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Public Memory and the Search for Power in American Historical Archaeology

How Americans remember the past is often reinforced by landscapes, monuments, commemorative ceremonies, and archaeology. These features and activities often help to create an official public memory that becomes part of a group's heritage. I suggest that public memory can be established by (1) forgetting about or excluding an alternative past, (2) creating and reinforcing patriotism, and/or (3) developing a sense of nostalgia to legitimize a particular heritage. These categories are not mutually exclusive, and the lines that separate these categories may not always be well defined. I show how post–Civil War American landscapes, monuments, and commemorative activities helped to reinforce racist attitudes in the United States that became part of the official memory. African Americans have struggled to revise the official memory of the Civil War, although the power to change this memory has been situational and not always successful. [commemoration, memory, material culture, historical archaeology, landscapes]

Americans often turn to the past to explain current social conditions, to comfort themselves, to build self-esteem, and to create cultural pride. What aspects of the past are remembered and how they are remembered and interpreted are important issues that allow us to see how public memory develops. Memories can serve individual or collective needs and can validate the holders' version of the past. In the public arena they can be embedded in power to serve the dominant culture by supporting existing social inequalities. It is common for subordinate groups explicitly or implicitly to challenge the dominant meanings of public memories and create new ones that suit their needs. Often, the success of these challenges is situational, depending upon context and social and political power.

In 1925 Maurice Halbwachs formally introduced the concept of memory in the creation of history. He remarked that a collective memory develops when individuals seek the testimony of others in order to "validate their interpretations of their own experiences, to provide independent confirmation (or refutation) of the content of their memories and thus confidence in their accuracy" (in Thelen 1989:1122). Other individuals are needed as a second reference in order to establish a frame of reference and to create recollection. People experience and remember or forget collectively, and they figure out how to interpret these experiences. They develop a collective memory by molding, shaping, and agreeing upon what to remember, although this process may not be always consciously planned. A collective memory becomes public when a group has the

resources and power to promote a particular past. These histories mask or naturalize inequalities through material culture, such as memorials, museums, and the built landscape. Inequalities can be also promoted or challenged through commemoration ceremonies.

In archaeology some important works that critically evaluate the production of history include those written by Trigger (1989), Leone et al. (1987), and Shanks and Tilley (1987). These works evaluate the management and use of prehistoric and historic resources. They view the production of historical consciousness as an outcome of the struggle between groups. I found the production of a collective memory intriguing when examining the development of the industrial town of Harpers Ferry, West Virginia (see Shackel 1994b, 1999, 2000, in press). For instance, until very recently, all of the town's histories written in the twentieth century stop documenting the town just after the Civil War era. It is easy to come away with the impression that the town reached its economic zenith in the 1850s and 1860s and that the town had virtually disappeared after the Civil War (Shackel 1996). Almost all of these histories proclaim that Harpers Ferry should be remembered only because of its role in the surrender of 12,500 Union troops to Stonewall Jackson and the events that surround John Brown (except Gilbert 1984, 1999). A historical archaeology of the town shows that it did survive and that it became a major regional industrial center until the 1920s. It thrives today as a tourist town (Shackel 1993, 2000). Many of the people who remained in Harpers Ferry after the Great Depression had a working-class background that extended

into the Victorian era as all of the industrial entrepreneurs were gone by the late 1930s. I think it is not an accident that Harpers Ferrians, mostly merchants and working-class families, ignored much of the town's Victorian industrial history. The postbellum industrial entrepreneurs who controlled the town's economy and labor opportunities were northerners and did little for Harpers Ferry's working-class families, except to take their rent money and extract their labor at very low wages. While the town had industrial success, people chose to forget their exploitation as well as their relatives' (Shackel 1994a).

This phenomenon, masking a class or a group history when developing a collective memory, is well documented in other communities. For instance, in Lawrence, Massachusetts, Sider (1996:48–83) describes a workers' history of resistance and strikes that has been repressed by community memory. In this mill community, the Strike of 1912, euphemistically called the "Bread and Roses Day," was branded by the Catholic Church as instigated by the most "unsavory immigrants" (quoted in Sider 1996:52). Strike leaders were intimidated throughout their lives by supervisors and industrialists. Community leaders focused on the strike, rather than the working conditions that provided the rationale for the strike. More important, the testimony of the factory working conditions by a 14-year-old girl in front of Congress was also suppressed from historical consciousness (Cameron 1993, 1996).

As these examples demonstrate, public memory is more a reflection of present political and social relations than a true reconstruction of the past. As present conditions change socially, politically, and ideologically, the collective memory of the past will also change. The control of a group's memory is often a question of power. Individuals and groups often struggle over the meaning of memory as the official memory is imposed by the power elite (Teski and Climo 1995:2). For instance, Handler and Gable's 1997 *The New History in an Old Museum* serves as an excellent example of deconstructing the production of history in an outdoor museum like Colonial Williamsburg. They reveal that the museum's interpretation of the colonial era is a way to reinforce social inequalities in contemporary society. This sentiment, that the histories told at Colonial Williamsburg are a product of public memory, has been expressed by others (Leone 1981; Wallace 1981). Anthropologist Michel-Rolph Trouillot (1995:15) also produces a compelling argument about taking a critical approach to historical accounts. Taking accounts that range from Columbus Day to the Haitian revolution for independence, he notes that the past can only be understood in the context of the present. He recognizes that during the production of history power operates in a way that silences subaltern groups.

Historians, too, have seen memories as being subjective to group interests. Influential works by David Lowenthal (1985), Michael Frisch (1990), David Glassberg (1990),

Michael Kammen (1991), John Bodner (1992), and Edward Linenthal (1993) have guided public historians into addressing issues that show the connectedness between memory and power. These works show that we cannot assume that all groups, and all members of the same group, understand the past in the same way. The same historical and material representation may have divergent meanings to different audiences (Glassberg 1996:9–10; Lowenthal 1985). A struggle to create or subvert a past often develops between competing interest groups (see, for instance, Neustadt and May 1986; Peterson 1994). Different versions of the past are communicated through various institutions, including schools, amusements, art and literature, government ceremonies, families and friends, and landscape features that are designated as historical. Public memory does not solely rely on professional historical scholarship, but it is usually influenced by various individuals and institutions that support the collective memory.

