

REMEMBERING THE BOYS: FIRST WORLD WAR MONUMENTS IN
DES MOINES, IOWA, AND NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

by

Graham Jack Henderson

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts in History

Middle Tennessee State University
May 2017

Thesis Committee:

Dr. Bren Martin

Chair Dr. Carroll Van West

To the men and women who served in the First World War.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my family and friends for their support. The encouragement I received from them in my pursuit of continued education has been a driving force. I would like to thank those I served with as a member of C Company, 2 Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment "No Slack", 1st Brigade Combat Team "Bastogne", 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), for instilling upon me an uncompromising no quit attitude. Having the central tenets of, "No breather from work, No relief from combat, No request for respite, NO SLACK!," etched into my being, I knew that no matter how arduous the challenges of graduate school may be, I never had any doubt in my mind that I could take them on. NFS Brothers! Finally, I would also like to thank Dr. Bren Martin, Dr. Katie Sikes, and Dr. Carroll Van West for the personal attention they have given me over the last few years. I am indebted to them for not only the knowledge they have bestowed upon me, but the opportunities they have given me in order to become a well-rounded Public Historian.

ABSTRACT

Following the trend of widespread memorial construction following the Civil War, cities such as Nashville, Tennessee and Des Moines, Iowa built several monuments in remembrance of the First World War. This study goes beyond the examination of artistic styles to explore questions surrounding the local communities that created these monuments. Using Southern and Midwestern cities for comparison, this work uses monuments as objects of material culture to expose reflections of past communities and their struggles to collectively remember themes of national trauma, industrialized warfare, patriotism, racism, new American imperialism, and shifting cultural attitudes on death and commemoration.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF FIGURES.....	vii
INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER I: "THE BOYS FROM TENNESSEE": FIRST WORLD WAR MONUMENTS IN NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE.....	8
Introduction.....	8
Historical Background.....	11
First World War Monuments in Nashville, Tennessee.....	14
Lieutenant James Simmons Timothy Monument.....	15
Gold Star Monument.....	19
War Memorial Building.....	22
First Tennessee Infantry Monument.....	27
Hadley Park.....	29
Colonel Luke Lea Monument.....	31
Sergeant Alvin C. York Monument.....	33
Conclusion.....	42
CHAPTER II: "THE NEGRO SOLDIER": RACE AND MONUMENT BUILDING IN DES MOINES, IOWA, 1917-1922.....	44
Introduction.....	44
Des Moines and the War.....	45
Racism and the Training of African Americans in Des Moines.....	53
Post-War Fallout and the Monuments of Des Moines.....	66
Fort Des Moines Memorial Park.....	68

CHAPTER III: "THAT LIBERTY SHALL NOT PERISH FROM THIS EARTH": FIRST WORLD WAR MONUMENTS IN DES MOINES, IOWA.....	75
Introduction.....	75
Merle D. Hay Monument.....	78
Gold Star Monument and the Gold Star Cemetery.....	86
Parks.....	98
CHAPTER IV: REMEMBERING OUR BOYS: CONNECTIONS BETWEEN FIRST WORLD WAR MONUMENTS.....	109
Introduction.....	109
Sergeant York Returns to America.....	116
Sergeant Alvin C. York Monument.....	126
Merle D. Hay.....	129
CONCLUSION.....	138
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	143

LIST OF FIGURES

	Page
Figure 1: Lieutenant James Simmons Timothy Monument.....	15
Figure 2: Lieutenant James Simmons Timothy Monument Plaque.....	17
Figure 3: Gold Star Monument (Davidson County, TN).....	19
Figure 4: Gold Star Monument Plaque (Davidson County, TN).....	21
Figure 5: War Memorial Building.....	22
Figure 6: "Victory" Statue.....	25
Figure 7: First Tennessee Infantry Monument.....	27
Figure 8: First Tennessee Infantry Monument (Front Plaque).....	28
Figure 9: First Tennessee Infantry Monument (Rear Plaque).....	28
Figure 10: Hadley Park Monument.....	30
Figure 11: Colonel Luke Lea Monument.....	31
Figure 12: Sergeant Alvin C. York Monument (Nashville, TN).....	34
Figure 13: Fort Des Moines Monument (Close-up).....	68
Figure 14: Fort Des Moines Monument (Sculpture).....	69
Figure 15: Clayton Hall Education Center, Fort Des Moines.....	71
Figure 16: Fort Des Moines Monument.....	74
Figure 17: Merle D. Hay Monument (Des Moines, IA).....	82
Figure 18: Merle D. Hay Monument Boulder (Des Moines, IA).....	83
Figure 19: Gold Star Monument (Polk County, IA).....	89
Figure 20: Gold Star Monument (Polk County, IA) (Close-up).....	91
Figure 21: Gold Star Cemetery.....	95
Figure 22: Gold Star Cemetery Monument.....	96

	Page
Figure 23: McHenry Park Sign.....	99
Figure 24: McHenry Park.....	100
Figure 25: MacRae Park Sign.....	101
Figure 26: MacRae Park Interpretive Sign.....	102
Figure 27: Baldwin-Patterson Park Sign.....	104
Figure 28: Rodney Crowley Playground Marker.....	105
Figure 29: Rodney Crowley Playground Entrance.....	105
Figure 30: Corporal James Bethel Gresham Monument Plaque.....	114
Figure 31: Corporal James Bethel Gresham Monument.....	114
Figure 32: James Gresham Memorial Home.....	116
Figure 33: Alvin and Gracie York Burial Site.....	123
Figure 34: Gracie York Burial Slab.....	125
Figure 35: Alvin C. York Burial Slab.....	125
Figure 36: Merle D. Hay Monument (Glidden, IA).....	130
Figure 37: Merle D. Hay Monument (Glidden, IA) Left Wing.....	134
Figure 38: Merle D. Hay Monument (Glidden, IA) Right Wing.....	134

INTRODUCTION

I grew up in Urbandale, Iowa, a middleclass suburb in the northwest of Des Moines. The boundary between cities is the old 58th street, known for nearly a century now as Merle Hay Road. The road is lined with large commercial strip malls, a shopping mall- aptly named Merle Hay Mall, and a series of car dealerships, nicknamed the 'Merle Hay Auto Mile'. I have traveled on Merle Hay Road hundreds, maybe even thousands of times. I worked as a teenager at the mall, my old Boy Scout troop had an annual Christmas tree lot along the road, and I never remember wondering who Merle Hay was. I do not remember Iowa history, or even local history, ever playing a large role in school curriculum, but that might be more of a statement about how much I paid attention.

Nearly ten years ago, as an undergraduate student at the University of Northern Iowa, I first learned who Merle Hay was. I was struggling to find a topic for the Introduction to the Study of History course I was taking at the time; and my professor had suggested I pick up a roll of microfilm, scroll through until I found something interesting and start trying to answer questions that arose. I had known that I wanted to learn more about the First World War since my high school history courses, and most of my college survey courses, tended to gloss over the subject in order to focus on the Second World War. Based on that, and purely by chance, I selected a roll of microfilm- probably the *Des Moines Register*- that contained November, 1917. As I scrolled through, I came across a headline, announcing the death of Merle D. Hay of Glidden, Iowa as one of three of the first Americans killed in the First World War. Recognizing the name, I became

instantly intrigued, wrote the term paper, got a B, and moved on never expecting to do anything more with it.

As a graduate student in the Public History program at Middle Tennessee State University, I finally had the opportunity to take a history course completely on the First World War- a dream come true I assure you. For that course I wrote a paper on the monuments of Sergeant Alvin C. York. That paper made me begin to think about focusing on monuments for a thesis topic. As I began to learn more about the history of Tennessee- and Nashville in particular- I began to want to know more about my own home. How might I go about comparing the First World War monuments of Nashville to the ones in Des Moines? What can monuments tell us beyond the words upon them? The thesis that follows is my attempt to explore those and other questions.

Nashville has seven monuments with a connection to the First World War. They are the 1st Tennessee Infantry Regiment and Colonel Luke Lea monuments of Percy Warner Park, the gates of Hadley Park, The Gold Star and Lieutenant James Timothy monuments of Centennial Park, the Sergeant Alvin C. York statue, and the Tennessee War Memorial Building. Des Moines has four; the Polk County Gold Star Monument, the Fort Des Moines Memorial, the Merle Hay monument and the Gold Star Cemetery Monument. In addition to these monuments, Des Moines also named five parks for local soldiers who died in the war, Captain Harrison C. McHenry, Corporal Donald MacRae, Sergeant John Burke, Lieutenant Rodney Crowley, Private First Class Alanzo F. Baldwin and Private First Class John Patterson. These monuments are associated with streets, bridges, and buildings around their respective cities and states. There are connections

elsewhere as well, Merle Hay and Alvin York for instance, in addition to their monuments in the capital cities of Iowa and Tennessee, their hometowns have monuments dedicated to their memories. Hay is also connected to Corporal James Bethel Gresham of Evansville, Indiana, and Private Thomas Enright of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Gresham and Enright were memorialized in their own ways.

