

Understanding Public Memory Resource Kit

Introduction

During the protests against racial injustice after George Floyd's murder in the summer of 2020, protestors confronted monuments that stand as icons to white supremacy and violence, from the beheading of a statue of Christopher Columbus in Boston to the toppling of the Jefferson Davis statue in Richmond on Monument Avenue. Countless monuments have come down since then, and the conversation surrounding contested monuments continues. As stewards of memory, public history institutions play an essential role in understanding this transformative moment, which inspired this Understanding Public Memory Resource Kit. The kit includes AASLH conference sessions, webinars, *History News* articles, books, guides, and award winners, as well as outside memory projects, guides to monuments and memorials, webinars, and readings, to introduce perspectives on the future of monuments, contextualize the formation and dynamics of public memory, and inform how the public history field should approach, contextualize, engage, and grapple with contested monuments on a national and local level. Many resources in this kit focus specifically on Confederate monuments and iconography within the broader context of public memory.

Conference Sessions

2021 Online Conference - [Richmond's Monumental Opportunities](#)

Adapted annotation: In 2020, the Lost Cause monuments came down from Monument Avenue in Richmond, VA. In 2021, institutions are embracing monumental opportunities to collaborate with each other and with the community to face our past, dismantle the Lost Cause mythology, and craft a new vision for the future. Panelists discuss ways their institutions have approached these opportunities through means such as interpretation, digital content, new installations, and community outreach; the challenges of dealing with contested monuments and the lessons they have learned from their experiences; and considerations for how to navigate what to put in a removed monument's stead. This session also poses questions and offers best practices that attendees should consider when grappling with monuments in their communities.

2021 Online Conference - [Memorializing African American History: Cemeteries, Monuments, and Markers](#)

Adapted annotation: This session overviews projects dedicated to memorializing African American history in New Jersey through the preservation, creation, and restoration of cemeteries, markers, and monuments. In presenting their projects, panelists discuss the forgotten and often obscured story of the African American experience in New Jersey and the importance of honoring and commemorating the lives, presence, and contributions of African Americans who lived in the New Jersey area but were written out of the region's historical memory. The session opening and closing remarks emphasize the significance of these projects in that cemeteries, monuments, markers, and historic sites in general are increasingly understood as manifestations of what should be and is being remembered.

2020 Annual Meeting - [When is Historic Preservation Radical?](#)

Adapted annotation: Historic preservation is radical when it gives a voice to those who would otherwise remain voiceless. Panelists in this session discuss their historic preservation projects of sites that stand as monuments to African American history and culture in Ohio and Alabama and how these projects showcase the radicalization of historic preservation through community leadership, engagement, and collaboration. In their presentations, speakers consider how physical spaces are manifestations of a community's identity and history and how preserving those spaces memorializes that community's legacy. This session also provides first steps for expanding the *conversation* to highlight absences and presence in historic preservation.

Webinars

[Monuments and Memory \(2020\)](#)

Adapted annotation: In this webinar, Ashleigh Lawrence-Sanders of the University of Dayton, Estevan Rael-Galvez of Creative Strategies 360°, and Todd Groce of the Georgia Historical Society address the connections between the current wave of protests and the nation's rapidly changing commemorative landscape. In the conversation, panelists discuss topics such as the history behind the current confrontation of monuments and questioning of the historic landscape; how monuments are instruments of power and stand as icons to colonial violence, patriarchy, and slavery; and the role museums can play in a moment when history is more relevant than ever before to a public looking for answers. In the webinar Q&A, speakers answer questions relating to dealing with different types of monuments, navigating working with institutional leaders who don't see a problem with contested monuments, and rethinking how communities remember and commemorate their history.

History News article adapted from webinar: "Monuments and Memory." *History News* 75, no. 3 (Summer 2020): 8–13.