In particular, I am interested in the various ways memory takes shape on the American landscape and how it is influenced by race, and power. After the American Civil War sectional bitterness existed, and to some extent it continues today. By the end of Reconstruction the political importance of the war refocused (Foster 1987:68–69; McConnell 1992:108). Blue–Grey reunions from the 1880s became a form of selective memory rather than forgiveness (McConnell 1992:190). The African American memory of the war continually lost ground to a new and growing dominant ideology, led by people like Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr. and later Theodore Roosevelt. An integrated collective memory became unacceptable to the majority of white Americans. They interpreted the war as a test of a generation's valor and loyalty toward a cause. The Lost Cause mythology argued that the Confederacy was never defeated but, rather, was overwhelmed by numbers and betrayed by some key generals (Blight 2001).

While the Victorian era had been a healing period between the North and the South, greater schisms developed in this country that divided people along lines of class and ethnicity. The era is recognized by many as the "decade of patriotic offensives among native-born, white members of the American middle class" (McConnell 1992:207). Exclusionary groups dominated the era. Americans created clubs and organizations at a rate never seen before or after in U.S. history. Associations developed for group protection and the wealthy increasingly excluded other groups (Hobsbawm 1983:292–293). Social Darwinism and scientific racism became the popular paradigms in intellectual circles, and African American participation in society and their role in the Civil War minimized. Commemoration ceremonies of the war often celebrated the great white hero memorialized with statues of generals on horseback or a generic-looking single soldier that stood in a town center (O'Leary 1999).

Recognizing various types of power is valuable when examining issues related to the creation of public memory, race, and the American landscape. Eric Wolf (1990) describes four modes of power: "the first is power as the capability of a person; the second is power as the ability of a person to impose upon another interpersonally; the third is tactical power which controls social settings; and the fourth is structural power, which allocates social labor" (in Little 1994:23). The first mode is what Miller and Tilley (1984) describe as "power to" and the remaining they call "power over." Contextualizing the use of power in relationship to public memory allows us to recognize the complexity of the use of power and its connections to public memory.

Many of the studies in public memory can be viewed within the context of tactical power, which controls social settings. The control over the uses and meanings of material culture, and the exercise of "power over," can be accomplished in several ways. Memory can be about (1) forgetting about or excluding an alternative past, (2) creating and reinforcing patriotism, and/or (3) developing a sense of nostalgia to legitimize a particular heritage. These categories serve as an organizational point to see the relationship between power and the construction of public memory. They allow us to see that objects and landscapes that historical archaeologists and public historians often view have different meanings to different people and groups at different times. These categories are not mutually exclusive. The public memory associated with highly visible objects is always being constructed, changed, and challenged, and at all times power and the challenge to power are situational. Below, I provide background and a case study for each category, all from a Civil War context and related to how landscapes reflect and reinforce the ideals of race and power through heritage and patriotism.

An Exclusionary Past

Elements of the past remembered in common, as well as elements of the past forgotten in common, are essential for group cohesion (Glassberg 1996:13). While collective memory can be about forgetting a past, it often comes at the expense of a subordinate group. Those who are excluded may try to subvert the meaning of the past through alternative histories, or they may also strive for more representation in the form of a more pluralistic past. When Americans reflect on the traditional meanings associated with a collective national memory, it has focused on elites and traditional heroes. The perception of many is that American history is linear and straightforward. This uncomplicated story occurs only when we leave others out of the picture. This "sacred story with strong nationalist overtones . . . derived much of its coherence from the groups it ignored or dismissed" (Leff 1995:833; also see Nash et al.

1998:100). Those who disagree with a multicultural history have claimed that

> it is difficult . . . to see how the subjects of the new [social] history can be accommodated in any single framework, let alone a national and political one. . . . How can all these groups, each cherishing its uniqueness and its claim to sovereign attention, be mainstreamed into a single, coherent, integrated history? [quoted in Nash et al. 1998:100–101]

I have seen this attitude among some historical archaeologists and historians who believe that the only reason for preserving Civil War battlefields is for commemorating the dead and for studying battlefield logistics. They refuse to see the relevance of incorporating social history to view the Civil War in its larger context. Multicultural perspectives, like addressing the issues of slavery at a national battlefield, are reprehensible to some Civil War scholars (see Smith 1999). There is the perception that the Civil War is all about loyalty to a cause, a sentiment that developed in the late nineteenth century that excluded African Americans from the Civil War story. It is a feeling that remains strong among many conservative scholars.

We often find that while accounts of ordinary people and subaltern groups do not necessarily find their way into official accounts, they can persist and create an alternative minority view. This view has a function to legitimize and stabilize a claim to a history (Fields 1994:153). While many federally funded museums extol the glories of economic and social progress as a result of industry, many working-class members view the preservation of old buildings and ruins as an attempt to save a degrading phase of human history. Robert Vogel of the Smithsonian Institution notes, "The dirt, noise, bad smell, hard labor and other forms of exploitation associated with these kinds of places make preservation [of industrial sites] ludicrous. 'Preserve a steel mill?' people say, 'It killed my father. Who wants to preserve that?' " (quoted in Lowenthal 1985:403). Therefore, while individual dissenting views on the true benefits of industrialization exist, the federal government remains strong in supporting ideas of industrial progress at national parks such as Lowell and Saugus in Massachusetts and Hopewell and Steam Town in Pennsylvania. In many of these cases archaeology has played a major role in supporting the official history.

Following, I provide a case study of how a community created an official history of an event in the Civil War at the expense of another group. In particular, a white officer was commemorated in the form of a statue that minimized the role of the African American troops that he commanded. Only through protest and the rise of the Civil Rights movement did the forgotten history of the troops become part of the official memory.

Case Study: The Remaking of the Robert Gould Shaw Memorial

The Robert Gould Shaw Memorial sits on the Boston Common to commemorate the colonel who led the first African American Northern volunteer regiment into battle during the American Civil War. The memorial to Shaw with a representation of the 54th Massachusetts Infantry has stood for over a century with its meaning controlled by the white community. It demonstrates and reinforces the memory of their community's historic patriotic and abolitionist commitment.

On May 28, 1863, Shaw and the 54th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry marched to Boston's Battery Wharf, where they sailed for the Sea Islands off Charleston, South Carolina. The world watched the soldiers since it was the first Northern-raised African American regiment. After a two-night march through rain and shifting sands, with insufficient rations, an exhausted Shaw accepted the order to lead an immediate attack on Fort Wagner. At dusk, on July 18, the Massachusetts 54th led the assault. Six hundred troops charged across a narrow spit of sand against a strong earthwork. Shaw was one of the first to fall, but his troops pressed on. More than half reached the inside of the fort, and they were able to hold Wagner's parapet for an hour before being driven off by the Confederates. Other white regiments attacked that night, but they also failed. The assault on Fort Wagner that day left 1,515 Union casualties compared with 181 on the Confederate side.