Most studies of monuments correctly examine artistic expression, or national thematic trends. These types of works have served as a solid foundation from which to work, but have failed to concentrate their scopes in order to gain deeper meaning. What might be learned if we look at one place, or the remembrance of one event within a community? What similarities or differences can be observed when we localize our study, and can we compare the results to those in other places? While I do my best to interpret the designs of the monuments in this work within various contexts, I do not claim to be an art historian. I chose instead to focus on value of these artifacts as objects of material culture.

Each of the monuments in this work have their own history, and while there are many differences between who is remembered and the physical design, there are also many similarities. Their creation is due in part to economics, community involvement-particularly from women, state support, involvement of veteran's organizations, national monument campaigns and trends, as well as layers of racism, societal trauma, and shifting attitudes of death. The majority were created in the decade following the end of the First World War in 1918, but the most recent of the monuments was completed in 2004. The Des Moines monument to Merle Hay was even moved since my initial

research project of the fall of 2007. Most importantly, if we take a moment to think about these monuments, individually or as a group, it becomes clear that they can tell us great deal beyond the intentions of their creators.

This study draws heavily on newspapers to present information such as dates, names, and costs. Newspapers have also been helpful to capture speeches, helping to inform on the feelings associated with the dedications of these monuments. Additionally, libraries and archives provided files and collections of documents such as letters, bills, organization minutes, and historic photographs, which helped to provide information on the process of securing funding and settling on designs for monuments. It became important to me to see each and every one of these monuments within the context of the landscape in which they exist. Photographs simply were not enough to get a feel for each of these monuments. Therefore, I traveled to Des Moines, Glidden, Nashville, Pall Mall, Evansville, and Pittsburgh, in order to get the proper spatial awareness and respect for each of the monuments explored in the pages to follow.

Chapter One explores the monuments in Nashville. By placing monuments within the historical contexts of their creation we can begin to see carefully constructed expressions of public memory. As a whole, the monuments demonstrate tangible evidence of a community struggling to cope with death in an industrial era, and new found national patriotism while reacting to the 'Lost Cause' narrative of the post-Civil War era. This chapter draws heavily from the thoughts about collective memory of

Maurice Halbwach.¹ Wolfgang Schivelbusch's study of the recovery of nations in the aftermath of trauma was useful for understanding the significance of the 'Lost Cause' on the South.² Erika Doss examines the evolution of monuments in the United States.³ Lisa Budreau presents an important work on the politics of commemorating the First World War in the United States.⁴

Chapter Two studies racism in Des Moines and its lasting impact on commemorating locally and nationally significant historical events. The chapter expands upon Bill Douglas' article by examining racism in Des Moines as an extension of more nationally known events.⁵ Racially motivated violence around the country, and the execution of three African American soldiers at Camp Dodge, left Des Moines silent in commemoration of the city's most historically significant contributions to the First World War for eighty years. The chapter concludes with an examination of the monument at Fort Des Moines that was completed in 2004.

The third chapter looks at the monuments and parks of Des Moines. Recent updates to the city, money from national veterans' organizations being spent elsewhere, and a local economic downturn forced the people of Des Moines to limit the scope of their memorialization. As a result, the monuments and parks of the city illustrate the shifting nature of physical commemoration in the United States from statuary to 'useful'.

¹ Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, ed. and trans. Lewis A. Coser (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992).

² Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *The Culture of Defeat: On National Trauma, Morning, and Recovery*, trans. Jefferson Chase, 2003rd ed. (New York: Picador, 2001).

³ Erika Doss, *Memorial Mania: Public Feeling in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010).

⁴ Lisa Budreau, *Bodies of War: World War I and the Politics of Commemoration in America, 1919-1933* (New York: New York University Press, 2010).

⁵ Bill Douglas, "Wartime Illusions and Disillusionment: Camp Dodge and Racial Stereotyping, 1917-1918," *The Annals of Iowa* 57, no. 2 (Spring 1998): 111-34.

This chapter also forces us to consider monuments, not simply as static displays of remembrance, but also serving as reflections of the local community that created them.

Finally, the last chapter looks at connections between monuments beyond aesthetic associations. Communities chose how they wished to collectively display their memories the First World War, but shared memories could vary in presentation depending on the community. In order to illustrate this, the monuments in the state capitals and hometowns dedicated to Sergeant Alvin C. York and Merle D. Hay are examined. This chapter also illuminates connections between the monuments in Des Moines, Nashville, and elsewhere to demonstrate the links between local memorials and national remembrance.

Initially, I selected Des Moines and Nashville for this study partially for selfish reasons, but also for practicality. I knew that I wanted to look at two different cities, Nashville was a logical choice given how close I live to the city. I selected Des Moines as the second city first, because I wanted to learn more about the city I grew up in, and secondly it was feasible to spend long periods of time conducting research during semester breaks for relatively low cost. A comparison of Nashville and Des Moines is useful when contrasting Southern and Midwestern cities. Population size of Davidson County, Tennessee and Polk County, Iowa were reasonably comparable. In 1920, for instance, a difference of less than 14,000 people existed.⁶ Interesting connections exist between those who were remembered on monuments as well. For example, several

⁶ U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division, "Population of Counties, Earliest to 1990," Census, Population of States and Counties of the United States: 1790 to 1990, (n.d.).

African Americans from middle Tennessee trained as officers in Des Moines, and one is listed on several monuments between the two states.

My goal in this examination is to provide a cases study for future research. The First World War is my primary historical interest, but the contexts which I apply to the monuments on the pages to follow can-and should- be applied to other groups of monuments. By no means do I attempt to present a definitive study, nor do I claim that the monuments examined here are the only First World War monuments in these cities. Like any project, scope is important. I chose to limit my scope to focus on built monuments, statues for example. It was impossible, to not include some examinations of buildings, roads, parks, and so forth, but this becomes a slippery slope when one begins to include American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars posts, national guard armories, auditoriums, memorial trees, schools, etc. This is further complicated when monuments, particularly structures, are dedicated to those who fought and died in all wars from a certain geographic location. The inclusion of such monuments would have reduced the effectiveness of my intended purpose of looking at local examples from a single historical event. We frequently pass monuments but rarely do we pay much attention to them. My hope is that this work will help my audience to have a deeper appreciation for these works of granite and bronze. I hope that after reading this, one will pause the next time they see a monument and reflect on what is commemorated, but also to ponder deeper questions about its significance in relation to the community that called for its construction.

CHAPTER I: "THE BOYS FROM TENNESSEE": FIRST WORLD WAR MONUMENTS IN NASHVILLE TENNESSEE

Introduction

Before most of the American soldiers returned home at the conclusion of the First World War, cities across the United States began taking it upon themselves to erect monuments in commemoration of their sons, brothers, fathers, and husbands. Historians generally argue that monuments are expressions of public memory at a particular moment in time.¹ Art historians look at stylistic trends and make arguments on how and why these trends change over time.² These two groups typically do not dialogue; they rarely examine what their themes and trends look like in one place. This chapter will explore the First World War monuments in Nashville, Tennessee. I argue that the monuments constructed by the people of Nashville, in commemoration of the First World War, demonstrate periods of change in public memory and artistic statements of Southern public art in the early 20th century.

Maurice Halbwachs' work regarding collective memory is the starting point for many scholars. According to Halbwachs, two different groups of thought construct collective memory.³ A community develops a shared memory of an event or set of

¹ Erika Doss, *Memorial Mania: Public Feeling in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010); Robert S Nelson and Margaret Olin, eds., *Monuments and Memory, Made and Unmade* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2003).

² Thomas H. Creighton, *The Architecture of Monuments: The Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial Competition* (New York: Reinhard Printing Corporation, 1962); Doss, *Memorial Mania: Public Feeling in America*; David J. Eicher, *Mystic Chords of Memory: Civil War Battlefields and Historic Sites Recaptured* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1998).

³ Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, ed. and trans. Lewis A. Coser (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), 189. In the conclusion, Halbwachs states, "To sum up: social beliefs, whatever their origin, have a double character. They are collective traditions or recollections, but they are also ideas or

traditions by combining individual memories of the same event or tradition. Equally, the individual perceives the past through community interpretation. In other words, if enough people are thinking about an event, like the First World War, that community has a collective memory of that event. In return, the way the community chooses to express memory of the First World War influences the individual's memory. The community monument is collective memory representing many individual memories, expressed as one.

It is out of this social construct of 'collective memory' we see authors such as Barbara Allen and Polly Stewart, examining various examples of 'collective memory' known today more commonly as public memory. While there are many other examples of scholarly works on public memory, Allen and Stewart represent two common themes. First, public memory is subject to definable boundaries such as geography.⁴ Second, as boundaries become more defined, the more they begin to exclude, thus making clearer who is in control of those public memories.⁵ Together these two authors serve as basis of

conventions that result from a knowledge of the present." (189). Continuing to summarize, the author states, "...social thought is essentially memory and that its entire content consists only of collective recollections or remembrances. But it also follows that, among them, only those recollections subsist that in every period society, working within its present-day framework, can reconstruct." (189).

