

CHOOSING HOW TO REMEMBER:
NEGATIVE HERITAGE AND VALUES-CENTERED PRESERVATION

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A THESIS

In

Historic Preservation

Presented to the Faculties of the University of Pennsylvania in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN HISTORIC PRESERVATION

2018

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Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my friends and family for their love and support; my classmates for a fantastic two years at Penn and for inspiring me to do more and continue to challenge myself; the preservation faculty for all that I learned; and most of all, I would like to thank my advisor, Randy Mason for his seemingly boundless patience and encouragement throughout this process.

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Introduction

Negative heritage remains a vastly underexplored topic within the field of historic preservation. While there is an increasing literature on design and intervention strategies for negative heritage, less has been written about preservation processes, and how they can be used in the interpretation and management of negative heritage. Dealing with existing historic sites or the legacies of long passed negative events poses particular challenges. The changeful nature of heritage means that it evolves more quickly than built interpretation as manifested in monuments, museums, and visitor centers. This can lead to what J. E. Tunbridge and G. J. Ashworth would call “dissonance in heritage.” Dissonance can manifest as a conflict between some existing interpretation and some new social reality, shifting power dynamics, a new occurrence that resonates with a past event, or even threats to an important cultural site. This “dissonance” can result in friction between groups connected to a given piece of heritage, which impedes decision-making around preservation. When that heritage is negative that friction can be especially heated.

A key issue for sites of negative heritage is therefore not what sort of preservation approach should be employed, but rather how stakeholder groups influence the approach. Dealing with friction is nothing new to preservationists. Values-centered preservation is an important means of navigating tension between different groups. It is an approach to preservation centered on realizing multiple different values and integrating engagement into decision-making and ongoing management. This method promotes stakeholder participation in the process of finding solutions to complex preservation problems by eliciting the ways in which different groups value a given site differently.

This thesis analyzes examples of a value-based preservation approach at sites of negative heritage in an effort to better understand how this approach is used around negative heritage and to better understand its advantages and challenges. This analysis will be conducted through three case studies of negative heritage where stakeholders through or outside of organized stakeholder engagement, presented values that dramatically shaped the interpretive programs of the sites. The case studies are Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument, Manzanar National Historic Site, and the African Burial Ground National Monument. These sites were chosen because they are all located within the United States, all are managed by the National Park Service, all were subjects of recent preservation work, and all represent tragic and traumatic events characterized as a collective loss by an American minority group.

Chapter 1, the literature review, sets out a conceptual framework, briefly covering some previous works on the preservation of negative heritage including Ari Kelman's book, *Misplaced Massacre*, which serves as the inspiration for this thesis. The book tells the story of the preservation and interpretation of the Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site. Kelman's book is interpreted through the lens of values-centered preservation, arguing for its special relevance to sites of negative heritage, because it creates space for conflicting stakeholder values to be aired, and the needs of different groups to be elicited. The subsequent chapters then analyze the three case studies in a similar manner discussing the history of the sites, reviewing early preservation efforts, and then discussing the more recent preservation efforts by the National Park Service that utilized extensive stakeholder engagement. The circumstances of that engagement and its outcomes are then further

reviewed in an effort to identify the successes and shortcomings of the values-centered preservation.

For each site, the history is (of course) different, as are the preservation narratives and the specific outcomes informed by the values of each stakeholder group, yet similar stories emerge where minority groups must fight for control over their heritage sites, and once they do gain some control, they push the interpretation of those sites in new directions that challenge traditional notions of material authenticity and question the supremacy of preservation professionals.

At Little Bighorn an early campaign of preservation in honor of the federal troops who fell during the battle was questioned and eventually reinterpreted with input from the descendants of Native American participants in the battle. They placed special emphasis on the commemorative and valorizing nature of the earlier preservation, and fought for the installation of a new monument to their fallen ancestors with equal prominence to monuments erected in honor of Custer and the 7th Cavalry.

At Manzanar, a Japanese internment camp, the preservation history centers on the development of the site's interpretive program. Recognizing the difficulty that many visitors would have understanding the site with almost all of its material features gone, the Japanese American community strongly argued for the reconstruction of important elements of the camp, especially those that portrayed the site as a prison. Through this strategy, the community clearly expressed the value they placed on the representativeness of the site, rather than the authenticity of discrete elements.

And finally, at Lower Manhattans African Burial Ground, the African American community went through a process of rediscovering their history and then fighting to

protect and interpret it. The community successfully prevented the displacement of this sacred space, which proved to be extremely important for telling the stories of colonial Africans and came to represent the ongoing struggle of people of African descent for self-determination. The community asserted ownership of the site and steered the discussion around its significance. They did so by stopping the excavation of all the remains, and instating African American professionals and preservationists in important leadership positions. With members of their community directing the study of the rich archaeological evidence unearthed at the site, they were able to avoid perpetuating the construction of race as a biological fact. Instead African American professionals were able to return agency and individuality to those whose remains were uncovered on the site, by developing a whole new paradigm for the interpretation of archaeological remains.

Some might argue that professionals, who have specialized training and decades of experience should be the ones making preservation decisions. However, evidence from these cases show that leaving lay persons with a strong sense of ownership out of the process will not deter their participation, but will only warm emotions and increase tensions. Feelings are likely to run hot, even when stakeholders are engaged, but active engagement is a process that is less politically toxic and that can lead to interpretative programs far better and more reflective of the negative memory narratives than might normally be proposed by professionals. When groups that feel a sense of ownership are allowed to express that ownership, and have their values embodied in the treatments, they are more likely to support those treatments.

Two common threads link these three stories despite their different histories, stakeholders, and solutions. The primary success of values-centered preservation at all three

sites was that the final outcomes were different from those that were originally proposed by preservation professionals, largely due to pressure from the stakeholder communities. At Little Bighorn, the Native American community lobbied for the introduction of a new monument reflecting both sides of the story; at Manzanar, the Japanese American community argued convincingly for the memorialization of the site and the reconstruction of important camp elements such as a guard tower; and at the African Burial Ground, the African American community was able to halt the excavation of human remains at the burial ground and challenge the norms of archaeological practice, which had been perpetuating the construct of race.

The primary failure at all of these sites was that, in all cases, the stakeholder communities had to force the conversation and create space for their values to be heard. Once they made that space, the National Park Service (as the professional preservation entity and owner/manager of the sites) was generally quite responsive to input from those communities. But this means that as a field and as a nation we are not proactive in commemorating and addressing the legacies of loss and wrongdoing that exist within our national heritage. Instead we tend to act only in response to the outcries by affected communities as they clamor for recognition and redress of the wrongs committed against them or for the protection and interpretation of their heritage. As a field, and as a nation we must strive to more openly and readily address the dark patches of our history, and values-centered preservation offers a framework for being more inclusive and proactive.

Chapter 1: Literature Review

In *Stigmatized Space*, Sarah Moses sought to trace the origins and development of the concept of negative heritage within the Historic Preservation field, and to explore different strategies that have emerged for the interpretation of negative heritage sites. Her first step is to develop a definition. She begins with Lynn Meskell's definition of "a conflictual site that becomes the repository of negative memory in the collective imaginary."¹ From here, Moses builds on the Meskell definition to more clearly indicate the owned aspect of heritage. She states, "The term negative heritage...will be applied to the circumstances that charge or stigmatize the site of a violent, tragic, or traumatic event and are interpreted as a shared loss by a self-identified group or community."² This change to include the active interpretation of sites by self-identified groups is important as distinct from the passive idea of the "collective imaginary." Acknowledgement of ownership and action (in the form of interpretation) allows us to see the origin of the conflicts that arise around negative heritage. This definition will also serve as the working definition for this thesis.

With her definition, Moses dives into a rich literature, drawing from fields outside of preservation and heritage management to understand the psychological and broader socio-cultural contexts of dealing with trauma, as negative heritage. Moses highlights different models and examples of how people have addressed sites, looking at demolition or erasure, concretization or other artful interventions, exoneration and alteration, adaptation, and reconstruction as different typologies.³ Moses conducts a deep study of examples of each,

¹ Lynn Meskell, "Negative Heritage and Past Mastering in Archaeology," *Anthropological Quarterly*, Volume 75, Number 3, Pages 557-574. , 558.

² Sarah Moses, "Stigmatized Space: Negative Heritage in Historic Preservation" (Master's thesis: University of Pennsylvania, 2015), 8

³ Ibid.

dissecting the power dynamics and aspects of different sites that led to each memorialization strategy. As she states, “characteristics of the atrocity itself will influence its usability in heritage interpretation.” Specifically the nature of the cruelty perpetrated, the victims, the perpetrators, visibility of the event, and survival of the record can affect the propriety of different responses.⁴ Moses’s main interest in the ‘usability’ of atrocities in heritage interpretation is in terms of how heritage can be mobilized as part of a cathartic process. Her clear articulation of how aspects of the sites and the dynamics between stakeholders affect and lead to the success of certain outcomes is one of her most important contributions.

Moses chose to focus on the origins of the concept of negative heritage and different outcomes that have developed to deal architecturally with sites of it. In doing this she was unable to address process, begging the question, how was it that these outcomes were selected? This serves as the starting point for this thesis, which seeks to examine the processes by which sites of negative heritage are interpreted differently by various stakeholder groups and preservation approaches developed. Moses has laid strong groundwork for such an analysis, especially through her framework of assessing the power dynamics around a given piece of negative heritage. We see in the Moses’s work that there is no shortage of creative and imaginative ways to interpret sites of negative heritage, and we clearly understand that a primary challenge is choosing the responses to be used at a site, given that different stakeholder groups may have different feelings about how it should be interpreted. So, what methodologies are used in interpreting and reinterpreting sites of negative heritage?

⁴ Ibid., 13-14

Values-centered preservation is a preservation methodology that was explored and expounded upon by Erica Avrami, Randall Mason, and Marta de la Torre in 2000 as a part of a research report for the Getty Conservation Institute.⁵ Their goal was to explore values theory and its relevance to the field of historic preservation. The main crux of the theory is that significance does not reside in the physical remains of history, but rather that it is constructed from values through a process of valorizing.⁶ Significance is not set, but rather is changeful and constructed by different groups who hold these values. And these values can be complimentary or conflicting, and are changeful, as many preservationists will have experienced when dealing with complex preservation issues.⁷

The research report suggests some of the types of values that preservationists could be confronted with, such as economic, social, spiritual, cultural, historic, environmental, political, and so on. With these also come individuals or groups of stakeholders who hold these values for the heritage assets. One of the main tenants of values-centered preservation as a methodology is that we can arrive at better preservation outcomes if we identify all stakeholders, illicit the ways they value the heritage assets, and then develop solutions that balance the different values. Mason, in an essay from 2006, exploring the methodology says, “At the level of preservation strategy, the important contribution of values-centered preservation is the framework it offers for dealing holistically with particular sites and addressing both the contemporary and historic values of a place.”⁸ The holistic nature of

⁵ Erica Avrami, Randall Mason, and Marta de la Torre; “Values and Heritage Conservation” (The Getty Conservation Institute, Los Angeles, 2000).

⁶ Ibid., 7.

⁷ Ibid., 9.

⁸ Randall Mason, “Theoretical and Practical Arguments for Values-Centered Preservation” *CRM: The Journal of Heritage Stewardship*, 3, Number 2 (Summer 2006), 21.

values-centered preservation therefore challenges the typical authority of the expert preservationist, conservator, or archaeologist.

Mason builds on this subversion of traditional western notions of history to highlight the dichotomy of what he calls the “curatorial” and “urbanistic” preservation impulses. The first of these impulses falls comfortably within the traditional western doctrine of the field, focusing on the role of the expert in knowing how to decipher history and develop conservation strategies to save historic fabric. Mason characterizes the curatorial mode as inward looking, stating, “this impulse in preservation is consumed with professional self-definition and ever greater technical and historical skill in determining the truth and pursuing authenticity.”⁹ The foil to this is the urbanistic impulse, which Mason says, “looks outward, seeking to connect historic preservation to the work of other fields and disciplines, such as planning, design, and education, in pursuit of solutions that address broader social goals.”¹⁰ To this end, values-centered preservation, as an urbanistic approach to heritage, is about openness and the real and potential connections or conflicts between the values that preservationists hold for heritage resources and the values that lay groups hold for the same resources.

What does this preservation methodology (compared with more conventional approaches) look like in practice? The central element of the methodology is broad stakeholder participation within the process of identifying and understanding significance.¹¹ By including a wider variety of stakeholders, we produce an environment in which the various values of these stakeholders can be identified and weighed against one another, and

⁹ Ibid., 25.

¹⁰ Ibid., 25.

¹¹ As Mason says, “Participation is part and parcel of the values-centered model of preservation.” Ibid., 31.

the potential points of connection and compromise found. This is not to say that the advice and experience of experts is not to be valued or incorporated – in fact it's essential that experts and their professional values be included – but rather that experts hold specific sets of values that are viewed through the lens of their professional expertise, while a local resident or community stakeholder may hold different specialized knowledge derived from proximity to the heritage resource for a lifetime, seen through the lens of their own experience. Both of these are equally valid and important.

Within the scope of this thesis and the sites chosen, it's necessary to acknowledge that some aspects of values-centered preservation may seem less applicable. For instance, Mason suggests that this methodology is best applicable when dealing with sites where preservation is not the key issue, but more of a supporting one that could have a place at the table and something to contribute.¹² As well, a perhaps less than popular tenant of the methodology is that certain values will likely be privileged over others.¹³ Of course, this will happen regardless; it's simply less common that all of the values are aired and weighed against one another. Instead the values already clearly called out are the only ones given attention.

However, the sites being examined in this thesis are sites that privilege preservation above almost all else, each being managed by the National Park Service. However, some aspects of values-centered preservation provide interesting alternatives to previous handlings of these sites. Mason suggests that stakeholder engagement may lead to strategies that are, with regards to the actual built assets, more informal. This may seem sacrilegious, especially on sites with such a focus on what are perceived as extremely fragile heritage assets, but the

¹² Ibid., 44.