News of the assault on Fort Wagner by the 54th Massachusetts became widely known in the North, and Shaw and the deeds of his fallen men were transformed into martyrdom. The *New York Tribune* wrote that the battle "made Fort Wagner such a name to the colored race as Bunker Hill had been for ninety years to the white Yankees" (from McPherson 1988:686). The *Atlantic Monthly* wrote, "Through the cannon smoke of that black night the manhood of the colored race shines before many eyes that would not see" (from McPherson 1969). The 54th had proven that African Americans could fight honorably. Shaw's death was a family loss and a moral contribution by Boston to preserve the Union and fight for emancipation.

Shaw became one of the Civil War's most celebrated legends. More than 40 poems have been written about Shaw and they helped to solidify his martyrdom. Plans for a Shaw monument began in 1865 with a formal meeting held in Boston. Many delays occurred as key proponents of the memorial died, but in 1884, a commission appointed a young, well-known artist, Augustus Saint-Gaudens's, for the Shaw memorial project.

Saint-Gaudens labored sporadically on the monument for 13 years, and he finally unveiled it on "Decoration Day," May 31, 1897. At the ceremony 65 veterans of the 54th Massachusetts marched up Beacon Hill past the Robert Gould Shaw Memorial. It was the first soldier's monument to honor a group rather than a single individual, although an explicit hierarchy exists in the representation. The memorial places the colonel in the center among his troops. Shaw is on horseback with his fatigue cap on. The African American soldiers serve as a backdrop. They are ready for battle with rifles over their shoulders, and the procession is led by a drummer boy. Above them is an allegorical figure with laurel branches in one hand and poppies in the other. The work was immediately hailed as a great success by many art critics.

In 1916 Freeman Murry lauded the sculpture as a "memorial to man, race, and a cause." Murry remarked that Saint-Gaudens's work will "tower above the color line" (1916:166). Murry's interpretation—that the Shaw monument would help dismantle the racial boundaries that were so prevalent in the early twentieth century—puzzles some scholars. For instance, modern art scholars, like Albert Boime (1990), point out Saint-Gaudens's racist tendencies. He created the Shaw monument in the context of strong racial and ethnic tensions in the late-nineteenth-century United States. The development of Jim Crow legislation in the late nineteenth century made it increasingly difficult for African Americans to achieve equality—in the North and the South.

While creating the monument, Saint-Gaudens filled his studio in New York with African American subjects from the surrounding neighborhood. Reinforcing a contemporary stereotype, Saint-Gaudens wrote that "they are very likable, with their soft voices and imaginative, though simple, minds" (1913:334–335; see Boime 1990:208). Saint-Gaudens's son, Homer, describes an incident of his father's substandard treatment of African Americans. Homer noted, "I believe he could detect a change of two degrees from his favorite amount of heat, when woe betides the darkey who tended stove" (Saint-Gaudens 1913:133).

While contemporary critics claimed his sculpture as an act of "newborn American patriotism" (Taft [1924]1969:304) and said that it would "tower above the color line" (Murry 1916:166), there were other contemporary voices that contested the meaning of the Shaw monument. Based on what we know about Saint-Gaudens's feelings about African Americans through his writings, it is difficult to see him as very sympathetic toward African Americans, and it becomes even more difficult to see his work as an expression of the abolitionist sentiment. The Shaw memorial is just that, a memorial to Robert Gould Shaw, and the African American troops serve as a background to the subject. It is a monument that remembers one of Boston's Brahman elite and the role that the elite played in the abolitionist movement.

A contemporary critic, Charles Caffin, wrote in 1913 that Saint-Gaudens "portrays the humble soldiers with varying characteristics of pathetic devotion. The emotion [is] aroused by intent and steadfast onward movement of

the troops, whose dog like trustfulness is contrasted with the serene elevation of their white leader" (1913:11). There is no doubt that the white officer is the central figure in the monument. Shaw is elevated on horseback and "sharing the upper zone with the allegorical Angel of Death who bears Victory and Sleep" (Boime 1990:209). Shaw is portrayed as noble and sits erect in his saddle. Boime concludes that Saint-Gaudens was successful "in establishing a visual 'color-line' that guarded white supremacy" (1990: 211). The hegemony of the powerful is explicit and noticeable.

In the late twentieth century the tone and meaning associated with the monument have become even more muddled. A rededication of the monument in 1981 placed in stone on the back of the monument the names of the 281 African American soldiers who died in the assault of Fort Wagner. This act provides some recognition to the foot soldiers. Later that decade, the critically acclaimed movie *Glory* brought further recognition to the role of African Americans in the Civil War.

In May 1997, Boston held a public ceremony that celebrated the 100th anniversary of the unveiling of the Shaw memorial. Several prominent African Americans spoke at this 100th anniversary rededication. President Benjamin Payton of Tuskegee University, Professor Henry Louis Gates Jr. of the Du Bois Institute at Harvard University, and General Colin Powell all remarked on the splendid beauty of the monument and saw the portrayal of the troops in a positive and uplifting light (Blatt et al. 2000).

Art historian Kirk Savage remarked that the memorial is an excellent blend between soldier and general. Savage argued that they are not "listless," as described by Boime (1990) but, rather, determined. The troops do not lose their humanity. He notes that the soldiers look well drilled and each looks very different. They are individuals who wear their uniforms in various fashions. The horse glides and towers, and the soldiers are weighed down by their equipment as they lean forward: "Saint-Gaudens was able to elevate the white hero without demoting the black troops" (Savage 1997:203). African Americans never had this representation of individuality before. While Saint-Gaudens was racist in his memoirs, Savage remarks, he made the infantrymen individuals, and the memorial is not a racist monument. Savage proposes that what Saint-Gaudens was thinking about had no bearing on his sculpture. He notes that Saint-Gaudens "treated racial differences openly and with dignity, asserting a 'brotherhood' of man. And yet it registered, compellingly and beautifully, the transcendence of the white hero in that of brotherhood" (1997:204). Savage does not believe that there can be different readings of the same piece of material culture and he claims that Caffin's (1913) and Boime's (1990) argument "cannot be sustained without a serious misreading of the sculpture itself" (Savage 1997:256 n. 97).

