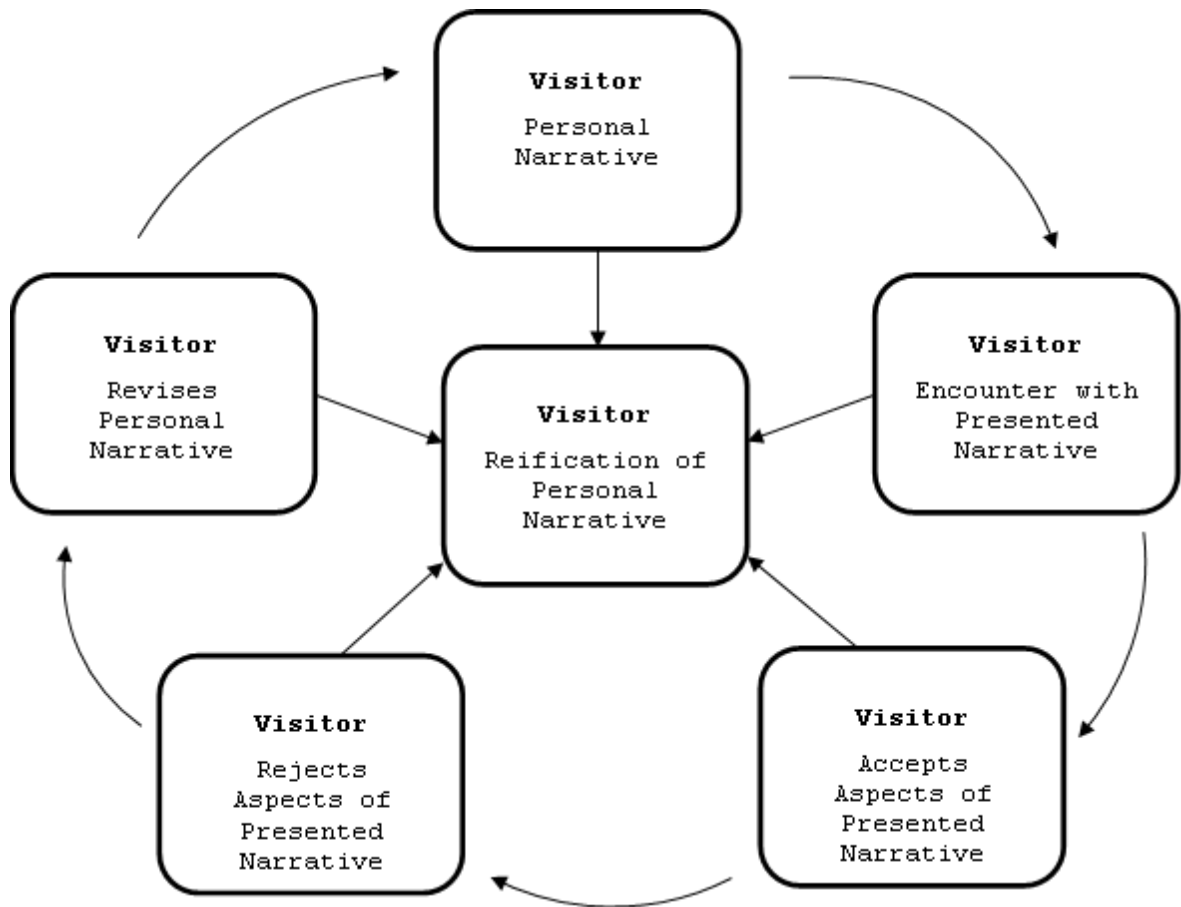


Figure 2. Lincoln Memorial Observed Learning Model

At the risk of sounding hyperbolic, the learning experience at the Lincoln Memorial is somewhat Orwellian. In his novel *1984*, George Orwell presented the concept of “doublethink” – the ability to hold in mind two mutually contradictory ideas. A similar experience takes place at the Lincoln Memorial. A Southern visitor is able to hold both the view that Lincoln was an aggressive and divisive figure, while accepting and celebrating the Memorial’s Primary Narrative of Lincoln as a unifying force. Even for

those who see Lincoln as a negative force in American history, such as the married couple from Virginia, the Lincoln Memorial is a celebratory space in which their own narrative is celebrated and reified. They do not care for Lincoln and what he did, but his Memorial serves as a point of focus for their interest and understanding of American history.

In this case, perhaps, the Nora hypothesis is somewhat lacking. Those who reject the Primary Narrative still find value and, indeed, reification in the site. That is, they neither fully accept nor fully reject that which is being taught, but absorb it into their personal knowledge base, accepting certain pieces of data and dismissing others. Cognitive dissonance plays a limited role, because of the inherently democratic nature of the space itself. Though the site is attempting to teach through the power of official authority, the space is not a classroom with an examination given at the end of the visit.

By default, one is allowed to accept or reject that which is taught based upon their personal desire to accept or reject it. Persons with strong opinions (the couple from Virginia) may see the Memorial's position as just one interpretation among many, whereas persons with little or no opinion (the young man from Ukraine) may be more of a

blank slate, ready to fully accept that which is presented entirely. Whereas others (the lobbyist) seek only reification; their only interest is the visceral experience, the concretization of their worldview.

The learning experience within the public space, as such, is radically different from that experienced within the classroom. Both deal with information - narrative - presented via the power of officialdom, yet the inherently democratic nature of the public space leaves one with more flexibility to adopt or reject that which is being taught. Furthermore, adoption or rejection of the Primary Narrative has little to no bearing on the visceral experience itself. A person can have the same intense experience at a public site such as the Lincoln Memorial, whether or not they agree with that which is being taught. The "lesson" has only limited impact.

Indeed, the lesson only appears to impact those who either already know it and agree with it or those who have only limited or no knowledge. This information should cause us to rethink our approach to educational strategies in the public space, especially spaces related to topics like history, based on largely subjective interpretations. I will explore the ramifications of this research project in greater detail in the concluding chapter.

The Lincoln Memorial: Simulacra and Memory Place

Standing on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial we end this investigation as we began - exploring an artificial monument dedicated to an actual, visceral life. Whether it be the British Museum, the Arc de Triomphe, Disney World, or the Lincoln Memorial, these sites are, in the words of Boudrillard "the genuine fake." They are simulacra of so-called authentic experience. The Parthenon Marbles at the British Museum are a mere recreation of the actual Parthenon in the same way that a British street at Disney World is a simulacra of a true street in the U.K.. It looks for everything like the real thing and a powerful experience can still be had there.