¹³ Ibid., 38.

reality of the examined sites is that they were chosen for their negative history and the lacking interpretation of that history at some stage in their lives as monuments. This poor interpretation can be inherent to the site, due to the absence of physical heritage available for interpretation. If the types of interventions are too restricted, preservationists may find their hands tied, with limited built heritage available for interesting and engaging interpretation. To give a widely known and highly controversial example, how do you compellingly tell the stories of Thomas Jefferson's slaves, if there's no visible evidence that they ever existed in that space?¹⁴

The final point made by Mason is that values-centered preservation is especially well suited to handling highly political sites, and this is the main reason why this methodology works so well with sites of negative heritage that are being reinterpreted or interpreted for the first time.¹⁵ An examination of the historical values propounded at a given site means opening up a can of political worms. Various stakeholders, regardless of whether or not they are included in the process will have something to say, and, if not included, often fight to be heard through disruption and obstruction of the process. Emotions can run especially high with negative heritage sites, because of the trauma, violence, or tragedy the sites represent. Excluding stakeholders, for whom these sites can be extremely important, is a recipe for disaster. Values-centered preservation is essentially an argument for inclusion, which can lead to more widely-supported and transparent decisions about how to interpret sensitive sites.

¹⁴ Associated Press, "Thomas Jefferson's home unveils rebuilt slave quarters to tell fuller tale of past," *The Guardian*, May 2, 2015.

¹⁵ Mason, "Values-Centered Preservation," 44.

What makes sites like those examined in this thesis so different from the typical subjects of a values-centered approach is that the types of values involved may not be so diverse, but rather there may be multiple iterations of the same type of value. Two different groups may both value a site for its history, spirituality, or social or political importance; however, the versions of a given value from each group may be in conflict. The idea of dissonance in heritage serves as model for framing these dynamics that can result in conflict.

In *Dissonant Heritage*, J. E. Tunbridge and G. J. Ashworth, examine the relativity of heritage.¹⁶ They begin by characterizing heritage as a carefully crafted interpretation of the past. This means drawing a stark distinction between history, as the set of facts about what happened in the past, and heritage, as an interpretation of the past framed within a certain world view. Essential to this view is the idea that *someone* has crafted a given heritage or a given value, that it belongs to one group, and thusly it does not belong to others.¹⁷

From this idea, Tunbridge and Ashworth delve into the frictions that develop between different groups that may both feel a sense of ownership, because of the heritages they craft, or between the heritages they craft because of differences between the groups. The authors characterize this friction as dissonance, borrowing from music a term describing the lack of harmony. Essential to their understanding of heritage is that – being a constructed set of ideas and understandings – it must be communicated, or even marketed, so Tunbridge and Ashworth put a great emphasis on the importance of messaging, and thus define four major forms of dissonance that occur in the messaging, or communication of heritage: messages that contradict, messages that are miscommunicated, messages that are

¹⁶ J. E. Tunbridge and G.J. Ashworth, *Dissonant Heritage: The Management of the Past as a Resource in Conflict* (New York: J. Wiley, 1996).

¹⁷ Tunbridge and Ashworth, *Dissonant Heritage*, 6-7.

obsolete or irrelevant, and messages that are specifically negative¹⁸ Tunbrudge and Ashworth outline a framework, not around the content of heritage, but rather around the relationships between heritage and audience or different heritages. For the authors, negative heritages are challenging to preservationists because of the responses they elicit from their audience, especially from groups with a sense of ownership over that heritage. After all, these sites often involve past violence or tragedies that can be collectively traumatic. The challenge then is working with people and the strong emotional reactions they can have to sites of negative heritage and its interpretation and management.

Misplaced Massacre provides an interesting case study.¹⁹ Kelman's book is about the Sand Creek Massacre, which occurred in Kiowa County, Colorado in November of 1864. Formerly the Battle of Sand Creek, the massacre was an attack by United States Federal troops upon a temporary settlement of Cheyenne and Arapaho Native Americans who had assembled seeking peace and protection by federal troops near Fort Lyon. Based on various accounts, about 200 Native Americans, mostly women and children, were killed. Horrific as the events of the day were, the massacre went mostly unaccounted for in broader American history, and, where mentioned, was usually described as a battle won by federal troops against an aggressive band of Indian warriors. Conflicting accounts of the massacre lead to a federal inquiry in the years immediately afterwards; however, the perpetrators of the massacre went unpunished. For most, the site was a quiet former battlefield. However, in the 1990s the National Park Service began exploring how the attack at Sand Creek could and should be commemorated, beginning an almost decade-and-a-half long process of research

¹⁸ Ibid., 28-29.

¹⁹ Ari Kelman, *A Misplaced Massacre: Struggling Over the Memory of Sandy Creek* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015).

and engagement, leading to the memorialization of the massacre as a National Historic Site in 2007.

Kelman spent much of his book discussing research that he and others conducted around the events of the massacre, attempting to clarify the facts and stories in an effort to uncover the facts of what happened. However, an even more important current within the work is a discussion about the role that all of this history played in the process of memorializing the massacre, resulting in the heritage embodied in the national monument. Kelman focused especially on the conflicting reports within the historical record and the numerous heritages that exist for involved parties, especially the conflicting sentiments of Native Americans descended from survivors of the massacre and Americans living near the site, the heirs to the legacy of American westward expansion, which includes the massacre.

Kelman's book serves as an important case study of the memorialization process for a site where a negative event occurred with conflicting historical reports. One of the most interesting threads to be pulled from his work is that of the processes by which the heated emotions and conflicting histories came together in the memorialization of the atrocity. The most inspiring piece of the puzzle was that the National Parks, as the arbiters of the process, ensured that tribal leaders, whose ancestors were killed by federal troops on the site, were included in the discussion along with historians, preservation professionals, and national park officials. In essence Kelman is highlighting an example of values-centered preservation in action, even if he doesn't give it this label.

The case presented by Kellman at Sand Creek exemplifies why values-centered preservation should be considered as a strategy for dealing with sites of negative heritage where there is a clear dissonance in how the site is valued. Both Native Americans and

Americans value the site for its history, but from very different perspectives. For natives, the site is important for the lives of their ancestors that were lost and its political value as an example of the crimes perpetrated against them, while generally Americans valued it as the location of an American “military victory.” Amongst those involved in the preservation of the site, it was generally recognized that the goal of the reinterpretation was aimed at problematizing the military history of the site and to make more visible the story of the wrongs committed against the native peoples. Interestingly though, even with most sides aligned with the purpose of representing the wrongs committed against the Native Americans, there was a clear dissonance regarding some of the simple “facts” of the event, for instance where it happened.

The historical records kept and analyzed by the National Park Service and affiliated historians indicated that the massacre had occurred in one position; however, the Native American oral tradition indicated another nearby location.²⁰ The conflict between these two sets of records presented a serious challenge to the authority of the traditional preservationists. In an unconventional but incredibly important move, the National Park team chose to respect the traditional history of Native Americans and to not write it off for its lack of alignment with their understanding of the past. Through a series of workshops and discussions, and aided by an outside investigator, the joint team was able to resolve the conflict. The crux of the discussion was the archaeological and historical evidence placing the massacre along the Sand Creek; however the description of this patch of land did not match that which was a part of the oral tradition of the Native Americans, but a bend further down the creek did, so their tradition placed the massacre there. What was

²⁰ Kellman, *Massacre*, 263-279.

discovered was that the bend in the creek had moved with the actual site having occurred closer to where the historians had placed it. But at the same time the changefulness of the site, so clearly highlighted by the native tradition, also subverted the National Park Service's understanding of the site's authenticity, since it had changed so dramatically in the decades after the massacre.

Chapter 2: Little Bighorn Battlefield, Crow Agency, MT

Custer's Last Stand; The Battle of Greasy Grass; The Battle of Little Bighorn. Three names for one battle between United States Cavalry and warriors of the Lakota, Northern Cheyenne, and Arapaho Native American plains tribes that took place along the Little Bighorn river in south, central Montana on June 25th and 26th 1876. A clear victory for the massive native force, the battle was considered a last and glorious stand for both sides. For General George Custer, who led the U.S. Cavalry forces to defeat in the battle, it was his final engagement, resulting in to the deaths of both him and all of the men directly under his command. For native peoples, the battle is considered by many to be the last major assemblage of native warriors into a force that engaged in outright battle with federal forces in defense of their lands and ways of life.

Even as fighting between U.S. federal forces and native tribes continued elsewhere, memorialization through burials, reburials and construction of progressively more permanent memorials began on the Battlefield. This process continued up to the 1940s. However, the memorials were not constructed in memory of both of these last stands, but merely in honor of Custer's, minimizing or outright ignoring the significance of the battlefield to Native Americans. This erasure of the Native participation repeats the historical trauma of the fight against westerners, in that they were first robbed of their land then their history. While the battlefield represents a Native military victory, it also stands as a site of negative heritage, within the context of the historical and ongoing trauma they experienced.

Only in the 1970s and 80s, after several decades of National Park Service control, did the caretakers of the site begin recognizing the imbalance in the interpretative program and

consider making changes to rectify the one-sidedness. At first changes were rhetorical, as the agency aimed to represent both sides while following their mandate, avoiding potentially harmful interventions in the fabric of the site. However pressure from Native communities showed that the physical battlefield insufficiently supported a balanced interpretation.

Through a series of demonstrations over the 1970s and 80s, tribal leaders made the political value they placed on a physical memorial explicit. Under mounting pressure, the National Park Service included native leaders in the discussion of what that monument should look like. Eventually, through renaming and the construction of a memorial specifically to the Native people, the events of the battle came to be interpreted in a more balanced way.

While the processes by which these changes were made did not occur under the label of values-centered preservation the Park Service responded to conflicting values between their professional urge to protect the preexisting historical narrative, and the value to native tribes of having their underrepresented narrative told. Through the incorporation of this value the Park Service managed the creation of preservation interventions that now present a more balanced and nuanced interpretation of the site and historic events that occurred there.

History

To begin, it is important to understand the events of the fighting itself so that one might understand the landscape of the battle and the preservation decisions that were made throughout the history of the site as a memorial.

The Battle of Little Bighorn was one of a series of conflicts between native tribes and U.S. federal troops known as the Sioux Wars, which are generally considered to have

lasted from the 1850s until 1890. The crux of the conflict was the U.S. policy of Forced Assimilation, which sought to relocate native peoples to designated reservations and limit their movements.²¹ As the reservations were assigned and marked out, many native peoples refused to move, leading to a series of bloody conflicts, from the Grattan Fight in 1854 to Wounded Knee in 1890. Little Bighorn was among the bloodiest for federal forces.²²

The Battle of Little Bighorn was the result of a campaign conducted by U.S. forces in the summer of 1876 to push the Lakota and the Northern Cheyenne back onto their recently diminished reservations. These tribes had won exclusive control of large chunks of what are now Wyoming and Montana in the 1868 Treaty of Fort Laramie.²³ However, in 1874, gold was discovered in the Black Hills, which were a part of that territory. The U.S. government desired to wrest control of the Black Hills from native hands, and so forced the sale of the lands in early 1876. Many natives refused to move to the newly shrunken reservations, or limit their movements to them, prompting a three-pronged campaign of the summer of 1876, drawing federal forces from Fort Ellis, Montana; Fort Lincoln, Dakota; and Fort Fettermen, Wyoming.²⁴

As hundreds of U.S. soldiers marched towards the area between Montana, Wyoming, the Dakota Territories, and the reservations of the Crow and various Sioux tribes, large numbers of Native Americans had assembled there to perform a Sun Dance, an important, traditional Plains Tribe ceremony. At such an event, large groups of Native peoples from different tribes and communities assemble to lend support to young men who engage in grueling physical acts of personal sacrifice on behalf of the tribes. The assembled Native

²¹ Robert M. Utley, *Custer Battlefield: National Monument, Montana* (National Parks Service, Historical Handbook Series No. 1, Washington, DC, 1969).

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

Americans performed their Sun Dance in early June of 1876 on Rosebud Creek in Montana. It was here that the U.S. troops first ascertained the number of Native Americans with whom they were about to engage.

Brigadier General George Crook's forces, which were marching northward from Fort Fettermen along the Powder River, found the large native encampment along Rosebud Creek on June 17th of 1876, where the two sides engaged in battle. The native force of over 1,000 warriors, led by Crazy Horse, outmatched Crook's force of about 900 soldiers, which held its line for a time before retreating with over two-dozen losses. The native force suffered slightly higher losses.²⁵

In the wake of what is called the Battle of the Rosebud, Crook retreated back towards Fort Fettermen to wait for reinforcements; however, Colonel John Gibbon, leading the force from Fort Ellis, and Brigadier General Alfred Terry, leading the force from Fort Lincoln, did not receive word that the third prong of their force had been hindered by an immense native force. Around the same time, they joined forces at the mouth of Rosebud Creek. From there General Terry ordered the young Lieutenant Colonel George Armstrong Custer to take the twelve companies of the 7th Cavalry forward to perform reconnaissance in force.²⁶ The two forces then planned to rejoin near the Bighorn and Little Bighorn rivers on June 26th or 27th. With 31 officers and 566 enlisted men under his command, and no knowledge of the size of the force with which he was preparing to engage, Custer set out.

The exact movement of the Native American forces are not well documented; however, it seems most likely that a portion, or all of the force that engaged with Crook at the Battle of Rosebud, then moved westward to join up with another large group of Native

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

Americans a little east of the Little Bighorn River.²⁷ The combined force was led largely by Crazy Horse who came from the Battle of Rosebud, Sitting Bull, Chief Gall, and Lame White Man. The native force is estimated to have numbered 1,000 to over 2,500, significantly larger than Custer's command.