While Savage believes that there can only be one reading of the monument, I believe that the importance and significance of the Shaw memorial is that it can be read in various ways and different people will ascribe diverse meanings to it, depending upon the memory they have associated with the event. Saint-Gaudens created this statue in a racist era, and he used the white colonel to dominate the foreground of the memorial. He also gives African Americans significant representation in the memorial, a rare phenomenon for the era. The events of the civil rights movement of the mid– and late twentieth century, along with the Civil Rights Act, have given African Americans a greater representation in our public memory, and the Shaw memorial centennial celebration, backed by many prominent political and social figures, also helped to solidify and sanctify a new public meaning and memory of the memorial. For instance, the newspaper *USA Today* reported on the ceremonies, and it did not even mention Robert Gould Shaw when describing the memorial but, rather, only mentioned the 54th Massachusetts Infantry. No longer do public-funded institutions, like the National Park Service, speak only about the Robert Gould Shaw Memorial, but they now include the name of the 54th Massachusetts Infantry when referencing the monument. It is part of the dominant culture's changing view of the Civil War and its willingness to include African American history in the public memory of this country's heritage.

Commemoration and the Making of a Patriotic Past

Another way to control the past is to create a public memory that commemorates a patriotic past. The official expression is concerned with promoting and preserving the ideals of cultural leaders and authorities, developing social unity, and maintaining the status quo. Those in control of the official memory interpret the past and present reality in a way that helps to reduce competing interests (Bodner 1992:13). Government agencies have traditionally advanced the notion of "community of the nation while suppressing authentic local group memories and collective identities" (Glassberg 1996:12). The goal of the official public memory is to produce obedient, patriotic citizens. "The argument," remarks Michael Frisch, "has traveled a long way from its humanistic origins, arriving at a point where education and indoctrination—cultural and political—seem almost indistinguishable" (1989:1153).

The Enola Gay exhibit at the Smithsonian Institution is an excellent example of how the government suppressed an alternative view on the grounds that it was not patriotic. The original plans for the exhibit ran counter to the collective memory of powerful lobbying groups. The original draft text interpreted the horrors of the atomic bomb. Veterans' groups and lobbying groups convinced the U.S. Congress and the president of the United States to place

political pressure on the Smithsonian Institution to change the exhibit. The revised exhibit conformed to the traditional patriotic view that claimed that it was necessary to drop the bomb to save American lives. The exhibit portrayed the flight crew as patriots and heroes (see *Journal of American History* 1995).

While collective memories are sometimes challenged, the ideals of the official memory must be supported through ceremonies and commemorations if their ideas and histories are to be long lived. One of the most popular commemorative events in U.S. history is the commemoration and reinterpretation of the American Civil War battlefields and landscapes. The struggle over which patriotic past the nation should celebrate was being settled by the end of Reconstruction, and it solidified through the early and mid–twentieth century. David Blight writes,

> Historical memory . . . was not merely an entity altered by the passage of time; it was the prize in a struggle between rival versions of the past, a question of will, of power, of persuasion. The historical memory of any transforming or controversial event emerges from cultural and political competition, from the choice to confront the past and to debate and manipulate its meaning. [1989:1159]

From the late nineteenth century through most of the twentieth century, recognizing African American participation in the Civil War became increasingly limited as the southern revisionist movement gained momentum. Southern whites gained tremendous political and social power after Reconstruction, and they developed a southern patriotic past that could overcome historical humiliation. They created a glorious past of honor and dedication to a cause, while excluding African Americans from the story except to mention their faithfulness to the regime of the Old South (Aaron 1973:332–333).

Patriotism promotes and preserves the ideals of cultural leaders and authorities to develop social unity and maintain social inequalities in society. Officials in charge of creating patriotic histories present a past that reduced competing interests (Bodner 1992:13). They create the notion of community and heritage while suppressing the local memories of competing interest groups. The establishment of a patriotic past is evident with the development of the Civil War centennial movement.

Case Study: The Civil War Centennial and the Battle at Manassas

In the 1950s and 1960s Americans looked for a unifying theme that could bring some peace and tranquility to the growing antagonism between races and regions. The era was marked by violence and grief as racial issues tugged at the fragile seams that held this nation together. For instance, in September 1962 more than a thousand angry whites rampaged across the University of Mississippi cam-

pus to protest the admission of the campus's first black student. President Kennedy sent several hundred federal marshals to protect the student. The mob killed two men, more than two dozen marshals were wounded, and 120 people were wounded amid considerable property damage (Cohodas 1997). These were not isolated incidents, but they were indicative of race relations at the time.

During this era of racial tensions, Civil War Round Tables in 1957, successfully petitioned Congress to create a Civil War Centennial Commission. The commission used the anniversary of this historic event to promote nationalism and patriotism. It fashioned memories of past conflict and tried to transform them into symbolic struggles for unity. Abroe explains that the recollection of a heroic past could easily provide a diversion from the racial and political unrest sweeping through the country: "With citizens' attention fixed upon subversive threats—real or imagined—to democratic institutions, the vision of a United States tested and fortified in the crucible of civil conflict offered reassurance that the nation could meet any crisis and emerge victorious" (1998:22). President Eisenhower wrote the Civil War Centennial Commission and urged it to

> look on this great struggle not merely as a set of military operations, but as a period in our history in which the times called for extraordinary degrees of patriotism and heroism on the part of the men and women of both North and South. In this context we may derive inspiration from their deeds to renew our dedication to the task which yet confronts us—the furtherance, together with other free nations of the world, of the freedom and dignity of man and the building of a just and lasting peace. [1960a]

Karl Betts, who became the first executive director of the national commission, was joined by Ulysses S. Grant III. Both men had military backgrounds. At the Civil War Centennial meetings it is clear that the ideas of the Lost Cause were embedded in the national public memory of the Civil War. Grant explained that the Civil War could not be forgotten and that the Confederates were also Americans "who were heroically fighting for what they thought was right" (Minutes of the Civil War Centennial Commission 1960). Heroism allowed for the common foot soldier to be recognized, but it also provided an example of how ordinary citizens followed the orders of their leaders. They fought for a larger political structure without question (Bodner 1992:209).

The opening ceremonies of the centennial celebration were held in New York City, where a group gathered at the Grant Memorial. There, Major General Grant gave a speech that stressed that the Civil War was important since it showed the ability of the country to reunite (*New York Times* 1961:1). That same day, opening ceremonies were held in Lexington, at Robert E. Lee's grave site. Congressman William Tuck of Virginia noted that after the war Lee

urged Southerners to strengthen the Union *(New York Times* 1961:1).