⁴ Barbara A Allen, "The Genealogical Landscape and Southern Sense of Place," in *Sense of Place: American Regional Cultures*, ed. Barbara A Allen and Thomas J. Schlereth (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 1990), 152–63. Allen looks at the importance of home in relation to kinship as one of the most important factors in the creation of individual and regional identity in the American South, going so far as to point out the need have one's body returned home for burial, 152, which will become important to understand later in this paper.

⁵ Polly Stewart, "Regional Consciousness as a Shaper of History: Examples from the Eastern Shore.," in *Sense of Place: American Regional Cultures*, 74–87. Stewart explains how regional identities create an "us versus them," feeling which lends itself to communities desire to interpret and manifest its public memory free of the influences of perceived outsiders. Having not been fully aware of this during a research project, Stewart states, "Had I not ignored two key points in the theory of regional consciousness-that it applies universally in a region by crossing all class and educational lines, and that it

understanding on public memory, which we can apply to public memory of the First World War.

Scholarship of First World War public memory is rich with studies of shifting ideas and traditions. The way western society deals with death before, during and after the war is a clear example of shifting ideas and traditions.⁶ From this body of scholarship we can draw four conclusions. First, due to industrialization the efficiency of killing became unprecedented. Second, mass death led to a complete break from the Victorian Era practices of burial and mourning. Third, for both the Allied and Central Powers perceptions of death on the battlefield shifted away from celebrated glory to tragic irony, while on the home front the shift is towards loss and sacrifice. Finally, individual regions, like the American South, chose to exercise their own public memory in distinctly different ways.

Rarely does a scholar of First World War memory leave out a discussion on commemoration. The most visible manifestations of commemoration are monuments. The study of monuments comes from the realm of art history. These scholars focus on the evolution of styles of monuments over the course of time. Historians took this method and began to look at politics and meaning behind the shifting styles. The most

operates without reference to reason- I could have avoided so egregious a blunder. But I miss judged my audience and became, in their eyes, yet another outsider telling local people what was what," 87.

⁶For further reading on this see: Lisa Budreau, *Bodies of War: World War I and the Politics of Commemoration in America, 1919-1933* (New York: New York University Press, 2010); Lucy Capdevila and Danièle Voldman, *War Dead: Society and the Casualties of War*, trans. Richard Veasey (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Press, 2006); Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Suzanne Evans, *Mothers of Heroes, Mothers of Martyrs: World War I and the Politics of Grief* (Montreal: Gill-Queen's University Press, 2007); Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975); and, Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *The Culture of Defeat: On National Trauma, Mourning, and Recovery*, trans. Jefferson Chase, 2003rd ed. (New York: Picador, 2001).

recent and important of these studies belongs to Erika Doss. In her monograph, *Memorial Mania*, Doss traces general national trends of both style and reason behind the erection of monuments in America. Also of note are works like David J. Eicher's *Mystic Chords of Memory*, a study of Civil War battlefields and the monuments placed upon those landscapes.⁷

These three bodies of scholarship underscore general studies and leave the reader with an understanding of either public memory in relation to monuments, or monuments in relation to a specific subject. There is a need for case studies, which limit themselves in scope, in order to be useful in understanding how a group of people actually exercises public memory through the construction of monuments. Studies like this are useful for a variety of reasons. First, the centennial of the First World War us upon us. Naturally, this anniversary brings with it a renewed interest in the historical events that set the tone for past century. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, as the United States looks to move past wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, public memory will once again attempt to heal. Studies such as this look to inform the present on specific ways in which others have used to the past to heal contemporary wounds.

Historical Background

Paul Fussell sums up the how westerners perceived the First World War,

In the Great War eight million people were destroyed because two persons, the Archduke Francis Ferdinand and his Consort, had been shot... the Great War was more ironic than any before or since. It was a hideous embarrassment to the

⁷ For more reading on the study of monuments, see: Creighton, *The Architecture of Monuments: The Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial Competition*; Doss, *Memorial Mania: Public Feeling in America*; Eicher, *Mystic Chords of Memory: Civil War Battlefields and Historic Sites Recaptured*; and, Nelson and Olin, *Monuments and Memory, Made and Unmade*.

prevailing Meliorist myth which had dominated the public consciousness for a century. It reversed the Idea of Progress.⁸

While this is an over-simplification of the massively complex causes and results of the war, Fussell simply and effectively illustrates the utter frustration felt during and after the bloodshed. Irony became one of the prevailing themes in literature. Famous examples from both sides of the Atlantic include Ernest Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms*, Robert Grave's *Good-Bye to All That*, Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front*, and "In Flanders Fields," by John McCrae. Most of the world viewed the First World War in the same way the British soldiers viewed the Battle of the Somme in July 1916, "...the Great Fuck-Up..."⁹

In the aftermath, all of the countries involved spent considerable energy and money into creating national cemeteries in close proximity to the fields of battle where millions of soldiers died. In addition to thousands of rows of headstones, national cemeteries generally contain one massive monument in remembrance of the dead. These hallowed places of mourning became the physical manifestations of the agony, which the living had to make sense. The exception to this, for the major powers at least, is the United States.

Since the United States did not enter the war until April 6, 1917, and the first Americans killed in U.S. uniforms did not take place until November 3, 1917, the United States only suffered one year of battlefield casualties.¹⁰ In total, the United States lost a

⁸ Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory*, 7–8.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 12.

¹⁰ While many Americans served in foreign armies before the United States entered the war, the first three Americans killed on the battlefields of Europe did not take place until November 3, 1917. These

little over 116,000 soldiers, compared to approximately 1,000,000 killed at the Somme alone between July 1, 1916 and November 18, 1916. Celebrations of victory by the European Allied nations were less about victory and more about relief that it was over. In the United States, especially in the South however, the end of the First World War meant a clear victory.

After the Civil War, Reconstruction, and the rise of Jim Crow in the South, popularization of the myth of the 'Lost Cause' became prominent. The romantic embrace of defeat in the mythology of the South quickly shifted the focus of defeat by the North onto the perception of taking the moral high ground. By quickly abandoning the blame of scapegoats for the defeat and instead focusing on the near canonization of its heroes like Robert E. Lee, the public memory of the South took comfort in the nostalgia of Jeffersonian past.¹¹

After the Civil War both the North and the South constructed monuments across battlefields and cemeteries. National cemeteries generally contain head stones with an inscription of which side the person fought for and, when possible, the soldier's name. The erection of monuments dedicated to whole units for specific events- like the 15th New Jersey Infantry Monument at the 'Bloody Angle' at Spotsylvania Courthouse, Virginia- represent a way to express a particular memory. States erected grand monuments like the Pennsylvania Monument at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. Even important figures who survived the war received elaborate tombs like that of P.G.T.

three soldiers were Corporal James Bethel Gresham, Private Thomas Enright and Private Merle D. Hay of Glidden, Iowa.

¹¹ For more on the 'Lost Cause' see: Schivelbusch, *The Culture of Defeat: On National Trauma, Morning, and Recovery*, 37–102.

Beauregard and Robert E. Lee. All of these monuments represent different manifestations of public memory upon the landscape, and serve to illustrate the importance Americans placed upon collectively remembering the conflict.¹²

Despite suffering among the least number of casualties of the Allied countries, individuals and communities still felt the loss of their soldiers. Torn between the pride of victory in the 'Great Crusade', and loss of life, the South would use the victory as a unifying event showing solidarity with the North as a reaction to the 'Lost Cause' myth. Payment in blood, sacrifice of mothers, and triumphs of heroes could become visual displays for public memory. Tennessee would be no exception and its capital city of Nashville shall henceforth be the focus of our examination.

First World War Monuments in Nashville, Tennessee

The Boys From Tennessee

I kind of like those fellows who's father fought with Lee;
They're back beneath the Stars and Stripes-The Boys from Tennessee.
They don't need much urging to do their duty well.
But the British colonel's verdict was, "Those Yankees fight like hell!"

"Of course he called them Yankees, these Boys from Tennessee;
Americans all, in British eyes, Yankees are bound to be.
But still, amidst the cannon's boom, the shriek of shell and rockets' flare,
I reckon those Boys from Tennessee, just grinned and didn't care.

They were the Boys from Dixie and with their rebel yell,
They gave the Fritzie's fifty-seven varieties of hell.
And when the war was over, and parading throngs you see,
Just don't forget who save the day- 'twas the Boys from Tennessee.¹³

¹² For further reading on Civil War commemoration through monuments, see: Eicher, *Mystic Chords of Memory: Civil War Battlefields and Historic Sites Recaptured*.

¹³ William Vintore Hyde, "The Boys From Tennessee," *Springfield Union*, October 23, 1918.

Lieutenant James Simmons Timothy Monument



Figure 1: Lieutenant James Simmons Timothy Monument.

The first monument constructed in Nashville commemorated Lieutenant James Simmons Timothy. On June 14, 1918, artillery killed Timothy, a Marine Corp Officer, in Belleau Woods, France. What separated this soldier from over 3,000 other Tennesseans killed during the war is Timothy is the first officer from Tennessee killed. A placard and tree in Centennial Park in Nashville commemorate Timothy.