As Custer marched towards his rendezvous with Terry and Gibbon, his scouts spotted a large assemblage of Native American horses from a distance, early in the morning on June 25th. Custer is said to have contemplated a surprise attack on the encampment for the morning of June 26th, but it was reported to him that some natives had spotted them.²⁸ Fearing that word of his force would quickly reach the encampment and that it would then scatter, Custer ordered an immediate attack, hoping to round up the Indians. In reality, the natives who had spotted their tracks were on their way out of the encampment, the Sun Dance having concluded.²⁹ Under no real threat of discovery, Custer began an attack, immensely misinformed with regards to the engagement ahead.

Custer split his force in three, hoping to surround the Indians, and prevent them from fleeing. He ordered Major Marcus Reno to take four companies and approach the Native encampment from the south, Captain Frederick Benteen to take three companies and scout the surrounding terrain, while he took the remainder of the force to catch the encampment from the north.³⁰ Reno advanced on the southern end of the camp under the cover of some foliage, which coincidentally, also masked the scale of the village from him until he came into the open to begin his attack. At this point, grasping the scale of the village, he stopped a few hundred yards short and formed a skirmish line from which he

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

ordered his men to fire upon the village.³¹ Coming under fire, Native American warriors began pouring out of the encampment by the hundreds, laying heavy pressure on Reno, forcing him to retreat with what remained of his men. They took cover under the brush and retreated south towards what is now known as the Reno-Benteen Hill.³²

It was here that his ragged force, still being pursued by the Native Warriors made contact with Captain Benteen and his force, which had been summoned with a messenger from Custer. Coming from the south, Benteen saw the sorry shape that Reno's men were in and moved to reinforce them. The combined force began fortifying their position digging rifle pits around the brow of the hill.³³ From this position Reno and Benteen held off attacks from the Native force that lasted into the next day when, seeing General Terry's force approaching, they retreated and dispersed.³⁴

The exact circumstances of Custer's last stand are unclear and hotly debated. Around 5:00pm on the first day of the battle, Captain Thomas Weir separated from the fortified position on Reno-Benteen Hill to attempt contact with Custer and his men. According to his account, he moved north and from a distance spotted a large group of Native warriors shooting down at the ground. It's generally understood that at this point, Custer's force had been annihilated and that the native warriors were killing the remaining soldiers on the field.³⁵ Seeing Custer and his men as a lost cause, Weir returned to Reno and Benteen's position. It's generally assumed that Custer had, similar to Reno, moved northward to the east of the native camp under cover; however, he continued further, emerging, where he expected to be, well north of the encampment. It's widely accepted that he actually arrived at

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

about the middle, where he was totally overwhelmed by native warriors.³⁶ Under their heavy assault he retreated to what is now known as Last Stand hill where he and all of the soldiers under his immediate command perished.

Early Preservation

The story of early preservation at the battlefield parallels the relations between the U.S. and native peoples that led to the battle itself; a relationship of minimal acknowledgement except through exploitation. In the wake of the battle, the site became a military cemetery and was largely interpreted as a shrine to Custer and his men who lost their lives, with little to no mention of the native peoples who were involved in the struggle.

The earliest preservation of the site was carried out in 1879, a few years after the battle, when the military sent troops to exhume the bodies and provide proper interment of the soldiers that had been quickly buried in the wake of the battle.³⁷ The military also took control of the property designating it a national cemetery. It remained open as a military cemetery until 1978 meaning that the cemetery contains the remains of soldiers who fought American wars from the Civil War through to the Vietnam War.³⁸ After reburying the dead, the U.S. troops erected a temporary marker on Last Stand Hill.

In 1881, the temporary marker atop Last Stand Hill, was replaced with a permanent one in the form of a stout marble obelisk. (See Figure 1) The memorial bears the names of all the U.S. soldiers killed during the battle. As well in 1890, small marble blocks were added

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Edward Tabor Linenthal, *Sacred Ground: Americans and Their Battlefields* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 132.

³⁸ National Park Service, *Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument, Cultural Landscape Inventory* (Washington: National Park Service, 2010), 43. National Park Service, *Foundation Document: Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument* (Washington,; National Park Service, 2015), 14.

to the battlefield to mark where soldiers were documented to have fallen. (See Figure 2) In fact, these markers are a great point of interest for the site, with the National Park Service stating that “Little Bighorn is the only known battlefield where commemorative markers denote the casualty site of every soldier, embodying a distinctive approach to memorializing and honoring the memories of the 7th U.S. Cavalry who lost their lives at this climactic battle.”³⁹

As a further emphasis of the military history of the site, the Department of the Army commemorated the battle with spectacular military showings such as gun salutes and reenactments as early as 1886.⁴⁰ In a number of the reenactments, Native Americans actually participated in traditional garb so as to show the fierceness of the “warlike Sioux and Cheyenne” as they made their last “vicious stand” against which Custer and his men so bravely fought.⁴¹

After the addition of the individual marble markers, the site remained largely unchanged until it was expanded in 1926 with Congressional approval to add the Reno/Bentzen Battlefield, memorializing the role that the other companies and commanders played in the battle. This second battlefield was wrested from the Crow Indians, the battlefield having been within their reservation in 1930.

The next change came in 1940 with the shift in control of the property from the Department of the Army, to the National Park Service, and then in 1946 with designation of the battlefield as a National Monument.⁴² In 1950, the Park Service added a public historical

³⁹ National Park Service, *Foundation Document: Little Bighorn*, 5.

⁴⁰ Collette Rachel Kinane, *Addressing the Nation: The Use of Design Competitions in Interpreting Historic Sites* (Masters Thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 2012), 61.

⁴¹ This quote comes from the brochure for a reenactment that took place in 1926, the 50th anniversary of the battle. Linenthal, *Sacred Ground*, 135.

⁴² Linenthal, *Sacred Ground*, 139.

museum to the site, with its contents mostly consisting of the donation of Mrs. Custer's collection of historical objects relating to her husband and his campaigns.⁴³ As well, in 1967 Major Marcus Reno was reinterred at the battlefield, bringing the body of one of the heroic survivors of the battle back to the site of the engagement.⁴⁴

Along with these various efforts to commemorate the 7th cavalry on the battlefield, Custer and his final defeat very quickly entered into the American psyche. Weeks after the battle occurred, word reached the East Coast of the United States where the New York Herald declared that the battle would become "...a part of our national life."⁴⁵ Six months after Custer's demise, a man named Frederick Whittaker, who had only met Custer once that same year, took it upon himself to publish a biography of him. Whittaker's "A Complete Life of General George A. Custer" was but the first in a long lineage of accounts of Custer's life, and can perhaps be considered the birth of his cult of personality.⁴⁶ Edward Linenthal explains this tradition of valorizing Custer and his defeat as a part of an American tendency to transform "defeats into moral victories."⁴⁷ Specifically the death of Custer and his regiments came to represent the "redemptive sacrifice" of the settlers and soldiers who struggled westward, in an effort to realize their young nation's Manifest Destiny to reach the western shore of the Americas.⁴⁸ In the American psyche, Custer's last stand came to represent not defeat but rather the ultimate sacrifice made for the progress of the nation, and the battlefield upon which he died served as a shrine to that sacrifice. This interpretation dominated the site for much of the one-and-a-half centuries after the battle.

⁴³ Ibid., 152.

⁴⁴ Associated Press, "Major Reno to Be Reburied," *New York Times*, September 6, 1967.

⁴⁵ Linenthal, *Scared Ground*, 128.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 131.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 132.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

Reinterpretation and the Role of Values

Under the management of the United States Department of the Army, Little Bighorn was largely, if not exclusively interpreted for its military history. The site was treated only as the place of Custer's downfall and, with its designation as a National Cemetery, as an honoring ground for fallen American troops. The result was only a partial interpretation of the site, valuing the glorification and valorization of Custer and his men who lost the battle, over the story of the native peoples who defended themselves against his surprise attack within the context of their fight for their way of life. In 1940, when the National Park Service took control of the site, the rangers pushed the interpretive scheme towards being more inclusive; however, the physical character of the site still failed to embody the Native American side of its history because the memorials only valorized Custer and his men. In the wake of the congressional bill that renamed the site and established the mandate for a monument to the native peoples and their role in the battle, the National Park Service decided to include the input of Native Americans. Neither this decision, nor the act of congress came out of a vacuum or purely the good will of public officials. Pressure for inclusion in the management of the site had been coming from tribal leaders for some time, and once allowed at the table, Native American Leaders made clear the value they placed on a physical presence on the site, and successfully pressured the National Park Service to make the significant addition of a permanent Native American Memorial.

While Native American participation on the site dates back to the turn of the century, including war department sponsored reenactments of the battle incorporating Native Americans; it is rather hard to characterize these as honest and equal terms upon

which they could engage with the site.⁴⁹ The purpose of the native participation in these events was to accentuate the bravery of Custer and his men by showing the fierceness of the native warriors, who were essentially being used as props.⁵⁰ Kinane discusses this in depth and characterizes the actions of the War department in staging these garish commemorative spectacles as exploitive of both the site and native peoples.⁵¹ And this exploitation was all to illustrate the political value of American military strength.

However, when the Park Service took control of the site in 1940, officials put an end to the reenactments, largely due to the threats they posed to historic resources of the battlefield.⁵² Park Service officials made efforts to better acknowledge the Native American story on the site through displays in the museum they had constructed on the site in 1950. Ironically the museum was built at the behest of Elizabeth Custer, George Custer's wife, after she died. She donated a large collection of artifacts relating to her husband and his military campaigns. These efforts proved insufficient for Native American groups over the next several decades. The two main points of contention were the naming of the site after Custer and their total absence from the commemorative program of the memorials.

The centennial of the battle in 1976 was a particularly heated moment for the National Park Service. As they prepared commemorative services, threats of violence were reported, prompting officials to hold the event earlier, lowering attendance.⁵³ Different groups of Sioux and Lakota assembled at the site to protest the celebration or to conduct their own services in honor of their dead.⁵⁴ The discord woven by the threat of violence and

⁴⁹ Kinane, *Addressing the Nation*, 61-62.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 62.

⁵¹ Ibid., 62.

⁵² Linenthal, *Sacred Ground*, 139.

⁵³ Kinane, *Addressing the Nation*, 64.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 64.

the counter ceremonies attracted national attention, with concern even being expressed to Park Service staff by Nixon's administration.⁵⁵ Disruption of the centennial resulted in a discussion about the name of the site, with even the superintendent of the park at the time commenting that the name fostered to an unusual fixation on Custer, eclipsing other aspects of the site's history.⁵⁶

The events of the centennial commemoration also prompted new discussion around a Native American monument. The earliest record of interest in such a monument dates back to 1925 when a group of Northern Cheyenne attempted to have one erected, to no avail.⁵⁷ Even after the Park Service took control of the site and made efforts to create a more inclusive interpretive program, Native Americans continued pushing for a monument. Park officials were reticent to intervene so aggressively in the landscape, worrying that a new monument would have a negative impact on site integrity. They argued that the entire battlefield already stood as a monument to both sides of the conflict.⁵⁸

This idea that the site itself represents the history in an unbiased manner did not receive significant buy-in from the Native American community who continued fighting for their own monument. Foote, in discussing the preservation of Little Bighorn and other sites of armed conflict talks about what he calls, "Equal honor on the battlefield," suggesting that there ought to be some sort of equivalency in the physical space.⁵⁹ The Park Service could discuss interpretation and language endlessly, but the reality remained that if one were to have visited the site, one would have found a monument marking where Custer and his men

⁵⁵ Linenthal, *Sacred Ground*, 32

⁵⁶ Kinane, *Addressing the Nation*, 65.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 66.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 66

⁵⁹ Kenneth E. Foote, *Shadowed Ground: America's Landscapes of Violence and Tragedy* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1997), 327.

died, with numerous small markers showing where federal soldier fell, and not a single marker valorizing the loss of Native American lives or the attack that they had faced. There's also a clear hypocrisy in this stance since one of the earliest actions taken by the Park Service was to construct a museum in the park, directly on battlefield resources.⁶⁰ As well, the 7th Cavalry Monument is no more authentic to the battle than anything proposed to be built later. It is a socially driven intervention that clearly favors one side of the battlefield's narrative above the other.

Native peoples felt so dissatisfied by the Park Service response that in 1988 Russell Means, a leader of the American Indian Movement (AIM), produced a guerilla monument on site, digging a hole in front of the 7th Cavalry Monument and filling it with concrete into which he and his supporters set a plaque to the, "Indian Patriots who fought and defeated the U.S. Cavalry."⁶¹ The new native monument stood only a few days before park officials removed it, and placed it in the museum. AIM was a large-scale movement that sought to address grievances between Native Americans and the federal government. Their actions on battlefield were therefore highly politicized, contributing to the larger goals of AIM to increase recognition by the U.S. government of the wrongs it had committed against Native peoples. While there are countless sites of engagement between Native and federal forces, and many have been added to the National Register, few are preserved and actively interpreted as historical sites. Many have simply become parks, available for general recreation. The prominence of Little Bighorn as a national monument, managed and interpreted by the Park Service made it a prime location for Native Americans to seek out

⁶⁰ Kinane, *Addressing the Nation*, 63.

⁶¹ Ibid., 66-67.

the interpretation deserved by their long and violent history with the U.S. federal government.

This most direct attempt by Native Americans to get a monument on the battlefield may not have succeeded outright, but it did prompt action from the Park Service. When they removed the plaque and its concrete setting, they placed it in the site museum with commentary on “The evolution of interest in an Indian memorial.”⁶² The park superintendent stated his hope that placement of the plaque in the museum would be taken as a symbol of the park’s intent to address the issue of developing a memorial.⁶³ This in turn opened conversation about how that could be done, resulting in a Park Service-organized planning committee that sought to consider locations and themes for a new monument.⁶⁴ The committee included park officials and tribal leaders who chose “Peace through Unity” as the guiding theme.⁶⁵ The formation of such a committee is a clear example of stakeholder engagement. By inviting tribal leaders to the table, the National Park Service created a space for those leaders to join the conversation and make their values clear by stating their desires for the site. The choice of the theme for the memorial is also important to note, because it represents a reconciliatory ambition for the monument.