Abraham Lincoln never visited the site of what would become his official national memorial, unless he took a chance boat ride to the west Potomac marshes during his presidency. Nothing significant related to the life of Lincoln or even to the Civil War or emancipation took place on that site, for it was under water. And yet it is the space where six million people sojourn each year to remember, understand, and celebrate the sixteenth president. It is the genuine fake - a constructed space dedicated to public memory.

As such, lacking a native story of its own, it is a

blank canvas onto which the powers of officialdom have painted a concrete message: Lincoln the savior of the Union, Lincoln the unifier, Lincoln the reluctant freer of slaves. Lincoln the hero. It is celebratory space *first* and a teaching space secondarily. But it remains, in either account, a place of *learning*.

Many of the park rangers whom I interviewed opined that it was their hope that the Memorial would serve as a place to "start a conversation." What they failed to realize is that such a conversation *is* taking place, not always among individuals, but *within* individuals. The dialogue is internal - the determination of what to accept and reject from the Memorial's Primary Narrative, while at the *same time* celebrating the monument for its own sake.

We should not be surprised to encounter this truth. Many people visit Las Vegas, Boudrillard's archetypal hyperreal space, but would never wish to live there. The space is temporarily experiential. A hardened neo-Confederate can still celebrate her country at the Lincoln Memorial in the same way that the same memorial can serve as the backdrop for a civil rights revolution. In this respect, the message conveyed by the monument is both concrete (expressed as affirmative reality by the powers of officialdom) and subject to democratic forces. The

visitors *choose* to learn what they want to learn from the information offered and the monument reifies that which they believe they already know.

In the following concluding chapter I shall summarize my overall findings and place them into the context of our earlier theoretical exploration. This will include reflections on the current state of educational programs at public spaces coupled with recommendations for alteration and improvement. Lessons learned from the Lincoln Memorial are instructive and show that the educational encounter at such spaces is fundamentally different, yet no less rich, than that of the formal educational experience.

8. OUR BUILDINGS SHAPE US

We shape our buildings, and afterwards our buildings
shape us.

- Sir Winston Churchill (1874-1965)
House of Commons, British Parliament,
October 28, 1943

We end this exploration in the way in which we began:
pondering the means by which the presence of an artifact in
our lives may transform each of us into a historian.
Whether it be a projectile point in the hands of a young
boy or a monument erected to a fallen leader visited by a
woman with a flight layover, such experiences form a
pedagogical encounter. These encounters are primed by the
curiosity of the learner and the intellectual toolkit they
carry with them. In approaching such artifacts we are both
the teacher *and* the student.

It has been the purpose of this manuscript to
understand the means by which "memory places" serve as
teachers of history. And we have achieved that end,
through a melding of theoretical exploration and practical
field study. Our examination is, perhaps, a challenge to
many of the traditional assumptions regarding education and
the role of the public space in serving to influence the
population at large. Though memory places (such as the

Lincoln Memorial) are typically endowed by their creators with a teaching agenda, the means by which the learner approaches such spaces relies on *interpretation* by the individual. In approaching a memory place, one is not *instructed*, one is encouraged to learn a specific agenda. The exchange of information is not one way - it does not flow from "expert" to "novice;" "teacher" to "student."

As the study of the Lincoln Memorial demonstrates, such places are meant to telegraph a specific constructed message. They are not designed randomly - and though such sites may be historic in nature, they have been enhanced with interpretative material sponsored by power and created by experts. Memory places are *created* and/or *sanctified* to support an agenda and the agenda is meant to be transmitted via an educational strategy.

However, the relationship between the site (teacher) and the visitor (learner) is complicated. These are not only learning spaces, though learning takes place at them. We can conclude that memory places have four primary roles from the perspective of those who interact with them, both manager and visitor. They serve as:

- Cultural Space;
- Learning Space;
- Democratic Space;

- Contested Space.

It must be understood that it is rarely the intention of the site creators/stewards that memory places should serve such a multifarious role. Nor does every visitor experience all of these facets of the site. To paraphrase Ernest Hemingway, such sites are a "moveable feast," an intellectual and iconographic smorgasbord which serves multiple, often competing agendas and publics. Let us examine each of these facets in greater detail.

Memory Place as Cultural Space

It is from the work, primarily, of Pierre Nora that we have come to understand the deep cultural significance of memory places. It was Nora (1989) who famously identified symbolic cultural icons as important repositories of human memory. Through these we preserve our history as *story* - in the way in which we wish to remember it, not merely as the facts of the past played out.

Jeffrey K. Olick (1998) argued that the very existence of the modern nation state relies on the creation of a collective cultural story. Modern Western states are multifarious, multi-cultural, and are typically democratic. Cohesion requires a shared story - a created culture - as a means of constructing an homogenous national narrative. Such homogeneity of identity leads to national harmony -

this shared "story" is the means by which a diverse society may find common ground in times of conflict. In this way, a recent Syrian immigrant to the United States might look to George Washington as the father of *her* country or to Martin Luther King, Jr. having died fighting for *her* rights as an ethnic minority.

Jan Assman and John Czaplicka (1995), following Nora, have proposed that memory places serve this "organizational" aspect of institutionalized public memory. These sites are tangible expressions of a normative cultural story - places in which the story is meant to be preserved and, indeed, celebrated. Within the case study of the Lincoln Memorial, we find this to be the site's primary purpose.

The Memorial was constructed specifically as a monument to an "American hero" who died while in active service to his country. The very architecture of the site (Lincoln's giant statue, the enormity of the building, its construction to mimic a temple, etc.) bespeaks of this message. Lincoln is meant to be seen as a Great Man. The Memorial's central theme is: Abraham Lincoln was a great leader *because* Abraham Lincoln "saved the Union."

The message - handed down from hegemonic national officialdom - is simple, yet powerful. Lincoln might have

done many things (freed the slaves, for instance), but his greatness - the reason he deserves a monument alongside that of George Washington - is because he preserved the Union. This is the consensus view Americans are meant to take away from a visit to this site; this is the sanctioned cultural narrative.

So as a cultural space, the Lincoln Memorial is meant to be a place for celebrating national unity. It was constructed as such, at the height of Jim Crow, and that is the primary message of the site to the present day. The Civil Rights movement which literally played out on the steps of the Memorial has been absorbed into this overarching message. The site seems to say: "even when we disagree, we do so in a peaceful unified manner, through the culturally sanctioned avenues of free speech, free association, protest, and the vote." Even at times of greatest danger to the hegemony, Lincoln remains a tangible representative of its perseverance: the man who saved the union; the man who represents national unity.