The language on the monument is simple, stating the monument is in memory of Timothy, and his death in combat. The last line of the tribute paragraph on the monument states, "HIS LAST WORDS WERE, "INTO THY HANDS, O LORD, I COMMEND MY SOUL." The placard concludes with the following poem:

STRONG IN FAITH, NO FEAR HE KNEW,
THIS GALLANT KNIGHT OF GOD SO TRUE:
PURE, COURAGEOUS, GRAND WAS HE-
OUR HERO SON OF TENNESSEE.

Christian language surrounding Timothy is common during his memorial service, and in a lengthy tribute to him. The dedication of the monument held on May 30, 1919 drew a large crowd of prominent citizens of Nashville, according to newspaper accounts.¹⁴ Sacrificing one's self to God and country is not a new method for accepting the death of a loved one in war. What is important to note is the significance First World War monuments place upon sentiment.

¹⁴ "Memorial To Lieut. Timothy," *Nashville Banner*, June 1, 1919.



Figure 2: Lieutenant James Simmons Timothy Monument Plaque.

Lisa Budreau demonstrates in her book, *Bodies of War*, that among the many things the First World War changed was the way Westerners coped with death.¹⁵ Unlike previous wars the United States had been involved in, the bodies of dead soldiers were not accessible to family members, inured in cemeteries thousands of miles away. Not having a body to mourn causes a deep psychological void in western tradition at that time. In order to move forward, sacrifice for a valuable cause must outweigh the absence of a body for the family to mourn.

As a result, the case of Lieutenant Timothy, sacrifice in the name of God and patriotism becomes the justification. A tribute to Timothy quotes from a letter to Timothy's mother from a soldier in his platoon and states, "He was known in the Regiment as the young officer who led his men over the top in God's name. When he

¹⁵ Budreau, *Bodies of War: World War I and the Politics of Commemoration in America, 1919-1933*.

saw danger ahead he knelt a few minutes and called out cheerfully, "Boys let's go over the top in God's name-- let it be for God and Country."¹⁶ This justification for his death, wrapped in religion and patriotism, thus becomes the basis for remembering Lieutenant Timothy, and serves to elevate a particular public memory associated with him. A letter to Timothy's mother from his company Commander further reinforces this justification for sacrifice. It states that after receiving his wounds, "We were talking of his brother's wedding when he was hit. He fell over in my lap and died about twenty minutes later...His end was peaceful and I am sure he was Spiritually composed for his last words were, "Into Thy hands, My God, I give my soul."¹⁷ In contrast to the two accounts of men close to Timothy, in General Pershing's tribute he states that Timothy, "...inspired the officers and men while he was in action by his fearlessness and fortitude until instantly he was killed by high explosive."¹⁸

We can never know which account of Timothy's death is accurate, or whether or not Timothy's last words were offering himself to God. What is clear is that the people of Nashville chose this as their collective memory of him. More importantly though, in the immediate wake of the First World War, the community had to find a way to justify the loss of people like Lieutenant Timothy, and it was in the name of the 'Great Crusade' that they found it. This demonstrates that during this period, the collective memory of the First World War accepted religion and patriotism because the narrative of the war itself viewed it as a righteous act.

¹⁶ "Tribute: Lt. James Simmons Timothy," 1919, 3, Tennessee State Library and Archives.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 5.

Gold Star Monument



Figure 3: Gold Star Monument (Davidson County, TN).

A decade before the Gold Star Mother pilgrimages to the cemeteries of Europe, women of Nashville exercised their newly found political power through their own expression of collective memory. Constructed in 1923, and a few hundred feet away from the Timothy Monument in Centennial Park is the 'Gold Star Monument'. The Gold Star Monument depicts two bronze figures on top of a marble base. The first figure is of a motherly female figure, kneeling and cradling in her arms the second figure; a dead soldier, laying on the ground, rifle in hand and head drooped. The inscription on the base states, "I gave my best to make a better world 1917-1918". Flanking the left and right side of the base are two bronze placards listing the names of the dead soldier from Davidson County. The backside of the marble base reads, "Erected by the citizens of Davidson County Tennessee 1923 Nashville Kiwanis Sponsor".

Amongst the patriotic language, filled with fiery imagery of America's greatness in the war, Governor Austin Peay's speech at the unveiling of the Davidson County memorial acknowledged the mothers who were present. He states:

Our country has embraced the mothers of the soldiers who died in France, in loving arms. Our tears have mingled with their tears. The infinite sadness of war is that women must bear this brunt and grief but it is their crown of glory. No hero in the field was ever so great and true as the brave and patient mother who waits and prays in the home. How we honor these mothers about us who wear their stars of gold, and who's heartstrings are always stretching to those battle-fields! May the gracious dew of heaven refresh them.¹⁹

¹⁹ Austin Peay, "Davidson County's War Dead," in *Austin Peay: Governor of Tennessee: 1923-1925, 1925-1927, 1927-1929*, ed. T. H. Alexander (Kingsport, TN: Southern Publishers, Inc., 1929), 415–16.

The Gold Star Mother, similar to the Silver Cross in Canada, is a First World War creation. It is a symbol of sacrifice on the part of the Mother- she has offered her son in the name of patriotism.²⁰ Evans comments on the Silver Cross Mother, "She is not an hysterical, wailing, hair-rending presence, but is stoical in her grief, a pillar of dignity,



Figure 4: Gold Star Monument Plaque (Davidson County, TN).

²⁰ Evans, *Mothers of Heroes, Mothers of Martyrs: World War I and the Politics of Grief*, 110.

honouring the dead child and sanctifying the struggle by ensuring that we remember-but not too much."²¹ This is precisely what the Gold Star Monument is depicting in Nashville. The inscription on the front of the monument at first might be construed as the soldier's last words, like those of Timothy, perhaps they were uttered, perhaps it is mythological embellishment, but in actuality, the inscription being stated from the motherly figure. The women of Davidson County chose to shift the collective memory away from religious and patriotic sacrifice to the acknowledgment of motherly sacrifice-giving up *her* son as *her* best thing- for a better future, not a crusade or political agenda. The Gold Star Monument represents the sacrifice of the mother of Davidson County but the monument also reminds the audience specifically who sacrificed.

War Memorial Building



Figure 5: War Memorial Building.

²¹ Ibid., 157.

With conclusion of hostilities, the State of Tennessee looked to honor and rationalize the loss of 3,000 of its citizens. Legislation quickly drawn up was accepted. Chapter 122, Senate Bill 1132, of the Public Acts of 1919, states its purpose for, "...the erection of a Memorial Hall to commemorate the heroic services of the soldiers and sailors of the State of Tennessee who fought or died in the recent war in which the United States engaged against Germany and her Allies."²²

The dedication ceremony of the War Memorial building, across the street from the State Capital building took place on September 25, 1925. This large Greek Revival building was both a tribute to the memory of the dead and functional governmental space as a government annex building. The Classical Revival architecture selected by the State is a statement on democracy in itself. While more popular in the 19th century, Classical Revival architecture remained a popular choice for government building well into the 20th century. Ancient Greece is often referred to as the 'birthplace of democracy'. George Washington had ascended to mythological levels as a Greek god in the statue by Hoatio Greenough, and "Apotheosis of Washington," by Constantino Brumidi, in the rotunda of the United States Capital Building. Classical Revival architecture, as we will see, was popular imagery in commemoration of the First World War for its ability to invoke ideas of new 'American Imperialism', linking it to ancient Rome. Architects and sculptors of the early 20th century could therefore use classical style to conjure, "...the glory that was Greece. And the grandeur that was Rome."²³ Imagery to support the

²² Messrs. Hill, Todd Haston, Houk, etc., "Chapter NO. 122. Senate Bill No. 1132.," in *Public Acts Of The State of Tennessee Passed By The Sixty-First General Assembly 1919* (Jackson, TN: McCowat-Mercer, 1919), 357–68.

²³ Edgar Allan Poe, "To Helen," 1841, poets.org.

causes of democracy and liberty-associated with ancient Greece-and the new proven imperial power the United States- associated with ancient Rome.

It is the Woodrow Wilson quote, carved above the entrance to the central courtyard of the War Memorial, which illustrates the prescribed public memory the State wishes to impress upon those who visit. The quote is, "America is privileged to spend her blood and her might for the principles that gave her birth and happiness and the peace which she has treasured." The quote comes from the closing paragraph of President Wilson's address to Congress in 1917 asking for a declaration of war against Germany.²⁴ In the center of courtyard stands a large statue of a triumphant warrior, sword in his right hand, holding a miniature representation of Nike, the Greek Goddess of victory. The statue named aptly "Victory". At the base of the statue a simple statement reads, "In memory of the sons of Tennessee who gave their lives in the Great War 1914-1918." On the western wall of the courtyard are bronze "In Memoriam" placards with the names of those Tennessee soldiers killed during the war.