With the formation of the committee and support from the Park Service, interest in an Indian memorial was formalized into law. In 1991 congress approved a change in the name of the historic site, calling it the “Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument,” and the bill mandated that a memorial be built on site in honor of the native participants in the battle and the cause for which they fought. The act stated,

⁶² Ibid., 67.

⁶³ Linenthal, *Sacred Ground*, 161.

⁶⁴ Kinane, *Addressing the Nation*, 67.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 67.

“The Congress Finds that –

- (1) A monument was erected in 1881 at Last Stand Hill to commemorate the soldier, scouts, and civilians attached to the 7th United States Cavalry who fell in the Battle of the Little Bighorn;
- (2) While many members of the Cheyenne, Sioux, and other Indian Nations gave their lives defending their families and traditional lifestyle and livelihood, nothing stands at the battlefield to commemorate these individuals; and
- (3) The public interest will best be served by establishing a memorial at the Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument to honor the Indian participants in the battle.”⁶⁶

The law went on to stipulate that the new Indian Memorial would be designed by competition. The planning committee was replaced with an official advisory committee again composed of tribal leaders and park officials, which developed a program for the memorial that served as the basis for a design competition. The same group then chose the winning design. Native Americans praised the addition of the new memorial for the sense of ownership it gave them over the site; however, it was criticized by others, especially white Americans who felt that their ownership was being usurped.⁶⁷

The process of developing a design competition, soliciting design, choosing a winner, and then constructing the monument took over a decade to complete. In the interim, another change was made to the commemorative program of the battlefield. In 1999, in a clear move towards “equivalency” for the native participants in the battle, two red granite markers were added to the battlefield to show where two native warriors had fallen.⁶⁸ In December of 2006, a total of 10 native warrior markers had been added to the site. With the addition of these markers Little Bighorn took a dramatic step towards the ambition to

⁶⁶ U.S. Congress, House, *To authorize the establishment of a memorial at Custer Battlefield National Monument to honor the Indians who fought in the Battle of the Little Bighorn, and for other purposes, Act of 1991*, HR 848, 102d Cong., 1st Sess., introduced in House February 6, 1991.

⁶⁷ James Brooke, “Controversy over Memorial to Winners at Little Bighorn,” *New York Times*, August 24, 1997.

⁶⁸ Bob Janiskee, “An Indian Memorial Helps to Re-Image Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument,” *National Parks Traveler*, December 7, 2008.

“denote the casualty site of every soldier”, now showing where both federal and native participants fell.⁶⁹

In 2003 the winning design for the Indian Memorial, by Native American artist Colleen Cutschall, was completed. (See Figure 3) The memorial consists of a circular wall, set into a small mound, just to the north of Last Stand Hill. The walls contain interpretative panels, one for each of the native groups that participated in the battle, the Sioux, Cheyenne, Arapaho, Crow, and Arikara. There are also four openings in the walls of the memorial, with one to the east and west as entrance and exit. The widest opening is to the north, providing a view over the site between sculptures of native warriors mounted on their horses, called the spirit warriors, depicted as riding across the plain. The figures of the warriors were constructed of bronze wire, so as to allow visitors to attach mementos or offerings to their fallen ancestors.⁷⁰ The final opening provides a sightline to the 7th Cavalry Monument to act as a “spirit gate” and serve as a moment of reconciliation, welcoming “the fallen soldiers to enter the Memorial and join the fallen warriors in friendship”⁷¹ It is this opening, tying the two memorials together, that is essential to the reconciliatory nature of the monument.

Conclusion

While not referred to as a values-centered approach, the process by which the new memorial was installed at Little Bighorn Battlefield really reflects different sets of values associated with the site. The construction of a new memorial was the result of the social and political value that native peoples placed on having the equivalency of their own monument

⁶⁹ Ibid

⁷⁰ Kinane, *Addressing the Nation*, 71.

⁷¹ Bob Reece, “Indian Memorial Tour,” Friends of the Battle of Little Bighorn, accessed April 22, 2018, http://www.friendslittlebighorn.com/Indian_memorial_tour.htm.

on the site. The battle represents an important moment within the traumatic history of the Western displacement of and violence against Native American people. Within the context of the campaigns to confine Native Americans to reservations, the battle was not particularly decisive for either side; however, the battle was the last major victory by Native fighters against American troops, at the same time making it a celebratory site for the Native People. The scope of the battle and Custer's dramatic defeat at the hands of the much larger native force made the battle particularly memorable within the western American psyche.

This lasting interest in the battle and the efforts to memorialize the site were largely focused on Custer and his famous 'Last Stand', both of which live on in public memory. For most of the battlefield's history, this commemorative program was crafted and installed by white Americans. The site therefore reflected this bias, almost completely ignoring the Native People's role in the battle, except as foils to Custer and his men. The battlefield contained no mark of them on the landscape, while markers were installed at the location of each federal soldier's death. In fact, the United States Army administered the battlefield for the first three-quarters-of-a-century of its history, before turning it over to the National Park Service. Under the Army's management, the site had become a shrine to the American military and the cult of Custer.

Once the battlefield came under the control of the Park Service, the sites curators made efforts to equalize representation, but were severely handicapped by the existing historic fabric, with which they were reticent to interfere. However, over the years, Native Americans who had lost ancestors at the battle began protesting the sites Custer-centricity and proposed alterations, including its renaming and the construction of a Native American memorial. After ongoing protests and mobilizing politically the Native Americans were able

to insert themselves into the site's preservation and direct efforts towards the memorialization of their ancestor's roles in the battle. By making clear the value that they placed on equal representation on the battlefield, Native Americans were able to disrupt preservation professionals and create a stage on which they could challenge the typical western notions of material authenticity. From this position, they were able to call for the erection of their own monument on the site, and thus embody their ownership of it.

Chapter 3: Manzanar, Independence, CA

Manzanar is one of ten camps that were set up across the United States after its entrance into World War II as holding places for the entire Japanese and Japanese American population of the country. Entire communities of immigrants and native-born Americans of Japanese decent were rounded up and relocated to these internment camps, where they were held until the conclusion of the war. Families and individuals were forced to abandon homes and businesses through the suspension of their civil liberties. After the war, the internees were released and the camps were unceremoniously wiped from the map, leaving little to no trace behind.

The camps were largely ignored by the general public until the 1960s when a group of Japanese American students organized a pilgrimage to the Manzanar Camp in an effort to connect with and better understand their complicated history with the country they call home. This pilgrimage, which featured addresses by former internees, sparked a movement that would eventually organize to improve education around the story of Japanese internment, and lobby for the designation of the site to the California and National Registers of Historic Places.

After the site was designated in 1976, it was further elevated to the status of National Monument, at which point it became the duty of the National Park Service to preserve and interpret the site. For the Park Service, this proved to be a very challenging task because the site was almost entirely bereft of remnants of the former camp. As the interpretive program for the site was developed, the Japanese American community weighed in and lobbied heavily for the reconstruction of certain elements of the camp that had made it a prison including the barbed-wire perimeter fence and guard towers. The Park Service had shied

away from reconstruction, as one of the four levels of intervention for preservationists, after its effectiveness at meaningfully conveying history without authentic fabric fell under scrutiny in the second half of the 20th century. However, with almost nothing left of the site to help convey a sense of place to visitors, the Park Service conceded to the entreaties of the Japanese American community, recognizing the value that they placed on accurately and evocatively conveying the prison-like conditions of the camp. As these values and ownership of the site were reconsidered, materialist preservation theory had to be reconsidered as well.

History

With the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor and the entrance of the United States into the Second World War, fear spread throughout the US as the possibility of war landing on American home soil was thrown into the face of the largely isolationist population. Facing this newfound reality, the gears of the American war machine began to turn as the nation prepared to dive headfirst into a multi-front war that would stretch across the better part of the globe. So too xenophobia, exacerbated by fear of the Japanese who had settled in the western US, began manifesting in the form of anti-Japanese policies, most shockingly in the form of the policy of internment and the ten camps that were spread across Arkansas, Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Utah, and Wyoming.

Since the last quarter of the 19th century thousands of Japanese people had immigrated to the United States. They mostly settled on the West Coast, especially in California. These immigrants, as so many before them, came looking for new opportunities

of economic and social mobility.⁷² Over the course of the first half of the Twentieth Century they started business, bought property, and established communities.⁷³ In the wake of the attack on Pearl Harbor, there was widespread fear among mainstream America that many of these newly minted Americans would turn back to their home nation of Japan, wreaking havoc on the American war effort through sabotage and espionage.⁷⁴ Acting upon the fears of so many Americans, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066 on February 19, 1942 declaring that all Japanese Americans were to be collected in Internment Camps where they were to be detained and monitored in an effort to preclude any treasonous acts.⁷⁵

Starting in March of that same year thousands of Japanese Americans were rounded up and transported to the ten internment camps located across the western half of the United States, each containing several thousand internees.⁷⁶ Over the course of the next four years, these Japanese Americans, many of who had attained American citizenship, were quarantined off from the rest of the nation, with most of their civil liberties totally suspended over the course of their internment.⁷⁷ Manzanar opened on March 21st, 1942 and remained open until September 21st, 1945, holding 10,000 internees at its peak. As the best preserved of the camps, it is today the most well known.

⁷² Jeffrey F. Burton, Mary M. Farrell, Florence B. Lord, and Richard W. Lord, "A Brief History of Japanese American Relocation During World War II", in *Confinement and Ethnicity: An Overview of World War II Japanese American Relocation Sites* (Washington: National Park Service, 1999).

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Foote, *Shadowed Ground*, 305.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Megan Venno, *Interpreting Human Rights Tragedies: A Comparison of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and Manzanar National Historic Site* (Masters Thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 2005), 50.

Foote, *Shadowed Ground*, 304.

⁷⁷ Foote, *Shadowed Ground*, 304.

Each camp resembled a small city thanks to the efforts of the internees to maintain a microcosm of civil society in their captive state. (See Figure 4) Residents organized themselves, selecting block leaders who spoke with the military and federal administrators of the camps when something was needed for the community. Beyond the bureaucratic operations of the camps, the residents also cultivated a fairly lively civic life. Small parishes met at halls converted into churches on Sundays, and auditoriums were used for community gatherings.⁷⁸ They even established a newspaper.⁷⁹ And all of this was outside of their full time work in factories and on farms producing the goods that supplied both the camps and the American war effort.⁸⁰ Some community members even joined forces to build Japanese style gardens within the camp boundaries, offering public spaces for the internees to cultivate and honor Japanese traditions.⁸¹ These gardens were also cultivated entirely in their free time and out of saved up materials or what they were able to convince the government to spare. The gardens became important centers for the community, representing the traditions the internees carried with them throughout their internment.⁸²

Regardless of what the internees were able to make of their time in the camps, the camps represent a twofold betrayal of the Japanese and Japanese Americans. First and foremost the internees lost their civil liberties during their time of internment, being imprisoned in all but name without due process to prove the validity of the claims of treasonous intentions made against them. And secondarily there was the loss of property and prosperity that they experienced during internment. By being forced into the camps and to

⁷⁸ Duane Noriyuki, "Stories in the Dust; Manzanar is a place of long ago many remember today. But preserving memories is no easy task," *Los Angeles Times*, July 31, 2002.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Venno, *Tragedies*, 54

⁸¹ Ibid, 53

⁸² Jeffrey F. Burton, *Garden Management Plan: Gardens and Gardeners at Manzanar* (Washington: National Park Service, 2015), 1-3.

abandon homes and businesses Japanese Americans collectively lost millions of dollars in property and earnings.⁸³ Those interned in the camps were often given no more than two days notice before being forced onto busses to the nearest camp. The short notice prevented most from making arrangements for the care of their homes or businesses. The government may not have seized the property of the over 120,000 Japanese Americans they forced into the camps, but they may as well have. For most, the internment period of three to four years (earning pittance wages) made mortgage payments impossible, resulting in the forfeiture of thousands of properties to lenders.⁸⁴

After the camps closed in 1946 the Japanese Americans returned to what remained of their lives or moved on to set down new roots elsewhere. Most were reticent to look back on the camps. The government was even keener to let the camps die out in the national memory, and moved quickly to erase them. Buildings at the camps were disassembled and what could be salvaged from them was, while what could not was abandoned to slowly rot or blow away. At Manzanar, there had been over 800 buildings and structures.⁸⁵ By the 1990s there were only three.⁸⁶ And compared to the other 9 camps, this was an impressive survival rate. These sites, covering thousands of acres owned or leased by the federal government, were simply allowed to return to the landscapes around them. However, much as the government tried to forget, the tens of thousands of Japanese Americans who had spent four years in these camps could hardly do the same.

⁸³ Venno, *Tragedies*, 53.

⁸⁴ Arthur G. Neal, *National Trauma and Collective Memory: Major Events in the American Century* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 1998), 68.

⁸⁵ Venno, *Tragedies*, 52-53.

⁸⁶ *Ibid*, 50

Preservation

In the late 1960s, inspired by the African American identity movements connected to Civil Rights, a handful of young Japanese American students began thinking about the checkered history that their families had with the United States. A small group formed around interest in the story of Japanese Internment and commemorating the infamous suspension of their, and their family's civil liberties. The group began organizing a pilgrimage to the site of the Manzanar Camp in 1969. The event proved to be a powerful one, kindling interest and anger amongst the surviving internees of the camp and within the larger Japanese American community. In 1970 the group was formally organized as the Manzanar Committee. This non-profit is committed to keeping alive the memory of the Japanese Internment through the annual pilgrimage and political activism. Through the later, the group successfully lobbied congress for financial redress for the wrongs committed against them, and for the designation of Manzanar as a national landmark remembering and interpreting the story of the internment camps. After prompting the commemoration of Japanese Internment, the community also played a vital role in the development of the Manzanar interpretive program.