Allan Nevis, a professional historian, and James I. Robertson, former editor of *Civil War History,* became the new commission leaders in 1961. Nevis declared the mission of the commission:

Above all, our central theme will be unity, not division. When we finally reach the commemoration of Appomattox, we shall treat it not as a victory or a defeat, but as a beginning of a century of increasing concord, mutual understanding, and fraternal affection among all the sections and social groups. [Minutes of the Civil War Centennial Commission 1961]

The Civil War centennial celebrated dedication and loyalty to a cause while the issue of slavery played little or no role at all during commemoration events. The commission could not totally ignore the racial divisiveness within the country, and on September 22, 1962, it sponsored an event at the Lincoln Memorial to commemorate the centennial of the Emancipation Proclamation. The ceremonies marked more than the symbolic end to slavery, and white national unity became the overriding theme once again. The Kennedy administration was reluctant to take a major political stance at the event while racial tensions boiled in this country. At the time Kennedy contemplated reelection, and he did not want to offend white southerners. The audience did listen to a recording of President Kennedy. He emphasized patriotic themes and commended African Americans for working on civil rights issues within the framework of the Constitution. He praised African Americans for their struggle to make life better for their people: "He thought it remarkable that despite humiliation and depravation, blacks had retained their loyalty to the nation and 'democratic institution' " *(New York Times* 1962:1, 50; Bodner 1992: 211).

Centennial celebrations occurred at many national parks, including Manassas National Battlefield Park on July 21, 22, and 23, 1961. Reenactment gatherings often attracted up to 100,000 spectators, and at Manassas, nearly 200,000 people observed the three-day event. In August 1960, President Eisenhower wrote the First Manassas Corporation that the event "will serve to remind all Americans that the bonds which now unite us are as precious as the blood of young men" (1960b). A 1961 pamphlet, called "Grand Reenactment," advertising the event described the importance of the battle in American history. It stated that the "reenactment will commemorate in action, sight, and sound the courage and devotion demonstrated here in 1861 and the need for similar dedication in the years to come."

The Centennial Commemoration program adopted the "Lost Cause" sentiment, claiming: "Today's commemorative spectacle has the objective of reminding you of our common heritage—and indeed of reminding the world—that our people have always been willing to fight and to die if need be for their beliefs—and their principles." Whether

fighting for the Union or the Confederacy, "they were all deeply in love with their country. And the country they loved was America."

While the reenactment received praise from the press, others criticized the event as "a celebration rather than an event commemorating a tragic event in our history. The 'Coney Island' atmosphere that concession stands created behind the spectator section was objectionable" (see Volz 1961:12). Another citizen noted "that even though great pains were taken to present a historically accurate event, as it was, comparatively few people came away really understanding what took place" (see Volz 1961:12).

Manassas National Battlefield Park has always been about the history of the battles (the First Battle of Manassas and the Second Battle of Manassas), and National Park Service historians at the park have not been willing to expand the interpretation of the park to incorporate social history into the story of the park. The centennial celebrations were about Confederate victories and the reconciliation between whites. These celebrations ignored some of the broader issues surrounding the war, like slavery, emancipation, and the use of African American troops in the Civil War. These topics are still not fully addressed in the park today, and park cultural resource managers and historians have continued to take steps to reinforce and glorify a Confederate past by erasing any forms of African American history from the battlefield landscape (see Martin et al. 1997).

Nostalgia and the Legitimation of American Heritage

Another way to create memory is to develop a sense of heritage. Citizens of the early American republic resisted the development of an American collective memory and frowned upon the commemoration of a sacred past. Adherence to republican values in the early nineteenth century produced tensions between democracy and tradition. John Quincy Adams noted, "Democracy has no monuments. It strikes no medals. It bears the head of no man on a coin" (in Everett [1836]1972:38). In the antebellum era, Americans saw the United States as a country with a future rather than a glorious past worth commemoration. They believed in the value of succeeding without patronage or family influence. Emerson wrote that Americans were "emancipated from history, happily bereft of ancestry, untouched and undefiled by the usual inheritances of family and race" (quoted in Lowenthal 1996:55).

Because of the resistance to create an American heritage, large-scale commemoration activities began slowly after the middle of the nineteenth century. The Mount Vernon's Ladies Association (formed in 1856) and the Ladies' Hermitage Association (1889) are important early preservation groups involved in the American historic, preservation movement. Women were the primary custodians of

American heritage, and they took pride in demonstrating their care and, therefore, patriotism for America's past. Those who did not have ancestral roots could join other groups, like the Patriotic League of the Revolution (formed in 1894). Their goal was to "create and promote interest in all matters pertaining to American history, to collect and preserve relics of the period of the American Revolution, and to foster patriotism" (from Kammen 1991:267).

Until the 1890s the U.S. government did little to assist historic preservation or to create a national collective memory. From 1880 through 1886, eight bills were introduced to Congress to preserve historic lands, but none was enacted. In the 1890s Congress finally authorized the establishment of five Civil War battlefields as national military parks to be administered by the Defense Department—Chickamauga, Antietam, Shiloh, Gettysburg, and Vicksburg. Several Revolutionary War sites were also added. By 1906, protection became available for prehistoric ruins with the establishment of the Antiquities Act. These events are an important indication of America's growing need to create a useable heritage.

This national movement helped to develop and foster a collective memory and national heritage. Heritage creates a useable past and it generates a precedent that serves our present needs. More recently the political uses of heritage have been made very explicit within Western culture. We live in a society whose thirst for nostalgia seems unquenchable. Kammen (1991:214–219) calls the creation of Americans' consciousness for historic preservation since the 1950s the "heritage phenomenon." Heritage connotes integrity, authenticity, venerability, and stability. While "history explores and explains pasts it grows ever more opaque over time; heritage clarifies pasts so as to infuse them with present purposes" (Lowenthal 1996:xv).

Heritage is one way to create community and cultural continuity. A nation uses heritage to create a collective memory in order to look for more innocent and carefree days by selectively remembering. We remember what we perceive as good and forget the rest. False notions of the past may be upheld in order to create and sustain national mythology. For instance, David Lowenthal brings to our attention the myth behind the founding of Londonderry (Derry). Contrary to local belief, the city was not founded by St. Columba, and the famed siege of 1689 was only a blockade: "But Derry folk dote on these founding fables all the more because they are fabulous" (Lowenthal 1996: 129).