Other monuments play very different roles - the Washington Monument, the tallest object in the world at the time of its construction and the tallest obelisk to the present day is a monument to national greatness. The Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial is a monument to

national perseverance. In the way that FDR overcame his handicap to triumph the nation overcame Depression and War (our collective handicaps) to succeed in the end.

Nora found a similar use of monumentation in France. Such memory places both serve to not only memorialize persons and events or to act as cultural symbols, but to serve as a place where a story is meant to be remembered. As we have seen from the Lincoln Memorial, that story often remains remarkably unchanged, despite the tides of history rolling about it. As cultural objects, these memory places serve as fixed points of reference.

Memory places express the agenda of those who designed them. The Lincoln Memorial was constructed nearly a century ago with the express intention of telling a story: Abraham Lincoln saved the union; the union is *not* divided. As has been demonstrated, despite all the change that has swirled around the Lincoln Memorial and, indeed, the Memorial's role in that change, that message has remained a fixed point. The narrative of the Lincoln Memorial is replete with texts, but of those, the message of unity is that with the greatest primacy. It is the central theme that is meant to be learned by the visitor. The space itself acts as a dam against whatever reality swirls outside its bounds. The opening ceremony of the Lincoln

Memorial was divided - but the Union is *not* divided.

A memory place such as the Temple Mount in Jerusalem is perhaps the most tangible example of a physical object acting as a cultural keystone. Twenty-first century Jews are a diasporic people. Their greatest cultural symbol is in the hands of, what is to them, a foreign occupier. But the Temple Mount symbolizes a period in their history when they were a cohesive nation. Thus it becomes a unifying tool for a modern people who are not even bound together by a common language. From Jews in Ethiopia to Jews in Poland to Jews whose families never left the Holy Land, the Temple Mount remains a symbol of unity.

The same remains true for an object like the Lincoln Memorial. For those who identify themselves as "Americans," whether their families arrived in the seventeenth century or the twenty-first, they are meant to see objects like the Lincoln Memorial as a unifying master symbol. Indeed, that master symbol *teaches* them to see it as so. Through the conjoined theories of Umberto Eco (1986) and Nick Perry (1998) we are able to classify these memory places through a more accurate theoretical lens. They are *hyperreal objects*: simulacra of a true reality, made manifest in a physical object.

In the same way that Epcot Center at Disneyworld

functions as a pseudo-realistic representation of a trip around the world, the Temple Mount, for instance, serves as a tangible representation for the epic history of the Jewish people. The Lincoln Memorial becomes a simulacra of American culture: a diverse people bound together in common unity.

In the case of the Temple Mount, that object played a direct role in Jewish history and has now been co-opted as a master symbol, whereas the Lincoln Memorial was precisely constructed to play the role of a master symbol. But in both cases the same role is played - they serve as a tangible, hyperreal distillation of a larger story and a bigger culture.

A memory place, as a cultural object, contains a message and, thus, it functions as a learning space. For such a site to "do its work," that is to function as a culturally binding object, it must have a means by which to sustain and transmit its message. Thus pedagogy is not only implied by the role of such objects, but explicit. In order to succeed, memory places must function as learning spaces.

Memory Place as Learning Space

Though the discipline of public history has a long standing, it was only relatively recently that David

Glassberg provided the key insights that formed the linkage between Nora's theoretical concept of memory places and the everyday world of site management. In essence, Glassberg recognized the *teaching* role of memory places, understanding the constraints of public historians in attempting to manage their institutions as cultural icons and purveyors of "true" facts.

If the business of history is to achieve some objective understanding of the past, the business of a memory place is to tell a specific story. As has been made clear in our case study of the Lincoln Memorial, for the purposes of cultural narrative, the way we *choose* to remember history is often more important than the way it actually happened.

In this, Glassberg recognized that memory places have a role in popular culture - the way they present their message is not constrained by the traditional academic setting. The story, in essence, can be whatever the site managers want it to be. Yet public historians - as teachers of history and students of their craft - are still constrained by the facts of the historical past. Rejecting that past in favor of a constructed narrative forces them into the uncomfortable position of acting as propagandists, not scholars. Thus managing a memory place becomes an

intricate dance of balancing an allegiance to the past with an allegiance to the constructed narrative presented at the site (Glassberg, 1996).

In his eye-opening work *Lies Across America: What Our Historic Sites Get Wrong* (2000), James W. Loewen documented numerous examples of historic sites which had opted to present an utterly constructed narrative at the expense of factual history. In short, the site managers had given up on all objectivity and taken the route of propagandists. Arguably the most startling example presented is the choice made by the managers of Ivy Green, Helen Keller's birthplace, to present this pro-socialist, anti-segregationist as a Confederate sympathizer. Thus those who visit that site leave with a counterfactual presentation of Keller's life and beliefs.

During my interviews with site interpreters at the Lincoln Memorial I found a tangible expression of this frustration. When confronted with the "Lincoln saved the union" meme my interviewee from Georgia summed up the rangers' collective sentiments with a shrug: "it is what it is - an oversimplification." Unlike the message presented at Ivy Green, the story of the Lincoln Memorial is *technically* true. But it is a distillation of a larger, more complex narrative.

In the previous chapter I identified three key components of the Lincoln Memorial's "curriculum:" 1) Abraham Lincoln "saved the Union;" 2) the Lincoln Memorial played a key role in the American Civil Rights movement; 3) abolition of slavery was not Lincoln's primary motivator. Because the memorial is not a traditional classroom, these "lessons" are presented in high relief throughout the site: carved into the walls, expressed through the products in the bookstore, presented in interpretive materials, presented in handouts and via the website, and expressed in the spoken words of the interpretive rangers. This message is remarkably cohesive in its expression.

It represents a distillation of factual history into a simplified, constructed narrative, presented uncritically in a hyperreal setting. In the way that a classroom instructor derives their authority to teach from their education, their credentials, and their position as a representative of established authority, the Lincoln Memorial draws its right to express a "true story" from its authority as a representative of institutional power. Like many of the world's great master symbols, it is owned and maintained by the prevailing hegemon - in this case, the United States government.

I will summarize, below, the learning model by which

memory places act as pedagogues. However, it must be understood that for memory places to "work" - in order that they may act as cultural objects - they must act as *explicit* spaces for learning. They are a tangible, hyperreal representation of a given constructed narrative. As such, they must function as a "school" in which that narrative is taught.

During the course of this research, however, I discovered that this intended teaching/learning model is often confounded by the nature of the site itself. Despite the need for these objects to act as "teachers" they are, as Glassberg expressed, *public* places. Though they may be *managed* by a given authority, they collectively *belong* to the culture for whom they stand as a tangible representation. Thus their narrative is not always subject to precise control - it is subject to cultural evolution and, indeed, the democratic process.