In 1969 the students organized the first large-scale pilgrimage, which was attended by about 200 people.⁸⁷ Attendees were mostly students, but a number were members of the generation that had lived through the Second World War and the internment. These senior members of the community took turns speaking, sharing with their communal descendants the importance of the site.⁸⁸ Amongst the attendees were two ministers who had been forced

⁸⁷ "About Us," The Manzanar Committee, accessed July 30 2017, http://www.manzanarcommittee.org/The_Manzanar_Committee/About_Us.html.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

to live in Manzanar during the war, and who then made their own annual pilgrimage starting the year the camps closed. They sojourned there every year to pay homage to the nearly 200 people who had died while in the camps, and were buried just outside the camp fence.⁸⁹ A simple white obelisk bearing the words “Soul Consoling Tower” in Japanese erected in 1943 (one of the few elements to survive the camp’s closure) marked the cemetery where they gathered for the prior decade and a half, and where the first mass pilgrimage concluded. (See Figure 5) The obelisk was the first memorial erected to honor those who had been interned at the camps.

With a new interest and engagement around the story of the camp, in 1970 the community formalized the group that had organized the pilgrimage as the Manzanar Committee. The committee set a clear goal; to improve and propagate education about the history of Japanese Internment, and to seek recognition of the site on the California register of historic places.⁹⁰ The group organized a series of educational events including teach-ins, lectures, exhibitions, and the publication of a book, *The Lost Years: 1942-1946*, which was released in 1972.⁹¹ The group also worked with the Los Angeles School District to ensure teachers had the resources necessary to teach their students about the Japanese Internment.

With the success of their educational programs, the Manzanar Committee then turned towards its goal of designating the site to the California Register of Historic Places. With the help of scholars and accounts of the camp provided by camp survivors, the members of the committee built their case for recognition.

⁸⁹ National Park Service, *Foundation Document: Manzanar National Historic Site* (Washington,: National Park Service, 2015), 6

⁹⁰ “About Us,” The Manzanar Committee, accessed July 30 2017, http://www.manzanarcommittee.org/The_Manzanar_Committee/About_Us.html.

⁹¹ “Resources,” The Manzanar Committee, accessed July 30 2017, http://www.manzanarcommittee.org/The_Manzanar_Committee/Resources_1.html.

The Manzanar Committee lobbied members of the California legislature for their support of the designation, and in 1972 Manzanar was added to the register.⁹² Shortly thereafter, the committee set its sights on the loftier goal of designation as a National Historic Landmark. Again, mobilizing politically, the committee lobbied members of congress and other important political stakeholders such as the Mayor of Los Angeles.⁹³ The site was added to the National Register in 1976, and in 1985 was designated a National Landmark.⁹⁴

Their argument for significance of the camp focused on the importance of the site for the Japanese American community as a clear representation of the persecution and racism that they had experience at the hands of Americans.⁹⁵ There was also an emphasis on the role that the Japanese played in improving their own quality of life within the camps, despite the neglect of the government, petitioning for necessary supplies and services.⁹⁶ As well, the nomination discussed the history of protest, violence and turmoil within the camps, as the internees at times felt compelled to reject their imprisonment through force.⁹⁷ Two internees were killed during a particularly tumultuous riot in December of 1942. The statement of significance framed an important balance between discussing the wrongs committed against the Japanese Americans while providing a clear image of the role that the

⁹² Venno, *Tragedies*, 51

⁹³ The City of Los Angeles owns the water rights to the land that Manzanar sits on, and therefore became an important partner in the process of designating the camp. "About Us," The Manzanar Committee, accessed July 30 2017, http://www.manzanarcommittee.org/The_Manzanar_Committee/About_Us.html.

⁹⁴ Venno, *Tragedies*, 51.

⁹⁵ Erwin N. Thompson, *National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination Form: Manzanar Internment Camp* (Prepared August 12, 1984).

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

internees played in the camps, showing their struggles therein while not depriving them of agency.⁹⁸

In tandem with the interest in preserving and interpreting Manzanar expressed by the efforts to get the camp onto the state and national registers, there was also an increasing interest in pressuring the government to take up the issue of redress for the infringement upon civil rights that the internment represented. Former internees began mobilizing and in 1970 they filed their case against the federal government.⁹⁹ Over the next eighteen years, the case was argued and fought for until finally, in 1988 the government agreed to issue 1.25 billion dollars in reparations for the lost wages, property, and livelihoods of those who had been forced into Manzanar as well as the other nine camps.¹⁰⁰

Financial redress was an important signifier of the intention of the federal government to make amends. The next step was to create a permanent memorial to the wrongs committed against and the adversity suffered through by the Japanese American Community. The designation of Manzanar as a national historic landmark was a major step towards that end. But the next was to create a formalized interpretation of the landmark so as to tell the story of the site. Because the site was a National Landmark, the National Park Service was charged with the task of developing an interpretative scheme in 1992.

Interpretation and the Role of Values

The task of interpreting Manzanar was far from an easy one. The Park Service was challenged by the contemporary state of the site, with only three of over 800 buildings still

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Foote, *Sacred Ground*, 306.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

standing. They had to develop a means of conveying to visitors the history of the expansive site, with little more than the few extant buildings and intermittent patches of road suggesting that there had once stood a small penal city, filled with people forcibly removed from their homes. The immense natural beauty of the Owens Valley further complicated the goals of conveying the sense of place by distracting visitors from the few subtle remnants of the camp. In response former internees, argued that some of the most prison-like elements of the camp had to be reconstructed to make visitors confront the long-since disappeared historical realities of the site.

In order to address the challenges of the site, the National Park Service engaged with the stakeholder communities: especially those who had been interned. The engagement conducted by the park service was two-fold: first to solicit input from leaders of important stakeholders like the Japanese Americans, Native Americans, ranchers, and surrounding towns through advisory committees. Second through mock-ups of interpretative exhibits opened to the public for comment.¹⁰¹

One of the main takeaways from the conversations was that the flat, barren landscape of the site, uninterrupted but by the few remaining buildings, did not fully convey the prison-like nature of the site as the interned had experienced it. The site was devoid of its barbed wire fences, guard towers, and armed soldiers, watching day and night. Without these features, it remained very difficult for visitors to understand the site. Members of the previously interred community lobbied heavily for the reconstruction of some missing

¹⁰¹ Frank Hays, "The National Park Service: Groveling Sycophant or Socially Conscience: Telling the story of mountains, Valley, and Barbed Wire at Manzanar National Historic Site," in *The Public Historian*, Vol. 25, No. 4., 79.

elements, writing letters to the site administration.¹⁰² In these letters and entreaties, the former internees made it clear that they truly valued the potential of Manzanar to convey camp conditions and their experience, but that the missing elements had to be reconstructed to fulfill that potential.

The photographic record might have provided some aid, helping visitors to see and understand the realities of the camp, but that record is far from complete and rich with bias. In 1943 the photographer Ansel Adams visited Manzanar where he documented the camp and its residents, but he was forbidden from taking photos of the fences or guard towers.¹⁰³ (See Figure 4) His work therefore gives a false impression of the conditions under which the Japanese Americans were kept on the site.¹⁰⁴ His photographs do show the freedoms that the internees were allowed or took for themselves, painting a quant picture of the civic life of the camps. While the content of Adam's photographs are certainly of historical value, and help to add color to the story of the Japanese agency within the camps, the reality remains that the internees were detained against their will, and the site and interpretive program needed to convey that to visitors.

Based on the advice and comments of stakeholders, the Park Service developed a two-pronged interpretative scheme. First the extant structures were to be utilized for site programming, with the largest, the old Auditorium building being extensively renovated and used as an interpretative center.¹⁰⁵ The center was to be filled with artifacts and photographs relating to the site and to serve as the main location where visitors could learn about the

¹⁰² Ibid., 76-77.

¹⁰³ National Park Service, *Foundation Document: Manzanar National Historic Site*, 7. Venno, *Tragedies*, 63.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, 63-64.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, 62-63.

historical context of the site and acquire clear historical knowledge.¹⁰⁶ The second part of the interpretative scheme was to utilize reconstruction; which had become an sparingly used by the National Park Service.

As an interpretative tool, reconstruction was very popular among preservationists in the United States during the 1920s and 1930s, being widely used at sites such as Colonial Williamsburg. However, as more buildings and sites were reconstructed to varying degrees of accuracy, historians and preservationists worried that these contemporary structures were being taken for the authentic thing, having survived the ravages of time. Also, preservationists have long theorized and believed that authentic material is the best way to covey historic value. As these concerns mounted, and architectural interest in historic forms waned in the shadow of the Modernist movement, reconstruction as one of the four levels of intervention fell out of favor.

During the 1970s, the Secretary of the Interior, as ordered by congress, began codifying the types of interventions to heritage resources, eventually leading the Secretary of the Interior's Standards.¹⁰⁷ Among these was reconstruction, which was heavily regulated and remains so today. The 2001 National Park Service Management Policies state that Reconstruction is only to be utilized if, "There is no alternative that would accomplish the park's interpretive mission; Sufficient data exist to enable its accurate reconstruction based on the duplication of historic features substantiated by documentary or physical evidence, rather than on conjectural designs or features from other structures; Reconstruction will occur in the original location; The disturbance or loss of significant archeological resources

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Kay D. Weeks and Anne E. Grimmer, *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring & Reconstructing Historic Buildings*, (Washington: National Park Service, 2017).

is minimized and mitigated by data recovery; and Reconstruction is approved by the Director.”¹⁰⁸ Reconstruction is the only of the four levels of treatment requiring the approval of the Director of the Park Service to be utilized.

Based on the lobbying and pressure by the Japanese-American Community, it was decided by the Park Service that the lost security features of Manzanar met the tests of reconstruction as a legitimate treatment. They developed a limited program of reconstruction around the site. Specifically The Park Serviced chose to reconstruct the fence around the edge of the camp and one of the guard towers that had stood at the perimeter of the site, as suggested by the leader of the Manzanar Committee at the time, Sue Kunitomi Embrey, on behalf of the community. (See Figure 6) Again, the choice that was made by the Park Services was strongly influenced by the input and criticism of the interned community and their descendants. Without this pressure, reconstructions may never have been made or delayed further.¹⁰⁹

Their decision to reconstruct the most prison-like features of the camp was the most controversial piece of the interpretative plan. Many felt it was unfair to portray the camp as a prison, fearing the poor impression it would leave of the nation. In fact, in 2003 the Park received sufficient criticism of their choice to reconstruct certain features of the site that then Director, Frank Hays, wrote an article published in *The Public Historian* that addressed one writer’s claim that the Park Service had become a “groveling sycophant” to minority interests.¹¹⁰ Responses such as this one represented the lack of understanding many had of the internment camps. In fact, they made it all the more clear how right the Japanese

¹⁰⁸ National Parks Service, *Management Policies*, (Washington: National Park Service, 2001), 59.

¹⁰⁹ Venno, *Tragedies*, 76.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

American community was in demanding these reconstructions. Without them, it may well have been impossible for visitors to understand the site as a prison. Even with the reconstructions, many visitors still struggle to see beyond the site's natural beauty.¹¹¹

Interestingly, the stakeholder engagement beyond the Japanese American community yielded insights from residents of the surrounding communities who knew the site from long before the camp's construction. Native American leaders raised the topic of their history on the site, and their large agricultural communities that had once cultivated the valley, filling it with orchards, which inspired the Spaniards to give the place the name Manzanar, meaning apple orchard.¹¹² The Native Americans discussed how European Americans expanding westward, had forced them out before cultivating the land themselves. These western agricultural communities were then pushed out when the Los Angeles water department began buying the water rights to huge swaths of land including the Owens Valley in an effort to sate the immense thirst of the burgeoning city.¹¹³ Though the main narrative and the interpretation center on the role of the site as an internment camp, the National Park Service was able to more deeply and richly explore the theme of displacement by acknowledging the valley as a cultural landscape with a long history of it.¹¹⁴

Conclusion

In 1942, only a few months after the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor, the federal government rounded up every person of Japanese descent in the United States. The government forced Japanese immigrants and Japanese Americans to live in secluded

¹¹¹ Ibid., 60-61.

¹¹² Ibid., 61.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 62.

internment camps under the auspices of security. These people had their rights suspended, were forced to abandon homes and business, and were held captive in these camps, with many being uprooted and sent to locations far from their homes. When the Second World War ended, the government allowed all of the interned Japanese and Japanese Americans to return to what remained of their lives, and quietly swept away the remnants of the camps.

In the late 1960s, as part of a growing identity movement, young Japanese American students started learning about the internment camps from their elder family members and began thinking about how to understand and relate to their collective past. In an effort to recognize the wrongs committed against them by the federal government, the group organized a pilgrimage to the Manzanar Internment Camp where internees were able to share their experiences with the younger generation of Japanese Americans, and the community was able to acknowledge their communal trauma. This pilgrimage has burgeoned into an annual event that spawned a movement to increase education around the story of the internment, designate Manzanar on the California and National Registers of Historic Places, and eventually to lobby for a formal apology by the government and billions of dollars in reparations for lost property and wages.

As Manzanar went on to be preserved as a National Monument under the management of the National Park Service, professional preservationists faced a series of challenges in interpreting the largely empty site. With almost all of the structures having been disassembled and moved offsite, staff and visitors were left with little to see of the internment camp on site. Park service staff began developing an interpretative program that sought to introduce visitors to the site through the sparse remnants of the camp, while preserving its authentic physical fabric. However, former internees and members of the

Manzanar Committee lobbied heavily with the Park Service to deploy the little-used treatment of reconstruction. In letters to park staff, former internees explained that the site could not be understood as the camp they had been forced to live in without barracks, latrines, guard towers, or the perimeter barbed wire fence. At the same time, they conveyed the value that they placed on people seeing and understanding what they had experienced. In writing these letters, and requesting the use of reconstruction, these key stakeholders were challenging the expertise of the park staff and questioning the relevance of their emphasis on authentic fabric.