[The Lost Cause: The Confederacy's Most Enduring Myth \(2018\)](#)

Adapted annotation: This webinar, presented by Caroline E. Janney, explores the origins and effects of the "Lost Cause," which Dr. Janney defines as a Confederate memory of the war that

sought to put the causes and consequences of the war in the best possible light. In a survey of the period between 1865 and the present, this webinar examines the central tenants, origins, leading architects, and rationale of the Lost Cause and how Confederates established this history of the war. Dr. Janney addresses how the Lost Cause has fared from the Civil War Centennial (1961–1965) to the present day in the aftermath of the 2015 shooting at the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina that renewed resistance to the Lost Cause and the more recent removal of Confederate monuments.

[Grappling with Confederate Monuments and Iconography \(2016\)](#)

Adapted annotation: The tragic shootings at Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston in June 2015 precipitated a national outcry against the Confederate flag. The controversy has since expanded to include Confederate monuments and statues. In this webinar, speakers Kevin Levin, Gordon Jones, and Dina Bailey address how the field of state and local history can respond to the growing debate over Confederate monuments and iconography. Among the suggestions of how the public history field can engage in the conversation are community outreach, corrective markers, interpretive panels, monument inventory, providing sources of reliable information, and taking an honest look at the racism and white supremacy Confederate monuments symbolize and perpetuate and how that perpetual symbolism affects our communities.

History News

Rael-Gálvez, Estevan. [“Centering Truths, Not So Evident: Reimagining the Santa Fe Soldiers’ Monument.”](#) *History News* 75, no. 4 (Autumn 2020): 22–27.

Annotation: This article gives a brief history of the Santa Fe Soldiers’ Monument and offers suggestions for reinterpreting it. Dr. Rael-Gálvez’s insight into reimagining this monument offers inspiration for how communities grappling with harmful commemorative memorials that perpetuate and codify violence in historical memory can work to transform those sites into spaces of healing and reconciliation. Through reinterpretation and renewed installations, these communities can tell the stories of and memorialize those purposefully left out of the nation’s collective historical memory.

Select passage: “Given the full and layered history of the obelisk, I believe in a collective and creative capacity to reimagine it to generate dialogue about the past. More than any other memorial in this landscape, it holds tremendous potential to re-present history and memorialize those impacted by slavery, either fighting against its spread or those fallen victim to the experience, albeit another, different slavery. While I believe some monuments should come down because their existence is indefensible in their effect of embodying the stories of domination in single individuals, this one held and holds still the potential to evolve.”

Books and Guides

Allison, David B., ed. [*Controversial Monuments and Memorials: A Guide for Community Leaders*](#). Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2018.

Shortened annotation from Rowman and Littlefield: Out of the chaos and pain of Charlottesville, museum professionals, public historians, and community leaders must move quickly to face the challenges of competing historical memory, claims of heritage desecration and the ongoing scourge of racism. This book takes on the tough issues that communities across America---and analogous locales overseas---must face as white supremacy, political quagmires and visions of reconciliation with the past collide.

The events of summer of 2017 that culminated in Charlottesville are outgrowths of ongoing dialogues and disputes about controversial history that encompass numerous historical situations and touch every part of US history. Strategies for working effectively with communities will be explored, and the book will delve into the ways that other countries have attempted to overcome their painful pasts. In addition, this book will highlight essays and case studies from numerous museum professionals, scholars and civic leaders as they grapple with the past they interpret for their visitors.

Levin, Amy K., and Joshua G. Adair, eds. [*Defining Memory: Local Museums and the Construction of History in America's Changing Communities*](#). 2nd ed. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2017.

First edition annotation from Rowman and Littlefield: Defining Memory uses case studies of exhibits from around the country to examine how local museums, defined as museums whose collections are local in scope or whose audiences are primarily local, have both shaped and been shaped by evolving community values and sense of history. Levin and her contributors argue that these small institutions play a key role in defining America's self-identity and should be studied as seriously as more national institutions like the Smithsonian and the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Second edition annotation from Rowman and Littlefield: This updated edition of Defining Memory: Local Museums and the Construction of History in America's Changing Communities offers readers multiple lenses for viewing and discussing local institutions. New chapters are included in a section titled "Museums Moving Forward," which analyzes the ways in which local museums have come to adopt digital technologies in selecting items for exhibitions as well as the complexities of creating institutions devoted to marginalized histories.