Closely linked with the idea of heritage is nostalgia. Nostalgia for things that are reminders of earlier days has replaced the early American republic's ideals for progress and development. Nostalgia is about nurturance and stewardship. Beleaguered by loss and change, Americans remember a bygone day of economic power. They have angst about the loss of community. In a throwaway society, people are looking for something more lasting (Lowenthal

1996:6). Massive migrations of the last 200 years have also sharpened our needs and feelings of nostalgia. Tens of millions of people have sought refuge outside of their native lands, fleeing hunger, violence, and hatred. Rural people have increasingly migrated to urban areas. People have been cut off from their own past, and they are increasingly seeking their roots (Lowenthal 1996:9).

The celebration of America's heritage can often be read from the American landscape, and it can be reinforced through material culture, such as museums and monuments. Following is an example of how a southern patriotic group used commemoration and a monument to reinforce nostalgia in order to legitimize southern bigotry. African American groups have challenged the placement of the monument is a visible and public place, and they have struggled to change the meaning of the event that the memorial commemorates.

Case Study: The Heyward Shepherd Memorial

After the Civil War, Southerners created more monuments to their defeat than any other civilization in history. It is their dedication to the Lost Cause, justifying their actions during the Civil War, that created the proliferation of these markers (McPherson 1982:488). The idea of the "Lost Cause" survived through the twentieth and now into the twenty-first century. It is kept alive by southern patriotic groups like the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC) and the Sons of Confederate Veterans (SCV). These southern heritage groups were, and still are, engaged in cultural warfare to establish a "Confederate tradition." This tradition focuses on the white South's view of history, appreciation for the rule by the elite, a fear of the enfranchisement of African Americans, and a reverence for the Confederate cause (Foster 1987:5). From the late nineteenth century, this paradigm has preached racial separation and the virtues of an aristocratic South. The Lost Cause mythology argued that the Confederacy was never defeated but, rather, they were overwhelmed by numbers and betrayed by some key generals. The Lost Cause has been compared to the Ghost Dance of the Plains Indians whereby southerners created "a dream of a return to an undefeated confederacy" (Foster 1987:47, 60). This mythology won in the battle to control the public memory of the Civil War (Blight 1989:1162–1163; Connelly and Bellows 1982; Holmes 1962:4–5, 76).

A monument to Heyward Shepherd, an African American killed by John Brown's raiding party on Harpers Ferry, is an important example of how one group consciously excluded another group's memory of the past. Brown, a famous abolitionist known for fighting against slavery in Kansas, had come to Harpers Ferry in October 1859. His goal was to capture the U.S. arsenal where guns were stored for the U.S. Army. Brown believed that once enslaved African Americans heard that he captured the arsenal they

would abandon their plantations and come to his aid. Brown would supply escaped slaves with weapons and they would march south, freeing slaves along the way. No slaves joined Brown's revolt; Brown and his men were captured, and many of his men were found guilty of treason and hanged.

It is ironic that Heyward Shepherd became the first casualty of Brown's raid. Although the stories are not clear, it appears that he was shot in the back as he tried to flee from Brown's raiding party. The memory of Heyward Shepherd, controlled by the white press, became an important tool to justify the Lost Cause sentiment. The *Virginia Free Press* reported, "He was shot down like a dog. A humble negro as he was, his life was worth more than all of the desperadoes of the party, and his memory will be revered, when theirs will only be thought of with execution" (1859:2). The newspaper continually reinforced the martyrdom of a faithful African American who worked diligently in a white-dominated society (*Virginia Free Press* 1867, 1879, 1884).

The UDC decided in 1905 that a "Faithful Slave Monument" would be one way that southerners could create and control a public memory of the conditions of slavery. A "Faithful Slave Monument" was a vehicle to counter the memory created by northerners about the South and the institution of slavery. The UDC believed that it was important to erect a monument "to the faithful old slaves who remained loyal and true to their owners in the dark days of the sixties and on through the infamous reconstruction period" (*Confederate Veteran* 1905:123). The monument would tell future generations "that the white men of the South were the negro's best friend then and that the men of the South are the negro's best friend to-day" (*Confederate Veteran* 1905: 123–124).

During the beginning of the Great Depression there was a new sense of xenophobia that swept through the country, and African Americans found themselves further segregated and oppressed by Jim Crow legislation. In 1931, the town council in Harpers Ferry unanimously agreed to allow the "Faithful Slave Monument" to be erected in town. Ceremonies occurred in October 1931, and Henry T. McDonald, president of Storer College, an African American college, participated in the unveiling of the memorial. The president general of the UDC, Elizabeth Bashinsky, spoke about her devotion to the Confederate flag and remarked how the "black mammy" loved her white "chilluns." She also believed that the slaves in the United States did not violently rise against their masters, like they did in Haiti, because they were well clothed, fed, and housed; treated kindly; and taught Christianity. Bashinsky noted that Heyward Shepherd "gave his life in defense of his employer's property, and in memory of many others of his race who were loyal and true during a period that tried men's souls. . . . Heyward Shepherd's conduct was honor-

able, just, and true, and merits the praise we bring him" (*Confederate Veteran* 1931:411). After Bashinsky's speech the memorial was unveiled. Part of the memorial inscription reads:

> As a Memorial to Heyward Shepherd,
> Exemplifying The Character And
> Faithfulness of Thousands Of
> Negroes Who, Under Many
> Temptations Throughout
> Subsequent Years of War, So
> Conducted Themselves That
> No Stain Was Left Upon a Record
> Which Is The Peculiar Heritage
> of The American People, And An
> Everlasting Tribute to The Best
> in Both Races. [UDC 1931:58–59]

The inscription angered many African Americans, and McDonald's participation in the ceremonies was immediately attacked by several members of the African American community (Andrews 1931). Max Barber remarked that McDonald should have been "shocked and disgusted" at the statements made at the ceremony and that he erred in participating in an event coordinated by "a bunch of unregenerated rebels" (*Pittsburgh Courier* 1931). W. E. B. Du Bois wrote in *Crisis* (1932) that the dedication was a "proslavery celebration" and called McDonald's participation in the event "disgraceful."