Memory Place as Democratic Space

As has been discussed above, memory places are replete with an overt message. It is a message with a mechanism whereby it is transmitted. In order to function as cultural spaces, they must also function as learning spaces.

My examination of the Lincoln Memorial showed that

such sites are highly effective at transmitting their message. The message gleaned from repeated visits to the site by me (with my experience as a professional scholar of American history) was identical to those I interviewed who made only the most casual of visits. Regardless of their cultural background, the essential narrative presented by the Lincoln Memorial was almost always successfully transmitted.

However, the site's interaction with the public does not end there. While visitors absorb the narrative presented at the site, they do not merely "learn the lesson" and move on. They evaluate what is being taught and incorporate that evaluation into their own personal worldview. Rarely does the information presented at the site *change* that worldview. Nor is it wholly rejected through the mechanism of cognitive dissonance. Rather, site visitors absorb the presented narrative and mold it to *reify* their worldview.

This is a surprising result. My initial hypothesis, based on a survey of theoretical literature, assumed that visitors who agreed with the presented narrative would absorb it and allow it to reify their worldview, whereas those who disagreed with the presented narrative would be subject to cognitive dissonance and reject it. My

interviews with park rangers confirmed that they assumed a similar process was ongoing as well. They see themselves as the keepers of the "official true story." They assumed (as did I) those who disagree with that story would simply ignore the narrative as presented.

In fact, site visitor's reaction to information they disagree with is far more sophisticated than this. Indeed, many visitors disagree with the narrative of the Lincoln Memorial as presented, but they are capable of learning it, and parroting it *as true fact*, while at the same time using that message to reify their own worldview.

My conversation with the elderly couple from Virginia (interview 3A) was the most telling example of this. The husband made it clear that he was a Confederate sympathizer, as his ancestors had been. He made it clear that he believed "the blacks" were better off enslaved than in their modern condition as "welfare slaves." He also expressed his firm belief that the Union was not worth saving and that Lincoln was a kind of national criminal. Yet he proposed to his wife on the site of Lincoln's memorial and made a pilgrimage to the site annually with his wife to celebrate their personal union.

I asked him how he could reconcile those views. His answer was straightforward: "Look, we've got a gay son.

I'm a conservative, but I'm going to vote Democrat party for the first time in my life because we want our boy to be able to get married in the state of Virginia. America is the way it is because of that man [indicates the Lincoln Memorial]. Whether I agree with it or not, it's the way it is. I can celebrate that even if I don't always agree with it."

This revealed to me a crack in the veneer of this man's worldview. From a pedagogical standpoint we might well refer to this "crack" as transformational learning. The subject, here, was loyal to his culture and his heritage, he was capable of absorbing the narrative of the site in question while *choosing* to disbelieve it, and yet, in the end, he had *changed*. His experience at the site was, ultimately, a tool for his personal evolution. This man - who could claim rock-ribbed conservative values - had allowed his values to evolve. He utilized as a justification of that evolution an outlook he had inherited from Lincoln and his relationship with that man's memorial! My subject had not learned anything about "the facts of history," but he had experienced a transformation in his personal viewpoint. Learning had taken place in a way that none of the designers of the site's "curriculum" could have ever considered.

Many of my interviewees expressed a similar version of this logic. While they might not agree with the message of the Lincoln Memorial and the actions of the man for whom it was dedicated, they can accept the impact the site has on them as individuals. My interviewee from Virginia was no celebrant of African American liberation, but he was willing to fight for the acceptance of diversity on the part of his son. He can hold in his mind seemingly contradictory beliefs without having those beliefs being negated by cognitive dissonance. Thus a Confederate sympathizer who believes the union should not have been preserved can celebrate the life and memory of the man who preserved the union. A visitor "cherry picks" the aspect of the narrative that has meaning to them, using it to reify their personal worldview, while disregarding all that is seemingly contradictory.

This apparent paradox arises from an aspect of memory place overlooked in the theoretical ponderings of the likes of Nora: memory places, to a lesser or greater extent, are essentially democratic. In a modern Western democracy, the views expressed at a memory place are typically those of the prevailing hegemon: a government, a foundation, an agenda. Successful memory places act as cultural binders because they have broad appeal.

But democracy, itself, negates the absolute authority of the hegemony because it is dictated by democratic rule. In the West, the price of disagreement is negligible. The position of the hegemon may shift as quickly as the next election. So while persons may be passionate about their views, they can accept the stance of the majority, live with it, live *under it*, and still fundamentally disagree.

This has been an aspect of American democracy for close to two centuries, as observed by Alexis de Tocqueville in his landmark work *Democracy in America*, published in 1835. In his chapter on the "Tyranny of the Majority," de Tocqueville observes how this contradiction is made manifest and subsequently reconciled:

In my opinion the main evil of the present democratic institutions of the United States does not arise, as is often asserted in Europe, from their weakness, but from their overpowering strength; and I am not so much alarmed at the excessive liberty which reigns in that country as at the very inadequate securities which exist against tyranny.

When an individual or a party is wronged in the United States, to whom can he apply for redress? If to public opinion, public opinion constitutes the majority; if

to the legislature, it represents the majority, and implicitly obeys its injunctions; if to the executive power, it is appointed by the majority, and remains a passive tool in its hands; the public troops consist of the majority under arms; the jury is the majority invested with the right of hearing judicial cases; and in certain States even the judges are elected by the majority. However iniquitous or absurd the evil of which you complain may be, you must submit to it as well as you can.

As de Tocqueville states: "However iniquitous or absurd the evil of which you complain may be, you must submit to it as well as you can." Surely, we have all experienced this in our own political life - the frustration of a policy being supported and carried out in our name by our government and being celebrated by those around us, when we ourselves fundamentally disagree with it. Our only recourse is to live with it - and perhaps work to make a change at the ballot box that will result in a change of that policy. Until that time comes, our only option is a shrugging resignation.

Thus the seemingly contradictory views of our pro-Confederate Virginian are explained. He might not agree

with the way the tides of history have turned, but he has admitted his own opinion is not favored by the majority. So he has agreed, within himself, to live with that and extract from the situation that which is beneficial to him. But because of the nature of democracy, he is under no penalty for not moderating his views in favor of the majority. He has a right to his dissenting opinion while at the same time taking advantage of the way things are.

History is a subject, arguably, that is particularly prone to this form of democratization. As has been discussed, unlike mathematics, chemistry, or physics, it is an inherently subjective discipline. Lacking a time travel device, our knowledge of history is gleaned from interpretation. Thus any narrative presented at a historical site is, itself, the result of interpretation. There is no "proof" that any particular interpretation is especially correct, only a case that can be made based upon evidence. Another interpreter might use the same evidence to build a different case.