²⁴ Woodrow Wilson, "Address of The President of the United States Delivered at a Joint Session of The Two Houses of Congress" (65th Congress, 1 Session, Senate Document No. 5, April 2, 1917).



Figure 6: "Victory" Statue.

This monument of the State represents a shift from the initial comforting of religion and patriotism illustrated by the Lieutenant Timothy monument, to a collective public memory of patriotic sacrifice in the name of victory for democracy. After all, President Wilson had justified entering into the war because, "The world must be made safe for democracy. Its peace must be planted upon the tested foundations of political liberty. We have no selfish ends to serve. We desire no conquest, no dominion, We see no indemnities for ourselves, no material compensation for the sacrifices we shall freely make."²⁵ The State of Tennessee chose this manifestation of public memory to demonstrate that the United States had been righteous in its entrance into the First World War.

It also represents a grand gesture of support for the Union. In his speech at the dedication ceremony on September 21, 1925, Governor Austin Peay stated:

No ordinary monument could celebrate any country's share in the war. From river to mountains, Tennessee sent her brave and stout-hearted sons to the far-flung battle lines. Well and nobly did they sustain the glorious traditions of their ancestry on those fields. Tennesseans have won imperishable glory, whenever human blood has moistened the soil of our republic in war, and whenever its flag has gone.²⁶

Governor Peay continued his speech by recognizing the Gold Star mothers, and Tennessee's contribution to the crusade; concluding he stated, "But come what may, in the unwinding years, here we have erected a memorial and a shrine to which our posterity my surely repair for new inspiration of patriotism and valor."²⁷

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Austin Peay, "The War Memorial Speech," in *Austin Peay: Governor of Tennessee: 1923-1925, 1925-1927, 1927-1929* (Kingsport, TN: Southern Publishers, Inc., 1929), 417-18.

²⁷ Ibid., 418.

The myth of the 'Lost Cause' was strong in the South, and victory in the First World War became viewed as a victory with justifiable moral implications. As Schivelbusch states, "This future promised not only internal renewal but a new role for the nation in the international community. It is a short step from understanding defeat as an act of purification, humility, and sacrifice- a crucifixion of sorts- to laying claim to spiritual and moral leadership in world affairs."²⁸ In the collective memory of the South, President Abraham Lincoln, who had led the north on a morally justifiable crusade fifty years earlier, President Wilson had done the same, but this time the South was on the morally just side, and Wilson, a southerner, was at the helm.²⁹

First Tennessee Infantry Monument



Figure 7: First Tennessee Infantry Monument.

²⁸ Schivelbusch, *The Culture of Defeat: On National Trauma, Morning, and Recovery*, 32.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 32–33.

The only monument in Nashville dedicated to a specific unit is that of the First Tennessee Infantry.

The 1st Tenn. Inf. Reg., of the Thirtieth 'Old Hickory' Division (National Guard), was an regiment of all white men. The division was comprised almost entirely of units from Tennessee, North and South Carolina. This garnet

stone with two bronze placards is located in Percy Warner Park in the Belle Meade area. The front side of the monument reads, "To the men of the First Tennessee Infantry who sleep in honored glory." The bronze placard continues with a poem, and a brief description of the mobilization of the First Tennessee Infantry at that place before being shipping off to France. The backside of the monument has a

second placard declaring, "We are the

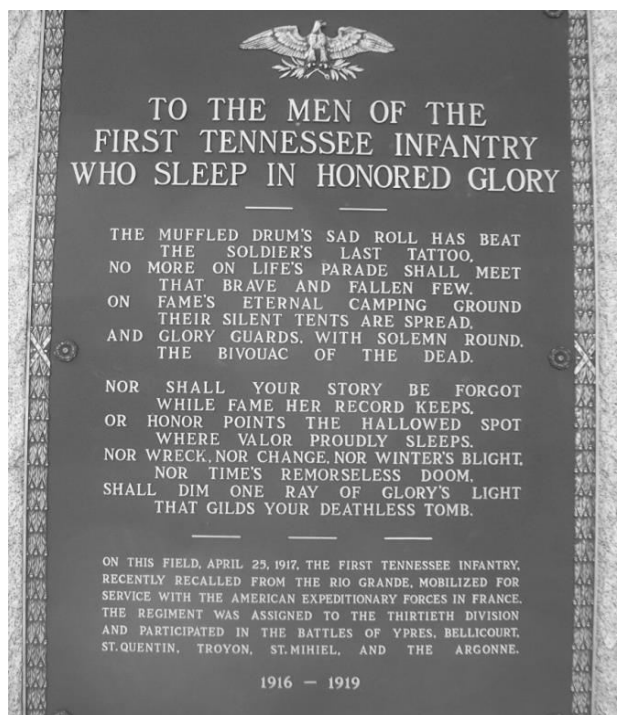


Figure 8: First Tennessee Infantry Monument (Front Plaque).



Figure 9: First Tennessee Infantry Monument (Rear Plaque).

dead," and another poem that reads:

We are the dead. Shot days ago
We lived, felt dawns, saw sunset glow,
Loved and were loved, and now we lie,
In Flanders' Fields.

Below this poem, referring to John McCrae's famous poem, is a list of the names of the men of the unit killed during the war. What is significant about this monument is that it returns to the idea of the 'glorious dead'. The Works Progress Administration (WPA) constructed the First Tennessee Infantry monument, during the Great Depression.³⁰ Colonel Harry S. Berry- for whom Nashville's airport is dedicated- was the commander of the regiment during the war, and became the Tennessee State Commissioner of the WPA, sponsoring the monument in 1936. Almost two decades after the end of the war, in a new time of crisis, collective memory pointed once again towards the First World War as an example of local struggle.

Hadley Park

Segregation in the Jim Crow South had an impact on the monuments of Nashville. Around the same time as construction of the First Tennessee Infantry monument, Hadley Park in North Nashville was receiving a separate WPA monument. Two stone walls flank the entrance to Hadley Park. On each side of the entrance is a stone placard that states, "Dedicated to the colored soldiers of Davidson County who were killed during the World War." According to a nearby historical marker, Hadley Park was the first public park for African Americans. Below the dedication on the stone columns are the names of eleven men killed during the war.

³⁰ Leland R. Johnson, *The Parks Of Nashville: A History of the Board of Parks and Recreation* (Nashville, Tennessee: Metropolitan Nashville and Davidson County Board of Parks and Recreation, 1986), 296.



Figure 10: Hadley Park Monument.

Interestingly, the names listed on the Gold Star Monument and the War Memorial placards are not segregated. They are however, incomplete. The Hadley Park gates list at least four more African Americans killed in the war. This likely due to a more complete list of dead soldiers compiled after both the Gold Star Monument and War

Memorial were constructed. The *World War Record of Ex-Soldiers of Davidson County, State of Tennessee*, not compiled until the early 1930s, is also missing several of the names listed on the Hadley Park gates.³¹ The only way a person would be able to tell if a name on Gold Star Monument or War Memorial build belonged to an African American would be to have knowledge of African American units during the First World War.

Colonel Luke Lea Monument

In 1945, U.S. Senator Luke Lea passed away. In 1950, Nashvillians dedicated a monument to the late Senator and former Colonel who had commanded the 114th Field Artillery during the First World War. The officers who served under Lea during the war erected the monument. The monument is located in Percy Warner Park a few hundred feet away from the First Tennessee Infantry monument. Colonel Lea had partially donated the land for Percy Warner Park,



Figure 11: Colonel Luke Lea Monument.

³¹ Rutledge Smith, ed., *World War Record of Ex-Soldiers of Davidson County State of Tennessee* (Department of the American Legion Auxiliary, 1935), 631, 758–76. "Data from the files of Major Rutledge Smith, Chairman of the National Council of Defense of Tennessee During the World War, and from the office of Joseph H. Ballew, the Adjutant General of Tennessee 1933... and the report of General Enoch H. Crowder, Provost Marshal General, to the Secretary of War, 1917-1918," title page. This document is a compiled list of all the men of Davidson County who fought, were wounded, died, or were dishonorably discharged during the First World War. The lists of the dead are not separated between killed in action and contain many who died of disease, and those who died due to accidents.

formerly the mustering grounds of the First Tennessee Regiment, to the City of Nashville in order to turn it into a park. The monument stands at the base of the large hill-dubbed Lea Heights, thus incorporating the landscape as part of the monument itself.³²

The Colonel Lea memorial represents a return to First World War public memory in Nashville over a decade after the WPA monuments of Hadley Park and the First Tennessee Infantry. While not as prominent in First World War memory as the Alvin York statue on the hill of the State Capital, this monument is important because those who served with Colonel Lea have crafted the public memory of him. Lea had been a Progressive Democrat, making him a contentious figure. In the 1930s, Lea was part of banking scandals, for which he went to prison, though ultimately pardoned.³³ The monument presents a limited interpretation of the controversial senator. Rather than make mention of his politics or his unjust incarceration, the bronze plaque on the Lea monument reads:

In Memory of Colonel Luke Lea
1879-1945

So that posterity might enjoy the benefits of a public park preserved in its natural beauty, in 1927 Colonel Lea gave the original tract of 868 acres of this land to the City of Nashville requesting that the park bear the name of his Father-in-law, the late Percy Warner.