In the 1950s the National Park Service (NPS) acquired the Heyward Shepherd Memorial along with the building it stood against in Lower Town Harpers Ferry. Funding became available for building renovations in the mid-1970s, and in 1976 the buildings adjacent to the Heyward Shepherd Memorial underwent construction. The NPS removed the memorial to its maintenance yard so it would not get damaged. In 1981 the Heyward Shepherd Memorial was moved back to its original location, although the NPS covered it with plywood when it received reports of possible plans to deface the monument (Meyer 1995:C2). The NPS found itself between two opposing organizations. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) viewed the monument as offensive, and the UDC and the SCV wanted the monument uncovered and displayed to the public.

Mrs. Dewey Wood of the UDC believed that the message on the monument is clear in its meaning. She remarked, "Why should the NAACP be opposed to this? It is a monument to one of their people. . . . There were 40,000 slaves in Maryland, and none of them came to [John Brown's] support. They were loyal to their people. . . . I really don't know what they find offensive about it" (in White 1989:4). Efforts to have all groups—UDC, SCV, NAACP, and the NPS—reach a compromise to uncover the monument failed.

On January 13, 1994, Elliot Cummings, Commander, Maryland Division, SCV, wrote to Senator Jesse Helms,

Republican, South Carolina, complaining that the monument, a form of southern heritage, was covered "for reason of political correctness." He argued against an interpretive sign next to the monument to explain its historical context: "This is the exact same line used by the perverters of history at the Smithsonian to justify a distorted story line about the Enola Gay. . . . This kind of thinking jeopardizes the heritage of all of us" (Cummings 1995).

The NPS received a congressional inquiry from Helms (Helms 1995) and political pressure forced it to remove the plywood covering. Beside the monument stands interpretive signage to create a context for the monument. The reaction to the inscription on the monument belies the oppressing memories this monument represents. Cummings demanded that the national park give the monument back to those who paid for it (the UDC and the SCV) or remove the interpretive wayside sign. "My position is that the monument should not be interpreted," said Cummings. "They should be allowed to exist as they are and people should be allowed to make whatever interpretation they want. . . . Do I get to put an interpretive plaque on the Lincoln Memorial saying this man was responsible for the deaths of 250,000 Southerners and usurped the Constitution?" (quoted in Bailey 1995:22).

While these southern heritage groups have fought to have the monument redisplayed in the national park, and are fighting to remove any contextual material associated with the object, blacks are arguing to remove the memorial from public display in order to erase some of the landscape reminders of the Jim Crow era. The president of the West Virginia chapter of the NAACP, James Tolbert remarked, "I don't think it's history. I think it is a misrepresentation of the life and role of Heyward Shepherd. We don't think that the Daughters of the Confederacy and the Sons of the Confederacy had that much love for Negroes" (quoted in Deutsch 1995:1A). During its August meeting, the NAACP chapter passed a resolution that condemned the monument (Bailes 1995:A1). Tolbert later added, "I believe it should be taken by crane to the Potomac River and dropped at the river's deepest point" (quoted in Deutsch 1995:9A; *Jet Magazine* 1995:22–23).

The erection of the Heyward Shepherd Memorial is a way that the SCV and the UDC used nostalgia to legitimize southern bigotry. While African Americans were not pleased with the erection of the Heyward Shepherd Memorial in 1931, they continue to battle with the UDC and the SCV over the meaning of the monument and the memory of slavery. The presence of the memorial in lower town Harpers Ferry is a reminder of the racism that existed in America during the Jim Crow era, and its placement in the national park, on view to the public, threatens African Americans' wishes to remove these signs of bigotry on the American landscape. African Americans feel that the monument legitimizes a racist heritage and successfully excludes a memory of the cruelties of slavery. They fear that its meaning may become part of the official public memory. It is obvious that the lack of political clout has hampered the success of the West Virginia NAACP.

Conclusion

There is a growing literature related to how archaeology is used to create a particular memory and instill nationalism in almost all parts of the globe including Asia (Edwards 1991:1–23; Glover 1999; Ikawa-Smith 1999:626–629; Pai 1999:619–625; Pak 1999:613–618), the Pacific region (Spriggs 1999:109–121), the Middle East (El-Haj 1998:166–188), Mesoamerica (Mazariegos 1998:376–386), Scandinavia (Scott 1996:321–342), and Greece (Brown 1994:784–796; Hamilakis 1996:117–129, 1999:303–320). Archaeology has a long tradition of supporting national programs and creating a past that justifies national territories and/or particular pasts (Anderson 1991:163–185; Kohl 1998:225; Scham 1998:301–308; Trigger 1989). Using historical archaeology to help prop official histories is not new to Americans as many projects had their beginnings during times of instability or times of social and economic crises. For instance, a major historical archaeology project began in the United States in the late nineteenth century when labor increasingly challenged the practices of capitalism. In 1897, the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities, which owns portions of James Island, uncovered the brick foundations of the 1639 church at Jamestown, the first permanent English settlement in the New World. During the Great Depression, in 1934 the NPS initiated excavations at Jamestown with the main goal of architectural reconstruction. This work, undertaken by J. C. Harrington from 1936 through the 1940s, continued under the direction of John Cotter in the 1950s (Cotter 1958; Cotter and Hudson 1957).

Excavations at St. Mary's City, Maryland's first capital, were also begun in the 1930s, pioneered by H. Chandler Forman, who worked there intermittently from 1936 to 1965 after he left Jamestown (Shackel and Little 1994). While the first capitals of Virginia and Maryland received early attention by archaeologists, Virginia's second capital did as well. Sponsored by the Rockefeller Foundation, excavations at Williamsburg from the 1930s also catered to architectural restorations (Derry and Brown 1987; Nöel Hume 1983:29).

Jamestown and Williamsburg, in particular, provide examples of government and private interest, respectively, in creating a memory of a historic past. For instance, at Jamestown the NPS presents the town not only as the first permanent English settlement in the New World but also as the birthplace of modern democracy. The first representative legislative assembly in America convened at Jamestown from 1619 until it was moved in 1699 to Williamsburg (Hudson 1985:48). At Williamsburg, the Rockefeller Foundation celebrates the ideals of the planter elite as

timeless and inevitable American values (Wallace 1981: 68–78; Patterson 1986). While each site celebrates Anglo-American history, non-European (and other European) peoples whose histories were inextricably linked with the British (and other Europeans) have been largely ignored or glossed over. Neither American Indians nor African Americans figured in the initial vision of the Jamestown and Williamsburg restorations. However, in the 1980s the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation made substantial strides in incorporating the lives of those "others" (e.g., black slaves, servants, and women in general) in restoration, archaeology, research designs, and public presentations (Handler and Gable 1997). An increasing awareness exists among the public, probably through greater exposure to critical histories, that the ideals of the planter elite were not "natural" in the sense of being inevitable, or timeless, but were embedded in their own contemporary social and political realities.