Thus, as has been a central thesis of this dissertation, all site visitors are themselves playing the role of historians - not merely students. The memory place makes its case - it is up to the learner to decide what to accept and what to reject. The message can be fully

learned, but not necessarily fully incorporated into one's worldview. "I accept it," one seemingly says, "but I don't have to believe it."

As a result multiple narratives may emerge around a site - and not necessarily supported or acknowledged by the site itself. In the case of the Lincoln Memorial, it became a backdrop for just such a "narrative conflict" - in that it was co-opted by the various forces in the American Civil Rights movement to buoy their cause. Memory places, because of their role as cultural icons with a message subject to interpretation, thus often become contested spaces, as varying aspects of a shared culture vie to use them for their own ends.

Memory Place as Contested Space

One might be tempted to dismiss the significance of memory places as a purely Western concept. Indeed, while it is true that the very concept has arisen from a study of Western European and American history, there is much evidence that memory places are to a lesser or greater extent universal. We need only turn to the example of the Temple Mount or Lenin's Tomb or to the Forbidden City for tangible examples. Israel does not control the Mount and the Soviet Union and Imperial China are dead, yet these places remain culturally significant objects though their

initial purpose has been surpassed. These spaces remain significant because they have been co-opted by a newly emerged culture - a fresh hegemon.

In the way that the Pyramids have meaning for modern Egyptians, almost utterly divorced from their ancient history, a site like Lenin's tomb remains significant to post-Soviet Russia. That being said, memory places are often found at the epicenter of cultural and political conflicts. The Temple Mount is perhaps the epitome of such a site. It is of primary importance to the identity of Jews the world over, but is controlled and, indeed, currently consecrated by Muslims.

To a lesser, but still significant extent, the Lincoln Memorial has undergone a similar process. It was built to celebrate the man who "saved the Union" from division during the Civil War and who, in the process, ended slavery in the United States. Yet it was erected at a time in which racial division among Americans was at its apex - the era of Jim Crow. As was covered in the previous chapter, though the Lincoln Memorial was initially consecrated as a monument to national unity, on its opening day the audience in attendance was forcibly divided.

From the very beginning the site became a pawn in the American Civil Rights movement. Initially it was meant to

serve as a representation of national unity under benevolent white rule, but soon became a backdrop - a stage piece - for Civil Rights advocates. This culminated in Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr's. 1963 "I Have a Dream" speech. From that moment forward, the Lincoln Memorial was re-consecrated as a purer symbol of national unity, for all races. And it was re-consecrated by outsiders, the protestors who chose to co-opt and embrace a majoritarian symbol for their own. Many of my interviewees pointed out that, for them, the Lincoln Memorial was an important site not because of Lincoln, but because of MLK.

Today, the Memorial itself embraces its role in the Civil Rights movement in a way that would have been unthinkable to those who engaged in its initial consecration at the height of Jim Crow. Yet the site continues in its same mission: a monument to the enduring cohesion of the United States. Though now it stands in this stead unironically.

Memory places exist as fixed points of cultural cohesion. In order to fulfill this function, they are necessarily learning spaces - their message must be propagated. But because they are controlled by a hegemon, yet relevant to an entire culture, they are essentially democratic spaces. The result of this interchange, is that

memory places are also inherently contested spaces. The more visible and relevant a site is, the more likely that it will serve as a backdrop for political and cultural debate. Various factions will attempt to embrace and, indeed, co-opt such sites as a means of using their authority to advance their message. The Lincoln Memorial is frequently utilized as a backdrop for both the American Left and the American right: from Louis Farrakhan to Glenn Beck. Both sides see in the site a message relevant to their personal movement.

On the day after Election Day, 2008 I rather paradoxically found myself in Paris, France. After a quiet dinner in the Latin Quarter, we made our way to the Arc de Triomphe - which Nora refers to as the master symbol of *France*. My wife and I found a massive pro-Barack Obama rally proceeding in force. We joined in and spoke to members of the crowd, who made it clear this was not so much a pro-Obama event as it was an anti-George W. Bush event. Those in attendance dismissed the fact that the Arc itself had been erected by a warlike and dictatorial autocrat favoring exceptionalism for his own nation at the expense of the rest of the world. Like the Lincoln Memorial, by 2008 the Arc had been re-consecrated not in the spirit of Napoleon, but to celebrate the democratic

values of the Fifth Republic. The lump of stone has never changed - only aspects of the message which it represents. Yet it still acts as a binding force for the nation as a whole.

This is neither a modern nor a purely Western concept. In 1401 BC, pharaoh Thutmose IV excavated the fabled Sphinx of Egypt and restored it to its former glory. The Sphinx was a thousand years older than Thutmose; so ancient in fact he had no idea why his ancestors had built it. Yet he recognized its power as a culturally binding object and he co-opted it for himself to legitimize his authority. We know this from the "Dream Stele" which he erected at the base of that great monument, which states: "Then he found the majesty of this noble god speaking from his own mouth like a father speaks to his son, and saying: 'Look at me, observe me, my son Thutmose. I am your father Horemakhet-Khepri-Ra-Atum. I shall give to you the kingship [upon the land before the living]....[Behold, my condition is like one in illness], all [my limbs being ruined]. The sand of the desert, upon which I used to be, (now) confronts me; and it is in order to cause that you do what is in my heart that I have waited'" (Shaw, 2000, p. 254).

Thutmose IV dreamed that if he restored the Great Sphinx then Egypt would become his kingdom. When he became

Pharaoh he restored the statue in his own honor - consecrating this master symbol in his own name. In this way power is both granted to memory places and derived from them.

As such, memory places will always be contested spaces. They are important icons of our culture - indeed as the likes of Nora have suggested, they are shorthand *for* our culture. Thus we fight over what they mean and we use them as stages in order to advance our own agendas.

This is exemplified by how James Farmer, the founder of the Congress on Racial Equality, summarized African Americans' embrace of the Lincoln Memorial: "'It doesn't say anything about what we thought about Lincoln,' Farmer explained. 'It says something about how great the image of Lincoln was, and it was something we could use to achieve our noteworthy objectives, that's all'" (Sandage p. 150). The Lincoln Memorial became the "protest place," as one Civil Rights leader called it. Its use and its importance gave voice to the protestors who chose it as a stage.