Erected by the officers who served under Colonel Lea in the 114th Field Artillery during the First World War.

³² The Historical Commission of Metropolitan Nashville and Davidson County, "Luke Lea Heights (Historical Marker, No. 86)," 1990.

³³ For more information on Colonel Lea, see his entry in the *Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture*. Mary Louise Tidwell, "Luke Lea," *The Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture* (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 2009).

The fact that this monument focuses on his donation of land for the park is telling of what is to be remembered of the man.³⁴ During the unveiling ceremony Mayor Thomas L. Cummings reportedly stated, "The people of Nashville will remember Col. Luke Lea for the man he was. We will remember him as a man who gave of his time to his city and his country."³⁵

Sergeant Alvin C. York Monument

Finally, and perhaps one of the most interesting First World War monuments in Nashville, is dedicated to Sergeant Alvin York. Constructed four years after his death, and fifty years after the end of the war, the Sergeant Alvin York Monument is one of the most powerfully crafted manifestations of public memory.

One of the key elements of the 'Lost Cause' are the religious parallels drawn between the sacrifices made by its heroes. The public memory of Robert E. Lee for instance shifted after the war. Before the war, Lee's rejection of President Lincoln's offer

³⁴ "Friends And War Comrades Honor Late Col. Luke Lea For Park Land Gift," *Nashville Banner*, April 17, 1950. During the memorial service at the unveiling of the memorial, Tennessee Governor Gordon Browning read from Lea's memoirs, "In a varied lie that has run the gamut of all human emotions from the sublimest of joys to the most tragic of sorrows, from the heights of fame and fortune to the depths of defeat and degradation, the greatest honor of my life has been that of commanding and leading the 114th Field Artillery in battle for flag and country. Success was not able to add to nor failure to subtract from the satisfaction that service with the regiment at the front gave. That is wholly mine. No court can declare it the property of another. No decree of any judge can place it in receivership. No Judicial fiat can enjoin it. No stripes can mar its beauty. No bars can imprison it. Not even death can erase its glorious memory."

³⁵ "Tribute Paid at Unveiling Of Plaque to Colonel Lea," *Nashville Tennessean*, April 17, 1950.



Figure 12: Sergeant Alvin C. York Monument (Nashville, TN).

to lead the Union Army is likened to that of Jesus rejecting temptation by Satan.³⁶ After the war, the myth of Lee transforms with the rise of the 'Lost Cause'. As Schivelbusch states, Lee was, "...no longer [viewed] a fervent Southern patriot but rather in his heart, a Union supporter who decided, contrary to his own inclination and conscious, to support his homeland's cause for reasons of loyalty and honor, although he knew from the start the quest was hopeless."³⁷

For the South, the First World War was ripe with opportunity to build new mythologies. The South had significant leaders like President Woodrow Wilson and Ambassador to England, Walter Hines Page to view as heroes. Tennessee, however, could not claim these two individuals as truly 'their' heroes as Virginia laid claim to President Wilson, and North Carolina Ambassador Page. Tennessee did have one hero, Sergeant Alvin Cullum York, around which the construction of a powerful mythology became possible. Sergeant York did not have the pedigree to reach the status of General Lee, but his actions on October 8, 1918 did earn him the United State's highest military decoration- the Congressional Medal of Honor. If the South had its Jesus in Lee, it had its Archangel Michael in Sergeant York. Michael Birdwell examines the mythology surrounding Sergeant York in popular culture as a result of the 1941 movie, *Sergeant York*.³⁸

The building of mythology around York begins with this internal battle of conscious. York's faith became intertwined with his mythology beginning with an article

³⁶ Schivelbusch, *The Culture of Defeat: On National Trauma, Morning, and Recovery*, 67.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Michael Birdwell, "A Change of Heart: Alvin York and the Movie *Sergeant York*," *Film and History* 27, no. 1-4 (December 1997): 22-33.

from the *Saturday Evening Post*. The story goes, York was drafted despite being a conscientious objector. After an examination of scripture, York and his Battalion Commander, Major Gonzalo Edward Buxton, ultimately cleared his conscience, and balanced his moral objections with the laws of God and his patriotic duties.³⁹ Presented in the film, the dramatic reenactment, according to Birdwell, "...worked well because it cut to what many considered the symbolic essence of America- the vision of its unique history as the new Eden and the last bastion of Judeo-Christian ethics in the world... [driving] home the notion that there were difference between just and unjust wars."⁴⁰

During the Meuse-Argonne Offensive of September and October 1918, York would forever cement his place in American history and mythology. The narrative of the events of October 8, 1918 is generally presented as follows. Ordered to flank a German possession, seventeen men, including Corporal York captured, 132 Germans, killing at least 25, and knocking out several machine gun positions. For his actions that day, York received many decorations and a promotion to Sergeant. The public virtually canonized Sergeant York. Upon his return to the United States, York was part of a parade in New York in May, 1919. A reception was held at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel. The key speaker at the dinner, Major General George Duncan, commander of the 82nd Division- which York was a part of- stated, "His achievement was the most outstanding act of gallantry, not only that this world was produced, but that I have ever heard of. He is not only

³⁹ George Pattullo, "The Second Elder Gives Battle," *The Saturday Evening Post*, April 26, 1919, sec. 3-4, 71, 73-74.

⁴⁰ Birdwell, "A Change of Heart: Alvin York and the Movie Sergeant York," 28.

modest absolutely, but unabashed, unafraid in the presences of any gathering or of any enemy."⁴¹

After the war, Sergeant York returned to America to massive fanfare. The 'Hero of the Argonne' was now the most well known enlisted man of the war. Sergeant York received many of the highest medals of the Allied armies including, the United States Congressional Medal of Honor, the Legion of Honour, the Croix de Guerre with Palm from France, the Silver Medal for Bravery from Montenegro.⁴² The Medal of Honor was recommended by General Pershing, and the Croix de Guerre was presented by Marshall Foch.⁴³ The Pawnee Indian Tribe even made him an honorary lifetime member and chief of the tribe.⁴⁴

On September 2, 1964, Sergeant Alvin York died at the age of 76 in a Veterans Administration Hospital, from an acute urinary tract infection.⁴⁵ Newspapers from across the country spread the story of the passing of the "American legend".⁴⁶ On that morning,

⁴¹ The following are a sampling of newspaper stories that followed York: "Tennessee's Prize Doughboy," *Nashville Banner*, May 24, 1919; "Unprecedented Honor To York," *Nashville Banner*, May 24, 1919; "York Coming June Ninth," *Nashville Banner*, May 31, 1919; and "York Fails To Visit Subway, His Only Wish," *Nashville Tennessean*, May 24, 1919.

⁴² "Alvin York Medal of Honor Citation," n.d., Alvin C. York Project Records, Box 1, Folder 14 (Citations and Honors), 1987, Tennessee State Library and Archives. Medal of Honor Citation reads: "By direction of the President, and in the name of Congress, the Congressional Medal of Honor for acts of gallantry has been awarded York, Alvin... Corporal Company G, 328th Infantry. For conspicuous gallantry in intrepidity above and beyond the call of duty in action with the enemy near Chatel Chehery, France, October 8, 1918. After his platoon had suffered heavy casualties and three other non-commissioned officers had become casualties, Corporal York assumed command. Fearlessly leading seven men, he charged with great daring, a machinegun nest which was pouring deadly and insistent fire upon his platoon. In this heroic feat that machine-gun nest was taken together with four enemy officers, 128 men and several guns."

⁴³ "War Crosses Won By Alvin York For Heroism In Argonne Battle," *Nashville Banner*, May 31, 1919.

⁴⁴ "Honorary Lifetime Membership: Pawnee Tribe of Indians," ca 1960, Alvin C. York Project Records, 1987, Tennessee State Library and Archives.

⁴⁵ R. Des Prez, M.D., "Certificate of Death," September 2, 1964, Alvin C. York Project Records, 1987, Tennessee State Library and Archives.

⁴⁶ "Sergeant York, War Hero, Dies," *New York Times*, September 3, 1964.

the *Nashville Tennessean* published a small article on the front page telling its readers that "York in Coma, Clings to Life."⁴⁷ The *Nashville Banner* being an afternoon paper was among the first to share the news of York's passing.⁴⁸ Over the course of the next week, newspapers reminded the public about Sergeant York, the hero of the Argonne, their hero. One memorial illustration depicted Uncle Sam holding a newspaper with the headline, "SGT. YORK OF WORLD WAR I."⁴⁹ That same day, the *Nashville Tennessean* published an illustration titled, "The Sergeant's Final March."⁵⁰

In 1964, during the centennial of the Civil War, work began on designing and constructing a state funded monument to celebrate Tennessee's hero. There was little opposition to this and the Tennessee State Legislature quickly allocated a total of \$50,000 to the State Building Commission shortly after his death.⁵¹ The Public Acts 1965-Chapter 313 states:

Section 47. *Be it further enacted*, That there is here by appointed to the State Building Commission the sum of Ten Thousand Dollars (\$10,000) and hereby re-appointed to said Commission the Forty Thousand Dollars (\$40,000) contained in Item 45, Section 4, Chapter 379, Public Acts 1963, said funds to be used for the purpose of erecting a suitable monument bearing the likeness of Sgt. Alvin Cullum York on the State Capital grounds. Provided, further, that said State Buildings Commission shall confer with the Tennessee Historical Commission and the veterans of World War I in design of the monument and composition of appropriate inscriptions to be placed there on. This appropriation is subject to the approval of the Governor.⁵²

⁴⁷ "'York in Coma, Clings to Life," *Nashville Tennessean*, September 2, 1964.