There would be much less to say about historical archaeology in the Chesapeake were it not for the likes of the Rockefeller Foundation (Colonial Williamsburg), the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities (Jamestown), the Thomas Jefferson Memorial Foundation (Monticello), and the Mount Vernon Ladies Association (Mount Vernon). However, it is also very clear that all of these archaeologies help to reinforce the ideals of the official history and help to create stability and justify inequalities in society today.

The analysis of the construction of history and public memory has taken on a renewed interest, especially when dealing with memory of the recent past and justification for the present (see, for instance, Blake 1999:423–435; Daynes 1997; Peri 1999:106–124). Many scholars are paying considerable attention to the memory of a generation that is coming to a close, the histories associated with World War II (Epstein 1999; La Capra 1998), and the creation of modern Europe in the post–World War II era (Markovits and Reich 1997). Remembering the Vietnam era has also occupied the scholarship of memory in recent years (see, for instance, Hass 1998).

How we remember and reinterpret a past also serves to create ethnic identities for communities, such as African Americans (Bethel 1997; Fraser 1998), native peoples in Mexico (Florescano 1994), and people of rural Australia (Goodall 1999:160–190). Selective memory of the past has also been used by groups to create and justify racism and ethnic cleansing (Coslovich 1994; Larson 1999:335–362).

Memory can be about (1) forgetting about or excluding an alternative past, (2) creating and reinforcing patriotism, and/or (3) developing a sense of nostalgia to legitimize a particular heritage. These strategies become important for the construction and legitimation of social groups, particularly nation-states (Alonso 1988:40; Anderson 1991; Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983). It becomes important in

creating national histories and in inspiring nationalism (see, for instance, Howe 1999:222–239; Nora 1999). Nation-states tend to be rooted in tradition, and this memory of the past appears to be "so 'natural' as to require no definition other than self assertion" (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983:14). Official histories of a nation require consensus building and the construction of a history from multiple, often conflicting memories (Anderson 1991:163–185; Kohl 1998:225; Scham 1998:301–308; Trigger 1989).

Public memory can be viewed as tactical power that controls social settings. Competing groups ceaselessly battle to create and control the collective national memory of revered sacred sites and objects. Different group agendas often clash causing the established collective memories to be continuously in flux. Some subordinate groups can subvert the dominant memory, other groups compromise and become part of a multivocal history, while others fail to have their story remembered by the wider society. The tensions between and within groups who struggle for the control over the collective public memory is often situational and ongoing since the political stakes are high. Those who control the past have the ability to command the present and the future.

"Culture may be seen as memory in action as we live and enact our version of the real living world. Habitual ways of doing things are almost automatic, for we act as we have acted before, and ultimately as we have been taught to act" (Teski and Climo 1995:2). We learn through actual instruction and imitating patterns that we have observed as they surround us at all stages of life. Social actors actively know the way society operates and individuals act within a preexisting structure, or *habitus* (Bourdieu 1977; Giddens 1979). Habitus is the interaction between the unconscious and physical world that is learned and reinforced through interaction. Symbols play an important role in structuring relations of hierarchy and classification systems. Using past experience and the ability to read the meanings of objects allows one to accept or reject the use and meaning of the object and the creation of a particular past.

Material culture, in the form of statues, monuments, museums, artifacts, or landscapes, has some ascribed meaning—past and present—associated with it, and these meanings vary between individuals and interest groups. This material culture can be transformed into sacred objects when serving the goals and needs of any group. The three case studies presented above show how conflicting memories developed around the Heyward Shepherd Memorial, the Civil War Centennial and Manassas National Battlefield Park, and the Robert Gould Shaw Memorial. All of the case studies are about the situational use of power and the ability to use resources to control public memory. In none of these cases has a consensus been reached; rather, groups struggle to have their meaning become part of

public history. In the case of the Heyward Shepherd Memorial groups like the UDC and the SCV, the NAACP, and the NPS are fighting over the control for the meaning of a particular past. In this case, NPS representatives placed the monument on display with an interpretive sign that provides some contextual information. A consensus was not reached between the different groups regarding a solution for redisplaying of the monument. The federal government imposed a solution and secured control over the interpretation of the monument. During the late 1950s and early 1960s, an era of great civil strife, the Civil War centennial commemorations became a vehicle to create the notion of obedience and loyalty to a cause. This message was reinforced through public displays and ceremonies. What became clear during these celebratory events was that African American issues played a subservient role to the larger issues of white reconciliation. At Manassas National Battlefield, as well as in many other national parks, African Americans have never had much of a voice at the national park. At the Robert Gould Shaw Memorial the African American community has been very successful in challenging the power of the meaning of the monument. The recent dedication has reaffirmed the power of the African American community and the meaning of the monument has become a memorial about the black soldiers rather than the white colonel. It is a monument that has become part an integral part of African American heritage related to the American Civil War.

In all of these case studies the power of the African Americans to assert themselves and become part of the official meaning varies significantly. While the civil rights movement and the Civil Rights Act allow blacks to gain some control over their official memory, it is important to look at the situational context of power. Blacks have had little power to claim representation at Manassas, a park that historically celebrated two Confederate victories. At Harpers Ferry, the NAACP struggles to gain control over the meaning of a UDC monument, although their efforts have not succeeded since they have had little political clout and they are fighting against an organization that has the backing of U.S. congressional leaders, like Senator Jesse Helms. In Boston, the presence of powerful black leaders like President Benjamin Payton of Tuskegee University, Professor Henry Louis Gates Jr. of the Du Bois Institute at Harvard University, and General Colin Powell gave legitimacy to the control of the meaning of the Shaw Memorial.

While there is always a strong movement to remove subordinate memories from our national collective memory, minority groups continually struggle to have their histories remembered. The clash over the control of public history occurs in some of the most visible places on the landscape, like national monuments and national parks. They are the arenas for negotiating meanings of the past (see for instance Linenthal 1993; Linenthal and Englehardt 1996; Lowenthal 1996). The past is always in flux, with competing interests always trying to take control over the collective meaning. The meaning of the American landscape is continually being contested, constructed, and reconstructed.

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