Memory places, because they are learning spaces, will likely always be regarded as contested spaces. Competing aspects of a society want to utilize the power and importance of such spaces to advance their own message - because they are intrinsic tools of information

dissemination; whether this be at the site of the Lincoln Memorial in 1963, the site of the Sphinx in 1401 BC, or the site of the Temple Mount today. History is subjective - but history has a tangible impact of the "now." The past and the present cannot be separated because our understanding of the present is informed by our interpretation of the past and vice versa. Each generation attempts to imbue a memory place with its own message - and thus stake its own claim to the prevailing cultural zeitgeist.

Memory Place: A Pedagogical Model

The pedagogical model experience at a memory place like the Lincoln Memorial is complex, but recognizable. However, my study demonstrates that site managers are likely largely unaware of how the public is approaching and engaging with their site from an education perspective. Indeed, site staff see themselves as the teachers and their public as the learners. They view themselves as the arbiters of an essentially true story - which they are trying to propagate.

However, as has been discussed above, the public approaches learning this story in a somewhat circumspect fashion. Their engagement is not politically and ideologically neutral. Because a memory place is a

cultural object, the public does not approach it as a "blank slate" - they enter the interchange with their own assumptions, biases, and worldview. Engaging a memory place is not like learning to fill out a tax form, drive a car, or solve a differential equation. It is a matter of engaging multiple worldviews in a dialogue, each from a differing perspective of authority. The individual is not so much being *taught* as being *pleaded with*. A case is being made, not a lesson being learned. Like a juror, members of the public might agree with all, part, or none of the State's case, accepting that which they find relevant.

I have graphically represented this learning model as follows:

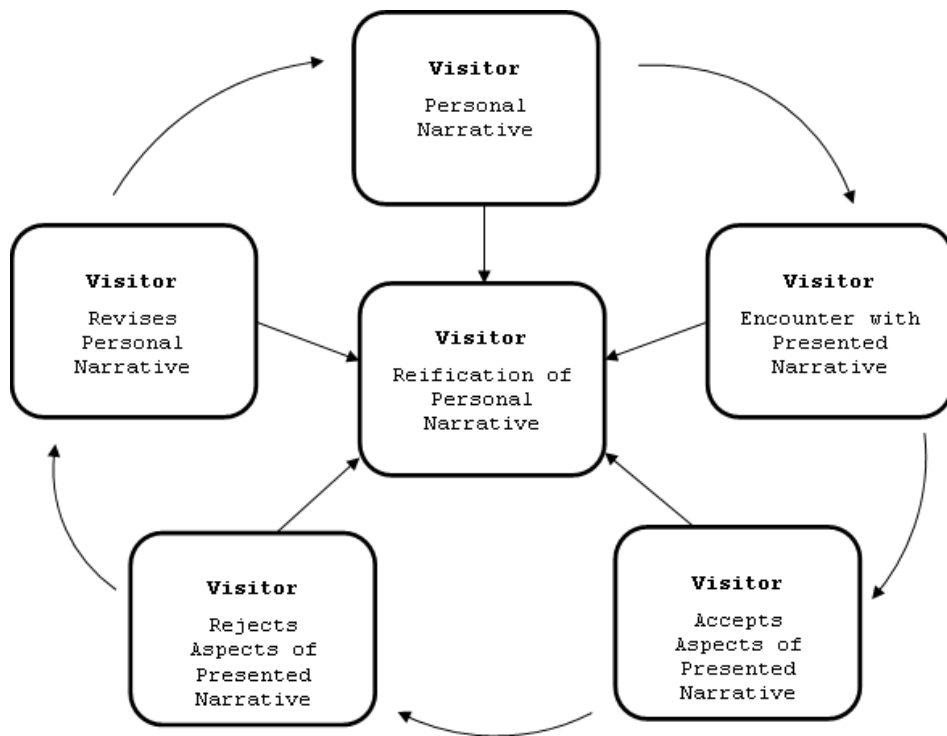


Figure 3. **Revised Learning Model**

A visitor arrives with their own understanding of the site and what it means in their head. They encounter the site and the “lesson” that is being taught there. They accept aspects of what is being presented that comport with their worldview and they reject aspects of the presentation that do not. They then revise their personal narrative while at the *same time* allowing their worldview to be reified. Visitors with less knowledge of a site and what it represents are likely to be more easily influenced by the presented narrative (as was demonstrated by many of my non-American interviewees), whereas visitors with very

strong preconceived views are less likely to be influenced.

Visitors will allow themselves to be challenged to the extent to which they are comfortable. Beyond that, they will resort to their personal narrative. They will not sacrifice their own part in sharing the cultural symbol for adherence to a narrative with which they do not agree.

Perhaps disappointingly to historians who want to "tell the truth" regarding a site and its subjects, the observed reality is that the public approaches a memory place with the intention of learning the narrative it wants to learn. A narrative that does not reify, in some way, a personal worldview will simply be rejected. Site managers are, perhaps, subconsciously aware of this fact. Perhaps Alabamans do not want to believe that one of their favorite daughters was a communist, perhaps Jews do not want to admit that there is no archeological evidence of an ancient Davidic Kingdom in the Holy Land, perhaps Americans do not want to admit that Abraham Lincoln was overtly anti-slavery. Those "truths" are too disturbing to our chosen cultural history, though they are a part of *actual* history, so we never force ourselves to face them.

Those who wish to use memory places as teaching tools must approach them with caution. These sites are not warehouses of *the* truth; they are tellers of a truth. Each

generation will take the pieces of that story that supports its own narrative and reject those that do not. The public historian is trapped between what is real and what we want to be real, challenged ethically to manage those two often competing biases.

Thus we are left with one overarching challenge: using the memory place to tell a story that approximates reality in a fashion gentle enough to not result in wholesale rejection by one facet of the culture and wholesale cooption by another. We must teach "the facts" filtered through the lens of longstanding narrative. We can challenge the public, but not to the extent that the public will reject the new narrative. Or worse, become so offended they seek to use the democratic process to overtake the site and change the narrative to suit their own ends.

Conclusion

It was the purpose of this dissertation to understand the means by which we learn history from encounters with public places; dubbed by Pierre Nora as "memory places." This end was achieved through a careful review of prevailing theories coupled with an attempt to observe those theoretical hypotheses in the field. In short, this is my ultimate discovery: our encounters with objects from

the past turn us *all* into historians.

History is a subjective discipline. Each of us must interpret what we are told about the past and what we are able to learn about it for ourselves. This is more than just *factual* knowledge, but *cultural* knowledge. History, within this public context, is more than just the story of us; it is the story of what we want to be. In exploring a memory place, we bring with us all of our learning and all of our intrinsic cultural baggage - our self-identity, our values, and our politics. We, thus, filter the narrative presented by a memory place through the mesh of our own worldview: keeping that with which we are able to reconcile ourselves and rejecting that with which we are not. Nevertheless, we are *still* learning. We will inherit and absorb the presented narrative, even when we feel that we are unable to agree with it.