In addition to the new chapters, the second edition updates existing chapters, presenting changes to the museums discussed. It features expanded discussions of how local museums treat (or ignore) racial and ethnic diversity and concludes with a look at how business relationships, political events, and the economy affect what is shown and how it is displayed in local museums.

Levin, Kevin M., ed. [*Interpreting the Civil War at Museums and Historic Sites*](#). Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2017.

Annotation from Rowman and Littlefield: Public historians working at museums and historic sites focused on the Civil War era are tasked with interpreting a period of history that remains deeply controversial. Many visitors have strong connections to historic sites such as battlefields and artifacts as well as harbor strong convictions about the cause of the war, its consequences and the importance of slavery. *Interpreting the Civil War at Museums and Historic Sites* surveys how museums and historic sites approached these challenges and others during the Civil War sesquicentennial (2011-2015). In doing so, this book offers museums and history professionals strategies to help shape conversations with local communities, develop exhibits and train interpreters. With the ongoing controversy surrounding the display of the Confederate battle flag and monuments, there has never been a more opportune moment to look critically at how the Civil War has been interpreted and why it continues to matter to so many Americans.

Macaluso, Laura A. [*Monument Culture: International Perspectives on the Future of Monuments in a Changing World*](#). Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2019.

Annotation from Rowman and Littlefield: *Monument Culture: International Perspectives on the Future of Monuments in a Changing World* brings together a collection of essays from scholars and cultural critics working on the meanings of monuments and memorials in the second decade of the twenty-first century, a time of great social and political change.

The book presents a broad view of the challenges facing individuals and society in making sense of public monuments with contested meanings. From the United States to Europe to Africa to Australia and New Zealand to South America and beyond, the contributors tackle the ways in which different places approach monuments in a landscape where institutions and ideas are under direct challenge from political and social unrest. It also discusses sharply changed attitudes about the representation of history and memory in the public sphere.

The goal is to acknowledge shared experiences through a wider perspective; to contribute to the work of the world-wide heritage community; and to document the history and shifting cultural attitudes towards monument culture across the world, encouraging a more informed approach to monuments and their meanings especially for the public and those outside of academia.

Select entries in [*The Inclusive Historian's Handbook*](#):

[Lost Cause Myth](#)

[Memorials and Monuments](#)

[Public Folklore](#)

Award Winners

2020

Award of Excellence: Illinois Holocaust Museum & Education Center for *Stories of Survival: Object. Image. Memory.*, a traveling exhibition

About the exhibition from IHMEC: *Stories of Survival* is a landmark exhibit that showcases more than 60 personal artifacts brought to America by survivors of the Holocaust and other genocides, never before on display. Exploring the relationship between objects, their meaning to the original owner and subsequent significance, each artifact is dramatically paired with oversized photographs by renowned documentarian Jim Lommasson with handwritten responses by survivors or their family members.

The objects featured in *Stories of Survival* are as everyday as a baby doll and a black suitcase and as symbolic as a young mother's cookbook and a wedding announcement. The objects were saved by survivors from genocides around the world, including Armenia, Bosnia, Cambodia, Iraq, Rwanda, South Sudan, and Syria.

The objects in this exhibition have traveled the world, sometimes seeing great tragedy, having narrow escapes, and representing fragments of home, love, family, and identity. They are a reflection of their owners' journeys and family histories. And though the objects and memories start from very different origins, from Germany to Belgium to Armenia to Syria, common threads bind them all together. These are the threads that bind us all; the common story of moving to a new land, building a new life, yet holding on to the past. We are all connected to these stories; we have them in our own families. They are the commonality of an immigrant experience, an American experience.