In response, the Park Service made the unusual decision to commission a number of reconstructions, to aid visitors in seeing the barren landscape of the camp as the prison that it once was. Without pressure from the Japanese American stakeholders, the camps interpretive program would have likely been limited to more delicate interpretive interventions such as signage and photographs. At Manzanar, the values and input of the former internees played an important role in shaping the interpretation of this important site of negative heritage, pushing the Park Service and professional community towards an unusual set of treatments that help create an evocative monument to the wrongs committed against the Japanese American community.

Chapter 4: African Burial Ground, New York, NY

In colonial New York, the vast majority of Africans or people of African decent were slaves to western settlers, or for the lucky few who were considered free people, were ranked as sub human. These individuals were relegated to the periphery of society, but at the same time were regulated and controlled by the European population. For these subjugated peoples, maintaining and exhibiting small freedoms was complex, difficult, and dangerous. It involved navigating colonial society, while under the constant threat of violence at the hands of the controlling Europeans. However, outside the city, the African Burial Ground was a place where Africans were able to assemble, exhibit a modicum of autonomy, and carry on traditions brought with them from Africa. Regardless of how powerful and important a statement of African willpower and autonomy the burial ground was, it fell under the foot of the European settlers, who wrested it from the African population and subsequently buried it under the city.

After the erasure of the site by the white population, the site was slowly forgotten over the course of the nineteenth century until its rediscovery during the construction of a federal office tower by the General Services Administration in 1991. Excavations for the new building's foundations uncovered hundreds of sets of remains, which had been preserved under dozens of feet of infill and the foundations of earlier, low-scale development. As the number of remains being uncovered grew, so too did outrage on the part of the African American community. As the history of the site as one of the earliest institutions set up for Africans in America by Africans in America and its subsequent destruction by the white European powers became widely known, many in the African

American community saw the ongoing disinterment of the surviving remains of their ancestors as an attempt to finish the job of destroying this African American institution.

Response to the continued destruction of one of the only extant sites of Colonial African heritage in New York City, the African American community mobilized, organizing protests, lobbying politicians for their support in halting the construction of the new office building, and fighting for a seat at the table as the preservation of the site was determined. After fighting tooth and nail, the community was able to assert its ownership over the site, redirect the course of construction, save the remaining unexcavated burials, and gain the support of important leaders within the city and congress. Importantly as well, the community made clear the value that they placed on members of their community being involved in researching and telling the story of the burial ground. And so they pushed to instate African American professionals into important positions as the leaders developing and conducting research, designing the memorials, and making decisions about how the site was to be memorialized for posterity.

This chapter will cover the history of the site up to its erasure in order to provide context for the importance of the site to the African American community. Then it will review the discovery of the site and the first response by the General Services Administration to their discovery. And finally, the chapter will discuss the process by which the community fought back against that response, and successfully mobilized to redirect the project and preserve an important piece of the burial ground. In telling the story of the creation of the African Burial Ground National Monument in this way, this chapter will demonstrate how the initial response by the General Services Administration, as an arm of the Federal Government, was truly a total preservation failure, which forced the African

American community for fight for control over this incredibly important site of African American history.

History

During the 17th Century, the vast majority of the Africans living in New York City were slaves, recently brought to the Americas from the west coast of Africa. There were a handful of freedmen living on the island of Manhattan who were allowed to own farms outside the city walls, but the population was largely enslaved and only one or two generations removed from their capture and transport to the Americas. As was widely true of so many of the European settlements in the Americas, New York was a highly segregated environment and for the Africans living there it was constant struggle to wrest small freedoms from European control. That struggle had a spatial aspect to it. Within the city walls, where the Europeans had built up their society, the Africans were subjected to the control of the Europeans. In order to practice their lives outside of that control, they were forced to find spaces at the margins of society; the wilderness to the north of the city's protective palisade at Wall Street.¹¹⁵ The Burial Ground was one of only a few important places where the Africans living in the city seem to have been able to find some freedom.

A 1697 policy adopted by the city, precluded Africans from being buried within the boundaries of New York.¹¹⁶ This codified segregation meant that the members of the African community in New York were forced to find and make their own place to lay their

¹¹⁵ Sarah R. Katz, *Redesigning Civic Memory: The African Burial Ground in Lower Manhattan* (Masters Thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 2006), 7, 25. New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, "African Burial Ground and the Commons Historic District Designation Report," prepared by Gale Harris, Betsy Bradley, edited by Marjorie Pearson (New York: 1993), 14-15.

¹¹⁶ Andrea E. Frohne, "The African Burial Ground in New York City: Manifesting and Representing Spirituality of Space" (Ph.D. Diss., Binghamton University, State University of New York, 2002), 153.

dead to rest. The African population therefore turned north, towards the “commons”, or the vast tracks of largely uninhabited and publicly held land north of the palisade.¹¹⁷ The Africans chose for themselves a small ravine between the highway, now Broadway, and a freshwater pond known as The Collect, all a little less than a mile north of Wall Street. (See Figure 7) The date of the earliest burial is unknown, but it is believed that interments began in the late 1600s, coinciding with this ban on African burials within the city limits.¹¹⁸ The size and boundaries of the burial ground have also been lost to time. They are believed to have stretched along Broadway and what is today Centre Street up to about Duane or Worth Street near where the monument stands today, covering as many as seven acres. It is believed by some scholars that as many as 10,000-15,000 burials may have occurred at the grounds between 1712 and 1796.¹¹⁹ Unfortunately, exact information about the grounds, can never be known due to the extensive disturbance of the ground and subsequent destruction of interments that occurred throughout the 19th and 20th centuries as lower Manhattan repeatedly redeveloped.

The Africans are believed to have chosen this ravine as the site for their burials because it afforded them small protections from the eyes and influence of the white European community of New York. While documentation of the funerary practices of the Africans living in New York are limited, there is some evidence to suggest that in the space of their burial ground, this enslaved and marginalized population was able to maintain a special autonomy by preserving and carrying on traditional funerary practices brought with

¹¹⁷ New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, "African Burial Ground and the Commons Historic District Designation Report," prepared by Gale Harris, Betsy Bradley, edited by Marjorie Pearson (New York: 1993), 5-6. Katz, *Civic Memory*, 22-23.

¹¹⁸ Burials may have begun as early as the 1660s, though this cannot be confirmed. United States General Services Administration, *The New York African Burial Ground: Unearthing the African Presence in Colonial New York* (Howard University Press, Washington, 2009), 45.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

them from Africa.¹²⁰ One notable practice was that of laying the deceased to rest at night, which allowed the African population time to socialize and gather as a community.¹²¹ Sadly one of the main pieces of evidence for this practice is a law instituted by City's governing council in the 1720s, mandating that all slave funerals take place before sunset.¹²²

The ban on night burials conducted by the African population is, unsurprisingly, not the only law that regulated the movements and actions of the enslaved population. In fact the scholar Jill Lepore researched the various laws passed by the colonial government, and began to interpret them as an inadvertent record of how the African population navigated their enslavement.¹²³ For instance a further regulation, limiting the number of mourners at funerals to twelve, suggests that larger groups of Africans had been gathering for funeral rites, at least with sufficient frequency so as to instill feelings of unease within the European residents of the city.¹²⁴ Regulations also extended to the ability of the slaves to move about the city without special permission, or their ability to buy or sell goods to and from one another.¹²⁵ These regulations illustrate that the enslaved population was not fully under the control of their European overlords, and that they were engaged in a constant struggle to keep alive a civic life and culture of their own.

The Burial Ground is an exceptionally important embodiment of that, because it is one of the only physical manifestations of enslaved civic life in colonial New York (or the early United States) to survive. As is inherently the case with impoverished or oppressed populations and cultures, their circumstances preclude them from creating lasting and

¹²⁰ Katz, *Civic Memory*, 7-8.

¹²¹ Ibid, 12.

¹²² Jill Lepore, *New York Burning: Liberty, Slavery, and Conspiracy in Eighteenth-Century Manhattan* (New York; Alfred A. Knopf, 2005), 57.

¹²³ Ibid.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 57-58.

tangible marks on their environments. Instead, their heritage is necessarily intangible; carried with them and propagated through their actions. The Burial Ground is a rare exception; once revealed, tangibly representing those lost practices and cultural acts. Through the act of having planted the bodies of their deceased into the ground that enslaved population left an indelible mark on the earth of the city. Later on, the team of investigators from Howard University, who took the lead in research and analysis of the Burial Ground after it was rediscovered, went so far as to say that the Burial was one of the “first institutions established by blacks and for blacks in the colony of New York, and perhaps North America,” and pointing to “burial of the dead and other funerary rights as definitive human characteristics.”¹²⁶ The burial ground therefore stands as a claim for recognition of and testament to the humanity of the African population of colonial New York, even as they lived under the oppression of the Europeans.

Sadly, the white, European population of the city would make the next moves in the struggle of the African population for that recognition. As early as the 1760s the development of the city began to encroach on the burial ground with buildings popping up nearby.¹²⁷ The city had outgrown the old limit of Wall Street and had been expanding northward for decades with haphazard development. By the end of the eighteenth century the city of New York annexed the African Burial ground and much of the surrounding land, bringing it within the city limits, and stripping much of the earlier autonomy.¹²⁸ In 1796, the city acquired large sections of the burial ground to extend a number of streets.¹²⁹ The

¹²⁶ Katz, *Civic Memory*, 27. Michael Blakey and Lesley M. Rankin-Hill, *The Skeletal Biology of the New York African Burial Ground* (Washington: Howard University Press, 2009), 3-4, 5, & 8.

¹²⁷ United States General Services Administration, *The New York African Burial Ground*, 57.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, "African Burial Ground and the Commons Historic District Designation Report," 20-21.

topography, which had once been the draw for the African population to establish their burial ground there, became an impediment to the northward march of the city. The land was flattened to ease movement and development, and those sections of the ground taken by the city were arrested from the control of the African population. By 1800, the burial ground was entirely destroyed or buried under forty feet of fill; the land taken over by the city for new streets or having been platted and sold for private development.

For the next almost two centuries the land was subsumed into the city's urban grid. The area first developed as a low-scale commercial district, until the early twentieth century, when close proximity to City Hall and several courthouses transformed the area into a major government center with municipal, state, and federal offices popping up around City Hall Park and Foley Square. The growth of this administrative district on the grounds of the former Burial ground "reflected Lower Manhattan's burgeoning position as a center of commerce and power."¹³⁰ The smaller scale of nineteenth century buildings meant that their shallow basements did not extend far enough below grade to interrupt the buried grade of the burial ground. In filling the ravine the city inadvertently preserved a large swath of burials, as uncovered in the 1990s.

Discovery

The project that led to the rediscovery of the Burial Ground was the construction of a new Federal office building undertaken by the General Services Administration in 1991. Being a federally funded project, it had to be executed in full compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, which was written to help protect historic resources

¹³⁰ Katz, *Civic Memory*, 32.

by mandating the review of projects where federal money could be used in their destruction.¹³¹ Despite the project happening under the control of an entirely public institution, perhaps some of the best circumstances one could expect for a preservation project, the agency's response was a public relations and preservation disaster. Over the course of the project, the General Services Administration moved forward on its project with a blatant disregard for the magnitude of what it had uncovered, and consistently ignored the recommendations and defied the demands of other governmental agencies that sought to resolve the complex and extremely sensitive quagmire that the bureaucracy found itself caught in.

Section 106 had been designed with a number of proactive processes, meant to mitigate the potential for unforeseen circumstances. One stipulated that before breaking ground the General Services Administration was to prepare a research-based environmental impact statement. This statement would determine the likelihood of finding or disturbing archaeological materials. The agency was then meant to develop a research design for any uncovered materials. Any findings would be eligible for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.¹³²

The General Services Administration hired Historic Conservation and Interpretation, Inc. as a consultant to prepare the Environmental Impact Statement. While conducting research, they found references to a missing African Burial Ground on old maps and in accounts of the period.¹³³ They stated that some remains could be extant, but that more

¹³¹ Ibid., 37.

¹³² Ibid., 38.

¹³³ Howard University The African Burial Ground Project, Washington, DC, "New York African Burial Ground Archaeology Final Report, Vol. 1," ed. Warren R. Perry, Jean Howson, and Barbara A. Bianco (The U.S. General Services Administration Northeastern and Caribbean Region, 2006), 1, 3.

likely most had been destroyed by earlier subbasement construction. They did indicate several areas that appeared to be largely undisturbed, and suggested there might be some intact graves.¹³⁴ The statement recommended limited archaeological probing in some of these areas, noting that any remains recovered could be of great significance. The General Services Administration published the statement in July 1990, making it available for a large number of agencies and community groups; however, they failed to follow the recommendations of the statement and did not develop any archaeological contingency plans. They purchased the desired properties in December 1990.¹³⁵

In an effort to keep the project on schedule, the General Services Administration, rather than conducting limited testing, ordered the archaeological team to begin full-scale excavation in May, 1991. By summer it was clear that the extents of the remains to be uncovered were far greater than expected. On October 8, 1991 they announced the discovery of human remains, only reporting 8 sets of remains at the time.¹³⁶ This statement vastly underestimated what the team was in the process of uncovering. Ultimately excavation would uncover 419 individuals of varying ages, buried with a wide range of personal item, including coins, shells, glass, buttons, beads, clay pipes, coral, and crystals; all of immense archaeological value.¹³⁷

As excavation continued and the scope of what was being uncovered grew, Federal and Municipal preservation agencies became concerned over the treatment of what was turning into one of the largest and most important archaeological findings in New York City history. The Federal Advisory Council on Historic Preservation and New York City

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Frohne, "The African Burial Ground," 20-21, 24.