Such an interchange is ultimately frustrating and challenging for the public historian as educator. In short, there is a limit to what pedagogy can achieve at a memory place. It can be used as a tool to teach reality or a tool to propagandize, but only to the extent to which a public is willing to allow itself to be challenged and to accept that which is on offer. One can learn a thing and still not believe a thing, as my observations showed.

Thus the public historian will face the eternal challenge of being a lawyer and a lobbyist as much, if not more so, than an educator. A case must be made and presented, an interpretation defended. Some publics will accept the case as it stands, others will reject all or part of it - but all will absorb it.

How do we learn history from public places? Not so much by being taught, but by consenting to agree with what is being taught and through the age-old institution that supports the foundations of democracy: public debate. A memory place, on its surface, is an icon: immoveable in its permanence. But beneath that surface is a rolling tide of conversation, debate, argument, and contention. Each generation seizes upon the permanence of the memory place and utilizes its Primary Narrative to tell a fresh story. Ethically, the public historian, as educator, must work to ensure that each new interpretation comports as closely as possible to the actual facts as we know them, rather than contravene those facts in the name of cultural solidarity. Our job is to preserve the tide of reality that flows within our shared and agreed upon cultural narrative.

The goal of this project was to answer a question: how do we learn history from public spaces? That question is answered. I have observed a pedagogical model and

interpreted it via an established theoretical framework. But in *many* respects far more new questions were proposed than were answered. The primary question of concern is: where do we go from here?

It is frustrating to conclude a research enterprise with a list of new questions, but that is the nature of any such project done well. A leading question relates to the utility of the pedagogical model proposed. How can it be used? Now that we better understand the role that public spaces play as teachers, how can that knowledge be adapted? It is hoped that this study will help to inform the managers of such facilities to be more cognizant in creating and shaping these memory places. These are contested spaces that serve a confluence of power agendas - not one-way tools of explanation and instruction.

Additionally, the operators of such places should see themselves, perhaps, as educators (and potential propagandizers) first and stewards of a facility second. The object serves the agenda - not the other way around. While there is a "lesson" to be taught, that lesson is the result of a political process, not merely a pursuit of an object "truth." A deeper understanding of that political process and the use of such memory places as tools of both authority and authoritarianism is needed.

Separate from the memory place itself, there is the question of the interplay of cognitive dissonance and cognitive bias. We now have a window onto a cognitive process in which individuals freely admit to being able to hold as "truth" multiple competing agendas. What are the roots of that cognitive process and where is it manifest elsewhere in everyday life? It appears that our ability to learn new ideas - to engage in the transformation process through pedagogy - is both mutable and frustratingly fixed.

This study and the accompanying theoretical interpretation, should serve to inform both the classroom instructor and the facilities site manager. It is a document with a foot squarely in both community education and public history. Perhaps the greatest contribution of this document is the extent to which it is clear these two disciplines require a more concerted fusion.

It is hoped, following the research presented in this dissertation, that we are now better equipped to see our public sites of memory as extensions of ourselves; both our visceral past and our vicarious present. Look on our works, ye mighty, with hope rather than despair. Armed with a new knowledge, perhaps our greatest monument to the past will not be the stones erected in its honor, but the truth enshrined within.

APPENDIX SECTION

APPENDIX A

Illustrations



Illustration 1. The author's wife and the Rosetta Stone.
The British Museum, London, United Kingdom, November 2008.
(Photo by the author.)



Illustration 2. Though the temperature hovers near zero degrees Fahrenheit, tourists flock to the National Mall in Washington, D.C. during one of the worst blizzards to strike the Eastern Seaboard in the winter of 2008-2009. Photo taken from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial facing the Washington Monument. In the foreground the Reflecting Pool is frozen over and covered in snow. March 2, 2009. (Photo by the author.)



Illustration 3. "Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!" The colossal statue of Ramesses II which served as the poet Shelley's inspiration for the poem *Ozymandias*. Notice how the pharaoh's eyes gaze down upon the onlooker. The British Museum, London, United Kingdom, November, 2008. (Photo by the author.)



Illustration 4. The perfect fake. View of the Walt Disney World United Kingdom Pavilion, Epcot Center, Orlando, Florida, June, 1987. (Photo by the author.)



Illustration 5. The genuine article. Street view of the city of Salisbury, approaching the medieval city gates and Salisbury Cathedral, Wiltshire, United Kingdom, October, 2008. Note that the Walt Disney World "Imagineers" have sought to replicate even the iconographic British litter bins. The chief difference being, of course, that the street in Salisbury contains a diversity of actual shops and businesses as well as living Britons. (Photo by the author.)



Illustration 6. The *Arc de Triomphe*, the master symbol of France, is a hyperreal monument to French history. It has gone beyond its original intended use as a memorial to the soldiers of the Napoleonic Wars and now serves as a national icon. Place Charles de Gaulle, Paris, France, November 2008. (Photo by the author.)