2019

History in Progress Award: University of North Carolina Greensboro Public History Program for the exhibit *Etched in Stone?: Governor Charles Aycock and the Power of Commemoration*

About the exhibit from AASLH: Following the removal of Governor Charles B. Aycock's name from a main campus building due to his role in advancing white supremacy, ten graduate students undertook an ambitious project to help their campus grapple with this legacy. Located in the renamed building, the exhibit explores the governor's complex legacies and the history of commemoration on campus, showing that whom we memorialize matters.

History News Award Winner Spotlight: Crisp, Christy. "Exploring Public Memory in North Carolina." *History News* (Autumn 2019): 36–37.

Award of Excellence: Westport Historical Society for *Remembered: The History of African Americans in Westport*

About the exhibit from AASLH: An exhibit and programs such as author talks, film screenings, and live performances used primary sources to reassert the forgotten contributions of African Americans to a suburban Connecticut town's history. Extensive school outreach and hands-on interactives provided multiple access points to demonstrate the relevance of black history to the viability and success of Westport, the state, New England, and the nation as a whole.

2018

Award of Merit: The Caroline Marshall Draughon Center for the Arts and Humanities, Auburn University, for the traveling exhibit *Remembering the Great War: Alabama and World War One*

About the exhibit from Auburn University: This project introduces visitors to the stories of Alabama's involvement and impact in World War I, and to the ways in which we remember those experiences today. Seventeen students worked together to research stories of Alabamians' involvement in World War I, define the visual language/identity system, generate design concepts and construct a working prototype for this traveling exhibition. The end result is an engaging, effective and elegant exhibition design that brings to life the experience of the trenches in World War I. The exhibition traveled to 23 cities across Alabama and is now part of the permanent collection at Mobile's USS Alabama Battleship Memorial Park.

2016

Award of Merit: Ford's Theatre Society for *Remembering Lincoln Digital Collection*

Shortened annotation from AASLH: The project creates a means for visitors to explore the early formation of Lincoln's legacy by understanding how people responded to his death in its immediate aftermath. As a website, *Remembering Lincoln* removes geographic barriers for users to connect with the events of Lincoln's assassination and their legacy. It enhances the ability of Ford's Theatre Society to reach a broad audience via their online presence, and it allows them to tell mission-related stories that they do not have space to share in our relatively small exhibition galleries. *Remembering Lincoln* extends the mission of Ford's Theatre by bringing the events of the assassination to life and helps today's public see Abraham Lincoln through the eyes of those for whom he was Commander-in-Chief and Chief Executive.

Outside Resources

Memory Projects

University of Virginia: [The Memory Project](#)

About the project from UVA: With funding from the Mellon Foundation and the Democracy Initiative, The Memory Project will promote research, develop curricula and programming, and create opportunities for public engagement to address issues of public memory, memory conflict, and memory politics in the wake of the right-wing violence that came to Charlottesville in August 2017. As the events of 2017, the legacies of slavery in the United States, and the problematic history of Charlottesville and the University in particular raise a host of unique challenges for scholars, policy makers, and public officials, The Memory Project aims to demonstrate that Charlottesville and the University of Virginia are at the forefront of a growing trend toward a more objective examination of the past in the service of creating a more equitable and ethical future.

Stopping Stones Project

About the project from Stopping Stones: Stopping Stones is an historical reparations endeavor designed to bring attention to the persons and places impacted by slavery, to reveal the roots of prejudice and hatred against African Americans in the United States and to catalyze actions to extinguish their impact.

Its objectives are to create memorials for enslaved Africans and African American individuals in the places where they were held and labored; engage local sponsors and citizens; encourage actions to end the abuse and discrimination of their descendants; and for each local sponsor to use the Stopping Stone and its associated digital archive to advance their own mission and purpose and to incorporate the Stone as part of the site's specific story and to help it become a forward-acting endeavor.