⁴⁸ "Sgt. York, 76, Dies at Veterans Hospital," *Nashville Banner*, September 2, 1964, 76.

⁴⁹ "Cartoon: An Old Soldier Dies- A Stirring Legend Lives" (*Nashville Banner*, September 3, 1964).

⁵⁰ "Cartoon, 'The Sergeant's Final March,'" *Nashville Tennessean*, September 3, 1964.

⁵¹ "Alvin C. York Project Report," n.d., Alvin C. York Project Records, Box 1, Folder 9 (Burial Monument), 1987, Tennessee State Library and Archives.

⁵² "York Monument Committee Minutes," n.d., Alvin Cullum York Papers, 1967-1968, box 1, Tennessee State Library and Archives.

The committee selected Felix De Weldon as the creator of the York Monument. De Weldon was already a famous statue creator having been the sculptor for the Marine Corp Iwo Jima Memorial in Washington D.C. Robert A. McGaw, of the Tennessee Historical Commission and the Sergeant York Monument Committee, sent his requirements for the statue to De Weldon in 1967:

It is important to us that the statue represent York the way he looked, an infantry sergeant, that day in the Argonne... Placement of the York Statue needs to be in deliberate relationship to an existing bronze statue of Sam Davis, Tennessee's "Boy Hero of the Confederacy," which stands about eight and a half feet tall. York was larger in life than Davis and needs to be nine feet and maybe more in bronze.⁵³

The State Buildings Commission did work with the Tennessee Historical Commission, especially on the inscriptions. Robert McGaw contacted Clayton Dekle, who was also on the Sergeant York Monument Committee, to express small but significant word choices to the text on the monument. An excerpt from a letter reads:

ARMED WITH HIS RIFLE AND PISTOL, HIS COURAGE AND SKILL, THIS ONE TENNESSEAN

The purpose of the inscription, I believe, is to inform and inspire the individual beholder of the statue. The thirteen words will do these two things, I believe for the following reasons-

1. The word ONE is historically accurate: York was not alone. His companions-at-arms were nearby, although they were out of action either because wounded, or pinned down by fire, or were guarding prisoners. Besides, the word ONE addresses itself to every beholder-- in the sense that I am forever one and only sometimes solitary. I am fully aware that the two words, one and solitary, are interchangeable in some situations. In this situation, I say the word solitary misleads the beholder of the statue.⁵⁴

⁵³ "Alvin Cullum York Papers, 1967-1968, Box 1," n.d., Tennessee State Library and Archives.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

The unveiling ceremony of the Sergeant Alvin C. York Statue took place at the Tennessee State Capitol in Nashville, on December 13, 1968. It would have been Sergeant York's 81st birthday. The *Nashville Banner* wrote an article about the unveiling of the 10-foot bronze statue. Governor Buford Ellington was quoted in that article stating, "He has gone from the American scene, but he is now memorialized forever on the grounds of the Tennessee's State Capitol."⁵⁵

Walking up the hill towards the Capital grounds, the statue of Sergeant York is easy to spot. It stands tall and impressive. Sergeant York himself stands, dressed in uniform, and helmet, rifle raised at the moment of a trigger pull. The base of the statue is dark almost onyx colored marble. The front of the monument presents to the onlooker the following inscription:

ALVIN C YORK
ARMED WITH HIS RIFLE AND PISTOL HIS COURAGE AND SKILL THIS
ONE TENNESSEAN SILENCED A GERMAN BATTALION OF 35
MACHINE GUNS KILLING 25 ENEMY SOLDIERS AND CAPTURING 132
IN THE ARGONNE FOREST OF FRANCE OCTOBER 8 1918.

The back of the statue base reads:

WHAT YOU DID TODAY WAS THE GREATEST THING ACCOMPLISHED
BY ANY PRIVATE SOLDIER OF ALL THE ARMIES OF EUROPE
MARSHAL FERDINAND FOCHE
COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ALLIED ARMIES

This statue is overwhelmingly about Sergeant York, not Alvin York. The State of Tennessee was clearly making a statement on how they want to remember and inspire future generations. Sergeant York's day of heroism was how York connected to the public and therefore the State. Whether or not there has been embellishment of Sergeant

⁵⁵ Frances Meeker, "Tennessee Honors Sgt. York's Memory," *Nashville Banner*, December 13, 1968. Similar coverage can be found in, Jerry Thompson, "York Statue Unveiled At Capitol," *Nashville Tennessean*, December 14, 1968.

York's actions is not important. His memorials stand as examples of how we remember him. The monument for the public is in Nashville; Sergeant York is the public's hero.

The monument makes several statements. First, York's monument is on the State Capital grounds, home to other 'great men' monuments such as Andrew Jackson, Andrew Johnson and is the place of burial for President James K. Polk. By placing a monument dedicated to York in such close proximity, the state is choosing to remember him in the same regard as that of its three presidents. Second, by remembering York for the mythology that had been built around him, the State makes the statement that the message and values associated with that mythology are worthy of prominent commemoration. York's mythology begins with the story of internal struggle, debating his Christian values against his patriotism. When York agrees in the story to enact violence for in the name of patriotism and the 'Great Crusade', the narrative represents a set of traditional Christian principles and patriotism. When the State chooses to embrace this, it is making the statement that this is what the population should emulate. As Birdwell states, "For a country struggling with double-digit inflation and staggering unemployment, a call for help from a higher power held renewed relevance. York's story helped buttress the faith of people reeling from the unhappy aftermath of Vietnam."⁵⁶ Ultimately, the monument to York is a statement of collective memory as a way of pointing to a particular set of values that the local community held on to in face of social and political change taking place in 1960s.

⁵⁶ Michael Birdwell, "Alvin Cullum York: The Myth, The Man, and the Legend," *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 71, no. 4 (Winter 2012): 329.

Conclusion

Nashville has seven monuments throughout the city with direct connection to the First World War. Each represents a different period of public memory of the war. Over the course of fifty years, the people of Nashville chose to commemorate the men who fought and died. Even after the people of Nashville stopped building new monuments, the memory of the First World War did not fade. With the centennial anniversary of the United States' entrance into the war fast approaching the First Tennessee Infantry memorial received restoration work and a rededication ceremony. Amongst the speeches and Tennessee Army National Guard trumpeter sounding "Taps," several descendents of Colonel Luke Lea, and Deborah York, great-granddaughter of Sergeant York attended.⁵⁷

Through public memory of the First World War, expressed through various monuments over the last century, Colonel Lea might best have stated the reasoning for such memorialization at the War Memorial dedication ceremony. In his speech, Colonel Lea criticizes the Allies for not giving enough credit to the United States for ending the war, foreshadows the consequences of America's separate peace with Germany, chastises news agencies for including the service record of former service men after criminal activity, and abandoning wounded and disabled veterans.⁵⁸ Lea's speech concludes,

Tennessee has not forgotten. It has not had the wealth enjoyed by other states so that it could bestow material rewards upon all of its service men, but it has recognized them in every possible way. It has been fair to them. I has created a bond that will ever renew and keep fresh the title of 'Volunteer State'.

The greatest hero of the world war, Alvin York has been acclaimed and awarded by the citizens and state alike, by the creation and endowment of a school that enables the broadened vision given him by service abroad and to find

⁵⁷ Gabriell Cintoino, "Historic WWI Monument Rededicated at Percy Warner Golf Course," *Nashville Today*, November 12, 2015, sec. News.

⁵⁸ "State Pays Lasting Tribute to Heroes," *Nashville Banner*, September 21, 1925.

a place in the hearts and minds of the great people of that mountain section of our Anglo-Saxon blood and the highest citizenship of the country.

And then, Tennessee has builded this wonderful monument to her soldiers, sailors and marines of the world war.

Such has been Tennessee's relation with her soldiers.

Now she makes a permanent record of its appreciation of the services of her soldiers, of her sailors, and of her marines, and in so doing it has woven a thread of gold binding to Tennessee the loyal heart of every Tennessee soldier with a bond that will last as long as courage rules and truth prevails in the mind of men.

Tennessee has not forgotten her soldiers.

Tennessee Soldiers will never forget their state.⁵⁹

⁵⁹ Ibid.