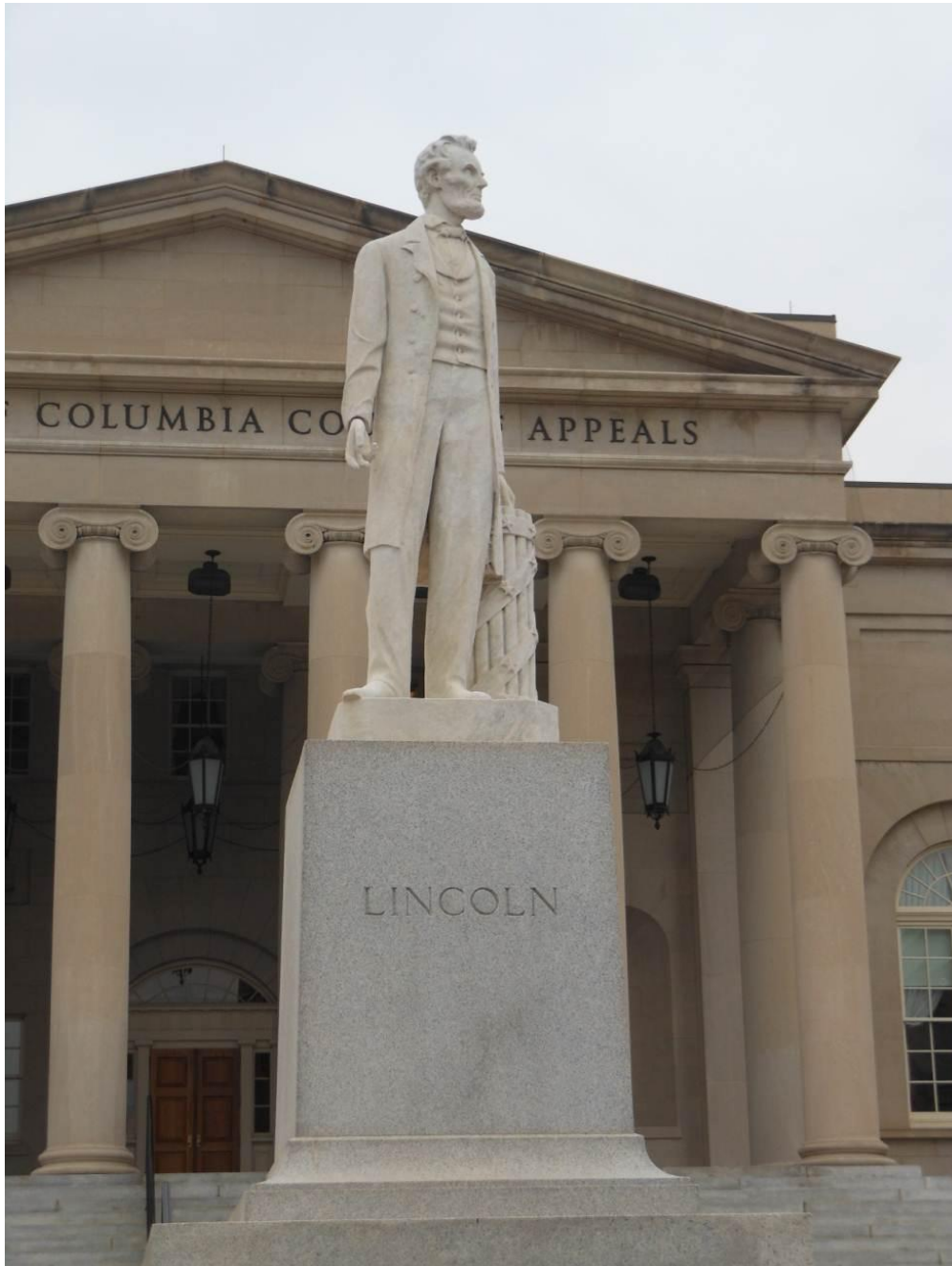


Illustration 7. The 1868 statue of Lincoln by Lot Flannery erected in front of what was then the District of Columbia City Hall, today the DC Court of Appeals located at Judiciary Square, Washington, D.C., January 2014. (Photo by the author.)



Illustration 8. "The Black Lincoln." Lincoln as slave liberator designed by Thomas Ball, 1876. The statue is in Lincoln Park, Capitol Hill, Washington D.C., January 2014. (Photo by Victoria L. Drake for the author.)

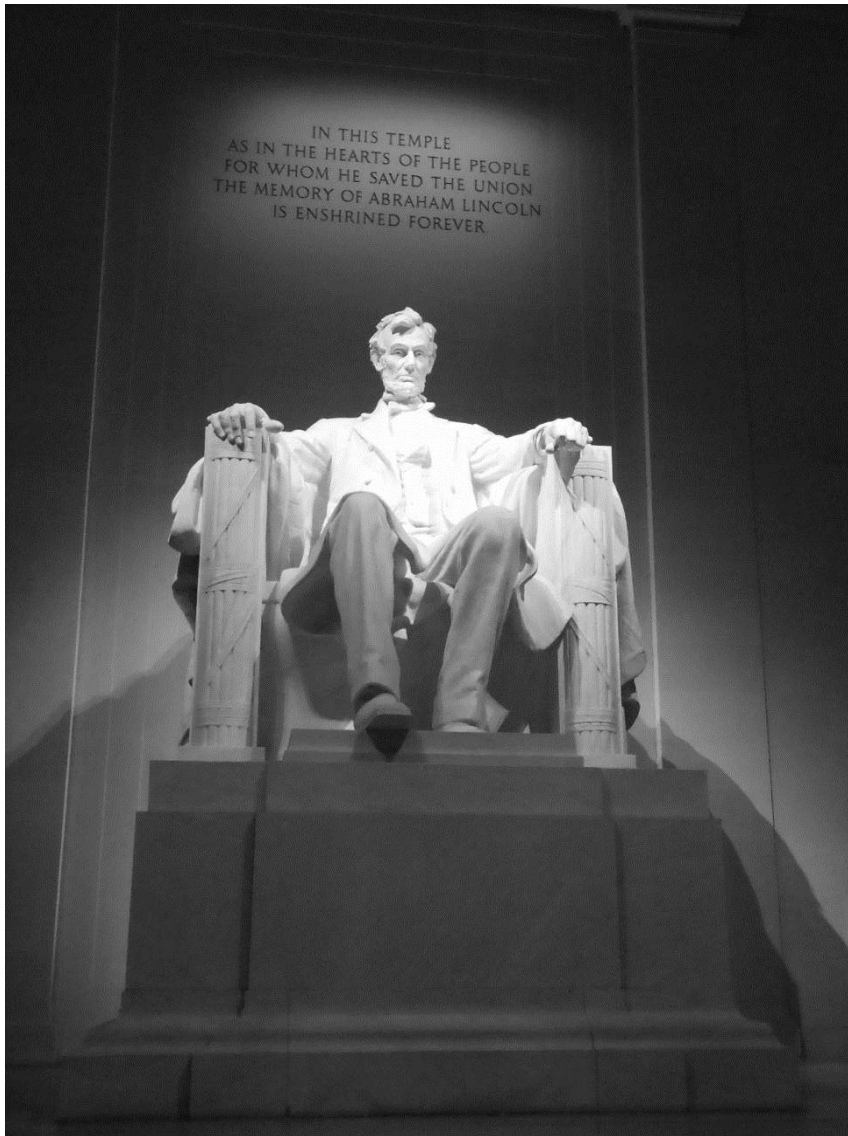


Illustration 9. Monumental statue of Abraham Lincoln, the Lincoln Memorial, Washington, D.C. Sculpted of Georgia marble by Daniel Chester French, 1920, November, 2013. The parallels between this statue and that of Ramesses II (ILLUSTRATION 3) are noteworthy. (Photo by Victoria L. Drake for the author.)



Illustration 10. The Lincoln Memorial “base camp” from which field data for this study was collected, August, 2013. (Photo by the author.)

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