Cayuga Museum of History and Art (Auburn, NY): The Memory Project

About the project from the Cayuga Museum: 2021 is the 85th anniversary of the Cayuga Museum of History and Art. As the oldest operating museum in Auburn and the representative of Cayuga County's history and cultural heritage, we are using our anniversary year to reflect on how we serve our community as a space for your memory. Museums are fundamentally places to remember: to see an image or a sentence, to feel or taste or smell something that ties our work to a moment in your memory. Memory itself shapes who we are as individuals, communities, and even as a broader human race, and museums are a major part of shaping how we remember moments and individuals. Recognizing that it is a huge undertaking to represent all of our community's memory, we have created a three-part exhibition series that will focus on different areas of memory. Throughout the year, you will see rotating exhibits exploring the history, art, science, impact, process and so much more regarding how we remember.

History Colorado: Museum of Memory Initiative

Annotation from History Colorado: Museum of Memory is a public history initiative that works together with Colorado residents to co-author a shared history. We collaboratively work to

reanimate, center and amplify the histories that have long existed only in the margins and create the opportunity for the community to decide how to remember its collective past.

Museum of Memory improves participation in civic life by building more inclusive narratives of all the many people and ways that contribute to the fabric of a community. This initiative is based on the ideal that when people see themselves as the creators and makers of their own history, they also come to see themselves as the writers of their own destinies. It gathers community together and creates space for residents to actively and energetically participate in crafting a shared historical record.

[Emmett Till Memory Project](#)

About the project: The Emmett Till Memory Project is your complete guide to the legacy of Till's murder. The app takes users to the most important sites in the Mississippi Delta and beyond. At each site, the app provides expert-vetted narratives, access to relevant archival documents, and a collection of historic and contemporary photographs. The ETMP teaches users what happened at each site in 1955 and how the sites have been commemorated since 1955.

By telling Till's story from the perspective of each site, the app encourages users to wrestle with different versions of Till's story and think critically about how it has been passed on.

[GU272 Memory Project](#)

About the project: The GU272 Memory Project is the product of a collaboration among the GU272 descendants, the Georgetown Memory Project, and American Ancestors, the oldest non-profit genealogical society in America. The collective work of these groups -- which is accessible via this website -- includes a searchable online database of genealogical data for GU272 families, oral histories of more than 40 descendants, and educational material about genealogy.

[Queer Memory Project \(QMP\) of Northern Colorado](#)

About the project: The QMP of Northern Colorado is an educational and community-based project to preserve and share the region's LGBTQ+ past. Our work focuses on 1) the discovery and safekeeping LGBTQ+ accounts from the region, 2) the training of local LGBTQ+ historical activists, and 3) the communication of the LGBTQ+ past to regional audiences: educators, schools, community groups, civic leaders, partner organizations, and other members of the community in engaging ways. Ultimately, our aim is to uncover the region's queer past and to help make our communities more safe, more welcoming, and more just.

Select state memory projects:

[Arizona Memory Project](#)

[Florida Memory](#)

[Indiana Memory](#)

[Maine Memory Network](#)
[Montana Memory Project](#)

Guides to Monuments and Memorials

Monument Lab: Philadelphia, PA - [National Monument Audit](#)

Annotation from Monument Lab: Monument Lab’s research team spent a year scouring almost a half million records of historic properties created and maintained by federal, state, local, tribal, institutional, and publicly assembled sources. For our deepest investigations, we focused on a study set of approximately 50,000 conventional monuments representing data collected from every US state and territory. The National Monument Audit allows us to better understand the dynamics and trends that have shaped our monument landscape, to pose questions about common knowledge about monuments, and to debunk falsehoods and misperceptions within public memory. The National Monument Audit is meant to inform Mellon’s landmark Monuments Project, a \$250 million investment designed to “transform the way our country’s histories are told in public spaces and ensure that future generations inherit a commemorative landscape that venerates and reflects the vast, rich complexity of the American story.”