¹³⁶ Katz, *Civic Memory*, 41.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

Landmarks Preservation Commission recommended that excavations be delayed until an approved research design was developed with input from the African American community. Representatives of the General Services Administration agreed to the recommendations, and guaranteed that a memorial and interpretive center would be developed on the site in consultation with interested parties.¹³⁸ However, the rate of excavation did not slow. Instead, the General Services Administration accelerated it, worried about project delays as the construction site transformed into an archaeological dig. Staff ordered the archaeological team to move through their findings as quickly as possible, so as not to impeded the concurrent construction crews. The increased speed of each disinterment meant the loss of important archaeological information. And in the rush to conclude excavations, a number of egregious errors were made, including the destruction of several burials by heavy equipment, and damage to several sets of remains due to improper storage.¹³⁹

As 1991 came to a close, members of the public became aware of the poor handling of the excavations and a State Senator formed a task force to investigate the General Services Administrations handling of the site and oversee further excavation. Members of the African American community specifically began feeling as though their voices were being left out as decisions were made, and in April, 1992 members of the African American community spoke out against the actions of the General Services Administration at a public hearing.¹⁴⁰ They called for the re-interment of the excavated remains and the abandonment of any construction on the site, so as to protect the remaining unexcavated graves.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 42.

¹³⁹ Ibid., 43.

¹⁴⁰ Frohne, "The African Burial Ground," 40. Katz, *Civic Memory*, 46-47.

Later in April of 1992, the General Services Administration finally submitted a research design in a delinquent effort to respond to the growing chorus of dissatisfaction in the community. Preservation regulators rejected the design for being poorly and hastily designed.¹⁴¹ In an effort to develop a research design that would pass muster they hired the accomplished firm of John Milner Associates to take over excavations (The firm had worked previously on several African and African American burial grounds).¹⁴² Members of the community were still unsatisfied with the response and continued to pressure the General Services Administration, organizing a series of meetings, vigils, and ceremonies to protest the actions of the federal agency in the hope of securing the protection and preservation of the African remains.¹⁴³ The earliest actions of the General Services Administration can, at best, be taken as neglectful, but as the project progressed, and more and more remains were uncovered, the agency embroiled itself in a preservation disaster with the African American Community through its own refusal to address what it had uncovered.

Interpretation and the role of Values

At the time of the rediscovery of the African Burial Ground, the mayor of New York was David Dinkins – the first African American to hold the office. Many saw his government as an opportunity to redress historic racial power imbalances.¹⁴⁴ The excavation and potential memorialization of the African Burial Ground represented an important stage upon which such imbalances could be addressed. The fight for control of the site became an

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 47.

¹⁴² Ibid., 47-48.

¹⁴³ Frohne, "The African Burial Ground," 47. E.R. Shipp, "Black Cemetery Yields Wealth of History," *The New York Times*, August 9 1992.

¹⁴⁴ Katz, *Civic Memory*, 48-49. "A Proud Beginning to 1990 (Editorial)," *The New York Times*, January 1, 1990.

important opportunity for African Americans to “assert their authority” and claim ownership of a piece of New York’s history, and to take control over how that history was told.¹⁴⁵ Through political mobilization, the community was able to fight against the General Services Administration and assert control over the site. As part of this mobilization, members of the African American community inserted themselves into important roles in the processes of uncovering and interpreting the burial ground, taking control of the physical site and the narrative.

As the General Services Administration continued work on the site without an approved research design, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation and Mayor Dinkins again requested that excavation and construction cease until a plan was developed. Extremely dissatisfied with the agency’s response, the mayor publicly threatened to orchestrate the transfer of the project to the National Park Services or another organization that would better steward the site.¹⁴⁶ After this threat the General Services Administration outright refused to cease excavations, claiming to be in compliance with federal regulation, and stating that only congress could redirect them. Even as these agencies were disputing the continuation of work, the General Services Administration was planning to excavate another 200 graves to accommodate the original building design, acting in direct opposition to the stated wishes of the mayor and the community.¹⁴⁷

As the depth of the General Services Administrations unwillingness to compromise on their schedule and meaningfully address the burial ground became apparent, members of the African American community reached out to congress. They found sympathy with Gus

¹⁴⁵ Katz, *Civic Memory*, 36.

¹⁴⁶ Frohne, "The African Burial Ground," 47-48.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

Savage, an African American congressman from Illinois who was also the chair of the Committee on Public Works and the Transportation sub-committee that had authorized funding for the project. Savage called for a hearing that included testimony from the General Services Administration and other interested parties.¹⁴⁸ By reaching out to members of Congress, the community in New York was able to thrust the issue onto the national stage. By doing so, they were able to gain wider interest in the Burial Ground and begin to build support for a national case for significance.

At the conclusion of the inquiry, the committee found that the administration was not operating in compliance with Section 106, or in good faith with the community's wishes for the site. Savage and his fellow committee members mandated that the General Services Administration work with the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission to develop a better scheme for the project.¹⁴⁹ Specifically the committee forced the General Services Administration to alter the design of the new building to leave the remaining undisturbed graves in place.¹⁵⁰ As well, Savage stated that he would help to expedite the designation of the site as a National Landmark.¹⁵¹ During a series of follow-up meetings with community leaders in New York, the General Services Administration committed to meet the community demand to leave the estimated 200 remaining graves intact, halt excavation, include African American scientists, and develop a memorial and interpretive scheme with community input.¹⁵²

In the wake of the congressional hearings, a steering committee was established to make recommendations to the General Serviced Administration and Congress. The

¹⁴⁸ Katz, *Civic Memory*, 50-51.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 50-51.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 52.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 53.

¹⁵² Ibid., 53.

committee was to act as a liaison for New York's African American community, and serve as a watchdog over the General Services Administration. It was composed of historians, archaeologists, politicians and members of the descendant African American communities. Many of the committee's recommendations were incorporated into the nominations for the site as they were prepared.¹⁵³ In 1993 the committee was charged with producing recommendations specifically about the interpretation and memorialization of the site. They released a report that sought to reconcile the issue of the massively reduced size of the site from its original boundaries, recommending that a museum and research center, a memorial, signage, exhibitions and artwork, and a ceremonial reinterment would be essential to the memorialization and interpretation of the site.¹⁵⁴

At this time, the General Services Administration also began working with the National Park Service to assist with community engagement and coordination. The Park Service organized a series of public meetings and discussions in an effort to build consensus and support.¹⁵⁵

In June of 1993 members of the African American community successfully acquired local designation of the African Burial Ground and Commons District.¹⁵⁶ The significance of the district was focused on the story of the African Americans in colonial and early republican New York, and on the extended history of overlapping development, civic and public use.¹⁵⁷ Later, in April the site was added to the national register and given landmark

¹⁵³ Ibid., 58.

¹⁵⁴ "Memorialization of the African Burial Ground. Final Recommendations to the Administrator, General Services Administration and the United States Congress," ed. Peggy King; Weil Jorde, Gotshal & Manges, Counsel; and members of the Federal Steering Committee for the African Burial Ground (1993), 8.

¹⁵⁵ Katz, *Civic Memory*, 110-112.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 55-57.

¹⁵⁷ New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, "African Burial Ground and the Commons

status, though with smaller boundaries than the local district. The national designation focused solely on the African heritage.¹⁵⁸ Once the process of designation was completed, it became easy to see that the preservation values associated with the site were historical, archaeological, and communal.¹⁵⁹

Through forceful political activism, which built strong support among important political leaders, New York's African American community, was able to build on the political moment of Dinkin's time as Mayor, and create waves all the way up to congress, rippling through the federal bureaucracy. With a coalition of municipal and congressional politicians, the African American community forced the General Services Administration to comply with the wishes of the community, and to recognize the importance of the site as one of African American heritage, and not just a piece of real estate.¹⁶⁰

Despite the progress made during the course of the congressional hearing, the African American community still had an uphill battle ahead as the process of interpreting and memorializing the disinterred remains began again. After the discovery of the remains on site, members of the community began calling for the research to be carried out under African American leadership with African American scholars and researchers, however the General Services Administration consistently chose white researchers.¹⁶¹ After continued pressure from the community, the General Services administration eventually appointed Dr. Michael Blakely as the director of the research project. With his appointment came a major shift in the interpretation of the remains. Blakely sought to design a new research approach

Historic District Designation Report," Prepared by Jean Howson, Gale Harris, and Betsy Bradley, edited by Marjorie Pierson (New York: 2003), 3-4.

¹⁵⁸ Katz, *Civic Memory*, 57.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 55.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 61.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 79-80.

that would subvert the racial aspects of archaeological practice, pushing for a very different interpretation of the remains that was not framed by European conceptions of race.

Dr. Michael Blakely, an anthropologist from Howard University, a Historically Black College or University (HBCU), had been brought in by a community group to examine the site and the practices of Lehman College's Metropolitan Forensic Anthropology Team (MFAT) after concerns arose over their handling of some remains. The MFAT team had ceased working on the project after coming into a contract conflict with the General Services Administration. Blakely sought to have the remains transferred to Howard for the remainder of their examination, but the MFAT team claimed the bones were too fragile to be moved. John Milner and Associates, Blakely and members of the community claimed that the remains were being held hostage, and pressured the General Services Administration into allowing a team from Howard to visit the lab where the bones were being stored to stabilize them.¹⁶²

In September of 1992 Blakely was appointed director of the African Burial Ground research project. He assembled a team of African American scholars in coordination with John Milner Associates, and created a new research design.¹⁶³ This then brought the Howard and MFAT teams into conflict over certain ideological questions. The team from MFAT wanted to measure the remains to identify the race of the deceased, a common archaeological practice. Blakely felt that the practice needed be abandoned, arguing that such measurements perpetuated the idea that race exists as a physically manifested trait.¹⁶⁴ Instead he proposed that the remains be analyzed for biological and genetic markers that indicate

¹⁶² Ibid., 64.

¹⁶³ Ibid, 63-64.

¹⁶⁴ Frohne, "The African Burial Ground," 61-62.

place of origin, living conditions, and circumstances surrounding death. Blakely's hope was that by focusing on individual identities rather than the construct of race, the research could better contextualize the burial ground within the larger narrative of the African Diaspora and shed light on the lives of colonial African Americans in New York.¹⁶⁵ Blakely also emphasized the importance of involving researchers of African descent or who were thoroughly familiar with African American culture.¹⁶⁶

In the Spring of 1993 GSA and the Steering Committee ordered the transfer of the remains held by MFAT to Howard University for study, marking one of the first times that remains were handed over to an African American institution, an enormous milestone for the larger African American community.¹⁶⁷ The move signaled that African American scholars and institutions had a larger role to play in researching and writing their history, one that they were ready and eager to take up. There was great hope that the findings of the team would help to rewrite history by shedding light on the importance of Africans in the history of New York and the lives they lived. And with the new research approach, the scholars hoped to look beyond race and explore the cultural backgrounds and origins of those buried, the processes guiding the cultural and biological transformation of Africans to African Americans, quality of life, and potential modes of resistance utilized by the colonial Africans.¹⁶⁸ The burial ground came to represent the historic struggle of Africans to fight for or maintain their freedom – as discussed with the early history of the site – and the

¹⁶⁵ Michael L. Blakey, "Bioarchaeology of the African Diaspora in the Americas: Its Origins and Scope" *Annual Review of Anthropology* 30 (2001): 387-422, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3069222>.

¹⁶⁶ The African Burial Ground Project, "The New York African Burial Ground Skeletal Biology Final Report, Vol. 1," 25.

¹⁶⁷ Katz, *Civic Memory*, 68-69.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 76-77.

contemporary African American leadership and the disrespect often paid to them by the US government.¹⁶⁹

Another way, in which the community leaders sought to make the memorialization process different, was by weaving together science and spirituality. Even as the community fought against the General Services Administration for control over as the fate of their ancestor's remains, they brought a sacred note to the proceedings. Impromptu shrines were set up at the site and protests were executed with sacred fervor in the form of candlelight vigils.¹⁷⁰ Once Blakely and his team were given control over the project and the remains, they made special efforts to leave room for spiritual associations. When the remains were transferred to Blakely's laboratory at Howard, a large ceremony was organized around the movement of the remains, and then marked with a symposium and religious service upon their arrival. Shrines were set-up outside of the lab and at the site to maintain space for community members to remember and honor the deceased uncovered at the site and to maintain the sanctity of the religious space that was the burial ground.¹⁷¹

The most dramatic of these spiritual services were the Rites of Ancestral Return and subsequent reinterment ceremony, which began on September 30th, 2003. (See Figure 8) Before being returned to their home in Manhattan, four sets of remains traveled from Howard University, located in Washington, DC, to Baltimore, Wilmington, Philadelphia, and Newark where celebrations were hosted in their honor, and members of the African American community in those cities paid their respects. The remains were then moved across the Hudson River via flotilla before joining the rest of the remains and being

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 77.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 48.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 73-75.

processed up Broadway by horse drawn carriage. This whole ceremonial movement took four days. Finally, on October 4th, the remains were reinterred with hundreds in attendance. African American community leaders acted as pallbearers, carrying the remains, in specially carved coffins from Ghana. Finally the 419 disinterred individuals were laid back to rest by members of their own descendant community as Maya Angelou read, “You may bury me in the bottom of Manhattan. I will rise. My people will get me. I will rise out of the huts of history’s shame.”¹⁷²

The presence of spiritual elements throughout the memorialization process highlights the value that the descendant community placed on the intangible, as well as tangible heritage. In fact, within their tangible value as archaeological evidence, and rare remnants of a marginalized group, the remains were the embodiment of the earlier intangible heritage in the form of burial practices. Through their ceremonies and celebrations, the community was able to revive and make new that heritage by performing new burial rights for their ancestors.

The final step in the commemoration of the Burial Ground was the design and installation of the interpretive and memorial infrastructure. While the process did involve members of the African American community, the National Park Service and the General Services Administration largely orchestrated it. The program for the site had three main tenets: installation of topical artworks, an interpretive center, and the memorial to be built above the remaining undisturbed graves.