Library of Virginia: Richmond, VA - [A Conversation About Monuments](#)

Ford’s Theatre: Washington, D.C. - [Monuments and Memorialization: A Resource Guide](#)

Annotation from Ford’s Theatre: In the last several years, how we remember and memorialize the Civil War has been a hot topic in the United States. Each year, some event or action brings it into sharp focus, and that is true yet again in June 2020.

Exploring how and by whom Civil War stories have been told over time empowers us to participate in shaping how we build our civic spaces and to use those spaces to tell American experiences. As a site of national memory and political violence, Ford’s Theatre is well positioned to provide a forum for such conversations.

At Ford’s Theatre we believe that the monument landscape is not static and should not be unchangeable. People create it, change it and expand it as we change and grow as a people and as a nation.

At Ford’s, we turn to history and primary sources to contextualize and interpret the monument landscape. Below are some of our staff’s recommendations as we each navigate our personal and professional responses to these nuanced and complicated discussions.

American Civil War Museum: VA - [Monument Avenue: A Select Reading List](#)

Annotation from the ACWM: The American Civil War Museum offers this short annotated list of secondary sources for you to further explore the history of post-emancipation Virginia and the

origins and development of Monument Avenue. In addition to histories, we recommend a number of readings and resources on the challenges of public memorialization in a pluralistic democracy.

Webinars

International Coalition of Sites of Conscience, *Whose Hero? New Perspectives on Monuments in Public Landscapes*, [Panel Discussion](#) and [Workshop](#) (2020)

Panel Discussion annotation from Sites of Conscience: Around the world, historic monuments erected in honor of racist systems and their supporters are coming down at a speed once thought impossible. What can we learn from this public reckoning and how can we ensure that new monuments are more inclusive and democratic? In this webinar series, four women artists and activists explored ways in which landscapes and monuments can be understood through indigenous and feminist perspectives.

Workshop annotation from Sites of Conscience: From conversations around confederate memorials and the memorialization of Native American heritage, public dialogue that addresses the historical exclusion inherent in many current existing representations of marginalized groups is profoundly important. This half-day workshop aimed to help museums and communities deepen their understandings of feminist and indigenous ways of utilizing landscapes, objects and dialogic thinking for memorialization and justice.

Participants heard creative ideas from artist and curator Jolene Rickard, consultant and media expert Michelle Schenandoah, landscape architect Julia Watson and historian Sally Roesch Wagner and then had opportunities to work together to reflect on their own communities and create concrete plans for change.

International Coalition of Sites of Conscience, [What Next? Perspectives on the Future of Divisive Monuments](#) (2020)

Annotation from Sites of Conscience: Monuments erected to honor racist histories and venerate the architects of systemic injustice were built to cause division and reinforce inequitable power structures, with particularly traumatic effects on communities of color. While a majority of Americans now support the removal of Confederate statues from public spaces, and divisive monuments have been toppled at a rate once thought unimaginable, how can communities ensure that our commitment to ending systemic racism will not dissipate after the monuments – and the media covering them – have left the scene?

Moderated by Alissandra Cummins, Director of the Barbados Museum and Historical Society and Vice-chair of the Coalition's board, and with the participation of Erin Thompson, full-time professor of art crime at CUNY, and Melanie Adams, Director of the Smithsonian's Anacostia Community Museum, this webinar will examine how communities can best transform divisive objects or spaces into ones that explicitly support racial equity. Panelists will share various

cultural, ethical and economic perspectives on the best path forward, exploring questions such as: When is removal necessary? When should contextualization – whether in its original site or at a museum – be considered, and what kinds of contextualization are most useful? And who is best equipped to facilitate these conversations and make these decisions?

World Monuments Fund, [The Confederate Monument Debate: International Perspectives on the Future of Monuments with Difficult Pasts \(2020\)](#)

Shortened annotation from WMF: The recent deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and countless others have led to massive protests across the United States calling for social justice in the name of Black Lives Matter. The destruction of Confederate memorials depicting white supremacists and slave owners has become a central issue in these protests. In recent years, protestors from Paris to Cape Town have made similar demands to remove monuments with roots in colonialism, imperialism, and systemic racism. This global movement highlights fundamental debates surrounding cultural preservation, notions of global heritage and ownership, and the public sphere. How do we make decisions about these monuments and places that are inclusive and representative of multiple perspectives?

Chicago Monuments Project [Events](#)

About the project: The Chicago Monuments Project intends to grapple with the often unacknowledged – or forgotten – history associated with the City’s various municipal art collections and provides a vehicle to address the hard truths of Chicago’s racial history, confront the ways in which that history has and has not been memorialized, and develop a framework for marking public space that elevates new ways to memorialize Chicago’s history more equitably and accurately.

Reading

Blight, David W. [Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory](#). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001.

Shortened annotation from Harvard University Press: In 1865, confronted with a ravaged landscape and a torn America, the North and South began a slow and painful process of reconciliation. The ensuing decades witnessed the triumph of a culture of reunion, which downplayed sectional division and emphasized the heroics of a battle between noble men of the Blue and the Gray. Nearly lost in national culture were the moral crusades over slavery that ignited the war, the presence and participation of African Americans throughout the war, and the promise of emancipation that emerged from the war. *Race and Reunion* is a history of how the unity of white America was purchased through the increasing segregation of black and white memory of the Civil War.

Blight delves deeply into the shifting meanings of death and sacrifice, Reconstruction, the romanticized South of literature, soldiers’ reminiscences of battle, the idea of the Lost Cause,

and the ritual of Memorial Day. He resurrects the variety of African-American voices and memories of the war and the efforts to preserve the emancipationist legacy in the midst of a culture built on its denial. Blight's sweeping narrative of triumph and tragedy, romance and realism, is a compelling tale of the politics of memory, of how a nation healed from civil war without justice. By the early twentieth century, the problems of race and reunion were locked in mutual dependence, a painful legacy that continues to haunt us today.

Dickinson, Greg, Carole Blair, and Brian L. Ott, eds. [Places of Public Memory: The Rhetoric of Museums and Memorials](#). Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 2010.

Shortened annotation from University of Alabama Press: *Places of Public Memory: The Rhetoric of Museums and Memorials* is a sustained and rigorous consideration of the intersections of memory, place, and rhetoric. From the mnemonic systems inscribed upon ancient architecture to the roadside accident memorials that line America's highways, memory and place have always been deeply interconnected. This book investigates the intersections of memory and place through nine original essays written by leading memory studies scholars from the fields of rhetoric, media studies, organizational communication, history, performance studies, and English. The essays address, among other subjects, the rhetorical strategies of those vying for competing visions of a 9/11 memorial at New York City's Ground Zero; rhetorics of resistance embedded in the plans for an expansion of the National Civil Rights Museum; representations of nuclear energy—both as power source and weapon—in Cold War and post-Cold War museums; and tours and tourism as acts of performance.

By focusing on “official” places of memory, the collection causes readers to reflect on how nations and local communities remember history and on how some voices and views are legitimated and others are minimized or erased.

Kammen, Michael. [Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture](#). New York: Vintage Books, 1991.

Shortened annotation from Penguin Random House: In this groundbreaking, panoramic work of American cultural history, Michael Kammen examines a central paradox of our national identity. How did “the land of the future” acquire a past? And to what extent has our collective memory of that past—as embodied in our traditions—been distorted, or even manufactured? Ranging from John Adams to Ronald Reagan, from the origins of Independence Day celebrations to the controversies surrounding the Vietnam War Memorial, from the Daughters of the American Revolution to immigrant associations, and filled with incisive analyses of such phenomena as Americana and its collectors, “historic” villages and Disneyland, *Mystic Chords of Memory* is a brilliant, immensely readable, and enormously important book.