The interpretive center and memorial were designed by competition, while the artists who created the artworks that were displayed in the lobby of the federal building were

¹⁷² Ibid., 86-87.

selected by a committee of visual art professionals and community members.¹⁷³ There were two rounds of artworks, commissioned. The first did not necessarily focus on the burial ground, but addressed a number of issues affecting African Americans and other minority groups, including the aids epidemic.¹⁷⁴ After consideration by the Steering Committee, the second round of artists were charged with focusing their work directly on the site.¹⁷⁵

The competition for the interpretive center was developed under a panel of African American professionals.¹⁷⁶ The interpretive center was to provide space to address the Historical, Scientific, and Spiritual values associated with the site. The winning design, by IDI Construction, was selected in 2000.¹⁷⁷ Their design divided the interpretation into four areas; orientation, studio, transformation, and reclamation. These areas each represented a stage in the narrative of the site, culminating in reclamation where the theme of rebirth was explored. The design also featured an altar at this final stage, providing a space for visitors to make offerings and carry on the need of the community to engage with the site in a highly personal and spiritual manner.

Beginning in 1998 the competition for the exterior memorial was organized. The competition guidelines stipulated that design needed to include space for cultural, ceremonial, and commemorative activities, an enclosure, and an area for the 419 reburials. The designs considered relied heavily on traditional memorial language and design features: memorial walls, water features, pathways, and defined architectural forms. There was also special emphasis on African forms, or on the concept of a burial ground. Several designs incorporated subterranean elements, in an effort to spatially connect with the remains that

¹⁷³ Ibid., 92-93.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid, 93-94.

¹⁷⁵ Frohne, "The African Burial Ground," 277.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid, 298-299.

¹⁷⁷ Katz, *Civic Memory*, 99-101.

were still buried and undisturbed. These designs were hotly debated and some in the African American community opposed them.¹⁷⁸

After the designs were shown to the public in 2003, there was a backlash of criticism against the General Services Administration as members of the descendant community complained they were being shut out of the design process, and that design presentations were not sufficiently publicized.¹⁷⁹ Criticism was largely focused on the government agencies involved in the process. Opinions were widely dispersed on the memorial's design. Some protested the construction of any memorial at all, and others called for the expansion of the site through eminent domain.¹⁸⁰

For several years the work on the memorial stalled as different community groups and the General Services Administration fought for control of the site. Work also stalled as the administration refused to fund Blakely's lab due to what they called the "experimental nature" of his research design.¹⁸¹ Finally in 2005, after the congressional intervention and the addition of the National Park Service to the project, the design by Rodney Leon of AARIS Architecture was chosen.¹⁸² Again, members of the descendant community opposed their choice, and began protesting, opposing the "incorporation of the burial ground into the city's formal, political, and interpretive structure."¹⁸³

After a 1993 "Call for ideas" that had been organized by a coalition of community groups, some in the community became interested in alternative means of

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 108-109.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 112.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 78.

¹⁸² Ibid., 112.

¹⁸³ Ibid., 113.

commemoration.¹⁸⁴ The competition revealed two main strategies for commemoration. The first strategy, which is quite typical for monuments, was to construct some massive, unchanging form, representing those who were buried below. This sort of monument would also be set apart, emphasizing the space as special and sacred.¹⁸⁵ The other strategy, that of the “Counter Monument” sought to make the burial ground unavoidable. The burial ground would be made present through the replacement of sidewalks, manhole covers, and the installation of signs in elevators within the historic boundaries of the burial ground. As one of the designers state, the “Counter Monument’s... aim is not to console, but to provoke; not to remain fixed, but to change...not to be ignored by the passerby...not to graciously accept the burden of memory but to throw it back on the town’s feet.”¹⁸⁶ The entrants into the competition garnered significant public interest, but, being unsanctioned by the governmental agencies overseeing the process, none of the designs were executed or even considered for the final memorial.¹⁸⁷ Despite the opposition of some in the community, and their mobilization through the “Call for Ideas”, the political process moved forward and the monument chosen by the National Park Service-led commission was pushed forward, with ground being broken in September, 2005.¹⁸⁸ (See Figure 9)

In some ways this disagreement within the descendant community could be viewed as a critique of Values-centered Preservation, because it shows how the process can be extremely messy and complicated. However, the process will be complicated in any event, and if efforts are not made to incorporate stakeholders with a strong sense of ownership over the site, it will be even messier as they try to assert that ownership. One could say that

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 88.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., 91.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., 91-92.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 92.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., 113-114.

this simply reinforced the need for more and better opportunities for stakeholder engagement while also pointing to the potential limitations of consensus building. As discussed in the literature review, an essential, if controversial element of values-centered preservation is that some values will be privileged over others.

Conclusion

In 1991 the General Services Administration broke ground on a new federal office building in Lower Manhattan. Located near Foley Square, an important governmental center in the city, the site had been covered by over two centuries of low-scale development. As this 18th and 19th century fabric was wiped away and excavation for the new high-rise's foundations burrowed into the ground, the construction crews uncovered several sets of remains. As digging continued and the hole sank deeper into the earth, more and more sets of remains were discovered. All in all, by the time excavations ceased, 419 sets of remains were uncovered, with over 200 more estimated to remain unexcavated. What had been uncovered during this excavation were the remnants of an African Burial ground. Research prior to construction had found that the burial ground had covered about seven acres just north of City Hall Park, beyond the northern extreme of Colonial New York.

Despite the findings of this pre-construction research, the General Service Administration did not approach the project with caution, but instead moved forward like a juggernaut. Their failure prepare for the potential archaeological significance of the sight in light of the research conducted, and their subsequent discoveries led to a complete public relations and preservation disaster that lasted for over a decade. As the scope of what was being uncovered became public and continued to grow, an outraged African American

community mustered its forces. They began by protesting the actions of the federal agency. When these demonstrations yielded little progress, they mobilized politically and reached out to members of congress who had the power to order a change of course by the General Services Administration. Even as higher powers came to the aid of the African American community, they had to continue fighting for their ability to have input into the handling of the site, and control over the outcomes. Highly qualified African American Scholars, such as Dr. Blakely had to fight tooth and nail for involvement, and were forced to weather assaults on their qualifications as they proposed new methods of research and study for the remains and other findings uncovered on the site.

Through the process of fighting for a modicum of control over the burial ground, the African American community asserted a number of values they associated with the site. Namely, the importance they placed on the sense of ownership they felt over it. This value was eventually reflected in the ceasing of construction over the burial ground and the insertion of African American scholars into key positions so that the community would be represented in the decision-making processes. The ways in which the community protested and demonstrated during their fight reflects the value that the community placed on the intangible elements of the sites history. The community held candlelight vigils and orchestrated an immense celebration for the return of the disinterred remains in an effort to revive the spiritual elements of the site. Their desire for spirituality in the commemoration went on to the shape the memorial erected on site as well. The monument incorporated a subterranean crypt-like space to serve as the inner sanctum for the site, and an altar was erected where visitors can leave offerings much as they had done at the construction fence that had once surrounded the site. By fighting for control over the memorialization of the

burial ground, the community demonstrated a number of values that they held for the site, and then was able to incorporate those into the memorial program.

The process of commemorating the African Burial ground proved to be long and messy, with disagreement even bubbling up within the African American community, especially around choosing how the site would be permanently commemorated. These earnest disagreements between members of the primary historic stakeholder group aside, the messiness of the process was largely due to the obstinate and unsympathetic approach taken by the General Services Administration throughout the process. Once again, the primary stakeholder group was forced to interject itself into the preservation process, even as they made strides to push the fields of archaeology and preservation in new directions, resulting in a unique program of interpretation and commemoration that met the needs of the community. Only once the more sympathetic entity of the National Park Service became involved, was the involvement of the larger African American community in the process no longer questioned by the managing entities.

Conclusion

In examining these three negative heritage sites, this thesis has argued that values-center preservation, in the form of stakeholder engagement, could serve as a model process for interpreting and preserving sites of negative heritage. Such sites are complicated and can be intimidating to interpret because, as Sara Moses so succinctly stated, they represent a, “...violent, tragic, or traumatic event... interpreted as a shared loss by a self-identified group or community.” However, complexity, conflict, and heated sentiments are nothing new to preservation, and the model of values-center preservation works as a means of cutting through the mire of such sensitive sites to develop preservation solutions based on a wider range of stakeholders and values.

At Little Bighorn the site had originally represented only the story of Custer and his famous last stand, ignoring the Native American participants in the battle. After receiving pressure from local tribal leaders, including the erecting of a guerilla monument on the battlefield, the Park Service incorporated a new Native American memorial on the site, recognizing the value that the Native American stakeholders placed on having their own physical monument on the site of their most famous victory.

At Manzanar, a Japanese internment camp, the site was largely demolished and left to deteriorate and be forgotten. After successfully lobbying for recognition by the United States government of the wrong committed against them, a grassroots movement of former internees and their descendants pushed for the designation of the site on the National register, and for its interpretation. The internees and their descendants convinced the National Park Service that the most significant aspects of the site related to the prison-like nature of the camp – including guard towers, a perimeter fence, and other security features.

Through continued pressure, the group convinced the Park Service to reconstruct these features, conveying the sense of place they had felt.

And finally at the African Burial Ground in Manhattan, where the remains of hundreds of African Americans were discovered in 1991, concerned members of the African American Community organized to ensure the remains of their ancestors were respectfully reinterred and the atrocity of their erasure was memorialized through a new monument. As well, students and faculty at Howard University, an HBCU, carried out the excavations on site and analysis of the remains, making the site one of the first where a majority African American institution handled the study and interpretation of African American archaeological remains.

When reflecting on these three cases, it's worth noting two key points. First that at all three sites, the outcomes that resulted from the engagement of the primary minority stakeholder community were drastically different from those proposed by professional preservationists, including from the National Park Service. In all three of these cases, the outcomes were not just departures from professional recommendations or opinions, but were challenges to the primacy of material authenticity as the seat of significance.

At Little Bighorn, the Native Americans received their own new monument on the battlefield; an intervention that had been seen as a threat to the authenticity of the cultural landscape by the park staff. At Manzanar, lost elements of the site were carefully reconstructed, despite the reticence of many to engage in that treatment precisely because of its inauthenticity. And, at the African Burial Ground, the Descendant community lobbied for the application of a new methodology for the study of their ancestor's remains, one that was more sensitive to the construct of race, and were able to weave into the proceedings and

eventually the built memorial, a spiritual component that highlighted the intangible heritage of burial rituals and the importance of the burial ground as an African American institution. In all three cases, new interpretative interventions were made in order to add to the built fabric of the site, so as to rectify imbalances in the historical record.

Secondly, in all of these cases, these primary minority groups had to fight for a seat at the table where preservation decisions were made. This thesis has argued that engagement with all of the communities connected with heritage sites, especially ones of negative heritage, can lead to the development of new, interesting, and meaningful approaches to preservation. At the same time, it has shown the need for increased openness towards different stakeholder groups and the diverse approaches to history and heritage that they bring. It's fairly obvious that these sites are of great importance to these groups, but they are often left out of decision-making processes, and ostensibly denied ownership over their heritage. Acknowledging that ownership, and creating space for all groups to participate can be messy. But so too can denying them that space and contending with the fight they will inevitably wage for that ownership. At all three of the sites explored in this thesis, key stakeholders had to claw their way to the table to assert control of their own heritage. We need to make more room earlier on for groups to participate in decision-making, and values-centered preservation can serve as a framework for opening up those processes.

Figures



Figure 1 – The Seventh Cavalry Monument – This undated, historic image, likely from the early twentieth century shows how early the site of this Native American victory was dedicated as a memorial to Custer and his men.

(<https://www.nps.gov/media/photo/gallery.htm?id=0348C65A-1DD8-B71B-0B9F0C1EB6D85428>)



Figure 2 – Markers for Fallen Soldiers and Warriors – Markers erected to show where individual soldiers fell during the battle. Note the red granite marker at left, which was added later to show where Native warriors fell. (<https://joshhenderson.com/2015/06/11/jrs-wild-west-little-bighorn-battlefield/>)



Figure 3 – The Indian Memorial – The statue of Native Warriors riding across the plains, which serves as the centerpiece for the Indian Memorial.

(http://www.custermuseum.org/indian_memorial.htm)



Figure 4 – Photograph of the Japanese Internment Camp – View over the main part of the Japanese Internment Camp. Interestingly, Adams took this photograph from one of the guard towers, which he was not allowed to photograph. (Ansel Adams)



Figure 5 – The Sole Consoling Tower – A view of the “Sole Consoling Tower” which stands at the cemetery at the camp. Note the dramatic scenery beyond, at the edge of the valley. (Rose Masters)



Figure 6 – Reconstructed Guard Tower and Perimeter Fence – The one reconstructed guard tower and a section of the perimeter fence, erected along the main road leading to the main entrance of the camp. (<https://www.californiahistoricallandmarks.com/landmarks/chl-850>)



Figure 7 – The Maerschalk Plan of New York, 1754 – A historic map of lower Manhattan showing the extent of the New York’s development up to 1754. Note that the “Negro Burial Ground” is marked on the map, just south (to the left) of the Collect (marked Fresh Water). (<https://www.loc.gov/resource/g3804n.ar110100/>)



Figure 8 – Coffins on Display at the Reinterment Ceremony – These elaborate coffins were specially made to hold the excavated remains from the burial ground, and featured prominently during the reinterment ceremony, being bourn to the site by important members of the African American community.

(<https://www.nps.gov/afbg/learn/historyculture/reintermentceremonies.htm>)



Figure 9 – The Complete African Burial Ground Memorial – A view of the completed memorial. Note the enclosed space to the west (top), and the mounded earth where the excavated remains were reinterred (top)

(<https://www.nps.gov/afbg/learn/news/newsreleases.htm>)

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