CHAPTER II: "THE NEGRO SOLDIER": RACE AND MONUMENT BUILDING IN DES MOINES, IOWA, 1917-1922.

Introduction

Like Nashville, a large civic building dominates Capitol Hill in Des Moines. The gold leaf dome of the Iowa State Capitol Building, built in 1873, catches sunsets and can be seen for miles. The grounds of Capitol Hill are landscaped and peppered with monuments dedicated to those who served in Korea and Vietnam, submarine service losses of World War II, and Christopher Columbus even has a monument. Dominating the south side of the hill is the Soldiers and Sailors monument, which has inscribed at its base, "Iowa's tribute to the courage, patriotism, and distinguished service of all her soldiers and sailors who fought in the War of the Rebellion," a reference to the Civil War. Unlike Nashville, the grounds of the Iowa State Capitol are silent in visual remembrance of the First World War.

The impact of the First World War on Des Moines, felt immediately during the war, continued for years after. The economy, national veterans' organizations, and racial discrimination throughout the country influenced the memorial response of the people of Des Moines. It is not to say that there are no World War I monuments in Des Moines, quite the opposite. Des Moines has many different forms of remembrance scattered throughout the city, but they are often less obvious and significantly less grand than, for instance, the War Memorial Building in Nashville, and result from several external influences. In order to begin to understand First World War monuments in Des Moines,

it is important to recognize the historical significance of the city within the context of the war itself.

Des Moines experienced many changes during the war, and immediately following the war. These changes included the rapid increase of soldiers receiving training in Des Moines with the massive increase in development of Camp Dodge on the north side of town and the opening of the first training camp for African Americans at Fort Des Moines on the south side of town. The rapid increase of material and men, particularly southern African American men, within the context of the race riots of 1917 increased tensions which ultimately led to what can only be seen as an institutionalized lynching on northern soil.

As quickly as things changed in Des Moines to support the war, the collapse following the war was equally as fast. First, financial support for monuments became limited and severely limited the size and manifestations of First World War monuments in Des Moines. Second, racism meant that no white leader was interested in the Fort Des Moines story. Third, these limitations meant that the historically significant events associated with the city were until recently, largely ignored in favor of strictly commemorating the dead. The chapter will conclude with an examination of the recently constructed Fort Des Moines Memorial and Education Center.

Des Moines and the War

In order to successfully wage war, in addition to soldiers, the two most important commodities a country needs are food and fuel. In the industrialized world of the early 20th century that meant agriculture and coal. While it may come as a surprise to many

today, Iowa, and Des Moines in particular, had a sizeable coal industry. Coal mining began with the soldiers at the first Fort Des Moines in the 1840s, but it was not until the end of the Civil War that commercial coal mining began.¹ The coal industry hit its stride in the early twentieth century. In Polk County- the county in which Des Moines is located- 14 million tons of coal were mined in the decade preceding the United States' entrance into the First World War.² In 1917, the year the United States joined the war, Polk County hit its peak production year extracting nearly two million tons of coal and shipping the critical resource to Illinois and Kentucky, where more mines sent coal to fire the industrial war production of the East.³

Iowa has been a major agricultural producer since European settlement. After the Civil War, Iowa had four railroads traveling east to west. In 1873, Quaker Oats established a mill in Cedar Rapids-approximately 130 miles east of Des Moines- and Deere and Company built a tractor factory in Waterloo- approximately 100 miles northeast of Des Moines- in 1918.⁴ During the First World War, in order to meet the demand for food worldwide, Iowa increased its production. Iowa State College at Ames- today known as Iowa State University- sent instructors around the state to teach better farming techniques, and future President Herbert Hoover was in charge of rationing in the United States during the war, and food relief in Europe after the war.⁵ The production of

¹ "Abandoned Underground Coal Mines of Des Moines, Iowa and Vicinity," Technical Paper No. 8 (Des Moines, IA: Energy and Geological Resource Division, Geological Survey Bureau, December 1989), 4.

² *Ibid*, 5.

³ *Ibid*, 5.

⁴ Dorothy Schwieder, Thomas Morain, and Lynn Nielsen, *Iowa Past to Present: The People and the Prairie*, 3rd ed. (Ames, Iowa: Iowa State Press, 2002), 238-257.

⁵ Kendrick A. Clements, *Life of Herbert Hoover: Imperfect Visionary, 1918-1928*, 2010th ed., Life of Herbert Hoover (Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

food in Iowa was so successful that in 1920, 100 million more bushels of corn were grown than in 1917.⁶

Another major change to Des Moines came in the form of increased 'production' of soldiers. In addition to ramping up production of war materials and equipment, the United States needed to drastically increase the size of its armed forces. On May 24, 1917, the *Des Moines Register* printed an article on the front page stating, "Des Moines Goes After Great Camp for Drafted Army."⁷ The War Department was in need of new training grounds for hundreds of thousands of new recruits and conscripts. Des Moines had two military outposts, Fort Des Moines on the south side of the city, and Camp Dodge on the north. Des Moines placed a bid to expand Camp Dodge to be one of the new training bases for the Army. According to the article, if the bid were won, "the camp would bring to the city immediately after the draft becomes effective 35,000 men who would remain here until sent into service, and who would be followed at intervals by later classes of conscripts."⁸ The newspaper continued by demonstrating to its audience that Des Moines had advantages over other 25 cities in the region who were bidding in that over 3,000 acres were available, transportation and water companies could guarantee the installation of necessary water and supply support, and space for an artillery range was available.⁹

⁶ Ibid, 263.

⁷ "Des Moines Goes After Great Camp for Drafted Army," *The Des Moines Register*, May 24, 1917.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

The following day the Army sent inspectors to visit Camp Dodge and the headline and byline proclaimed, "Des Moines Given Army Camp: "40,000 Men Coming to Big Training Station Sept. 1 or Soon After."¹⁰ The newspaper writer noted:

CAMP SITE- Near Camp Dodge and Hyperion Club. SIZE- 3,500 acres. NUMBER OF MEN- Approximately 35,000 men. FROM- Iowa, Nebraska, Minnesota, North and South Dakota. FROM DES MOINES- About 800. FROM IOWA- About 10,000... COST- Primary, permanent construction cost about \$5,000,000. MONTHLY EXPENDITURES- For salaries alone \$3,150,000. LOCAL BENEFIT- Daily expenditure for food, a great portion of which must be purchased here, \$14,000. DEFEATED ASPIRANTS FOR CAMP- St. Paul, Minneapolis, Sioux City, Sioux Falls, Watertown, Cedar Rapids and a half dozen others.¹¹

The newspaper further reported that the Secretary of War, Newton Diehl Baker: ...made public his decision with regard to the training camp for the thirteenth military district, and gave it to Des Moines in preference to cities far larger...The decision came without warning, and was in the nature of a surprise to local citizens including members of the Greater Des Moines committee who had believed the fight for the camp site was going against them because of tremendous pressure exerted by other camp site aspirants.¹²

Following the announcement, construction crews began the immediate expansion of Camp Dodge. Local newspapers, *Des Moines Evening Tribune*, *Des Moines Register*, *Bystander* (Des Moines' African American newspaper), and the *Des Moines Capitol* closely followed the development.¹³ One editorial printed in the *Bystander* in November 1917 described the camp:

¹⁰ The Associated Press, "Des Moines Given Army Camp: 40,000 Men Coming to Big Training Station Sept. 1 or Soon After," *The Des Moines Evening Tribune*, June 12, 1917, Home Edition.

¹¹ "Here Are All the Facts Concerning Conscript Camp Coming Here," *Des Moines Evening Tribune*, June 12, 1917.

¹² Arthur W. Park, "Great Camp Means Much to Des Moines," *Des Moines Evening Tribune*, June 12, 1917.

¹³ Throughout the summer of 1917 local newspapers in Des Moines printed updates on the expansion of Camp Dodge. The following newspaper articles are only a handful of examples: "Mountain of Work Ahead for Big Camp," *The Des Moines Evening Tribune*, June 13, 1917, Home Edition edition; "Present Site of Camp Dodge, Where 40,000 Soldiers Will Be Encamped," *The Des Moines Evening Tribune*, June 13,

We will state that Camp Dodge is about complete...The chief contractor told us that he had been working 7,000 men. Their main streets are paved with asphalt...numerous other independent buildings, such as eight Y.M.C.A buildings, nearly every church has a building, also the secret societies and numerous picture houses and theaters, and sheds for housing about 10,000 head of horses and mules...In this great body of 35,000 men there are now about 7,000 colored men, more than the total population of colored people in Des Moines and Buxton combined...About 4,000 of the colored men are from Alabama and the balance are from Iowa, Illinois, Minnesota and the Dakotas.¹⁴

Construction of Camp Dodge did not come without issues. One article reassured the people of the city that 75 policemen would be added to help deal with an expected 4,000 camp followers associated with Camp Dodge and would:

...safeguard the morals of the soldiers...officials feel that no expense or trouble should be spared to prevent spread of vice during the stay of the conscripts here...number of women are expected to follow the camp to Des Moines. Efforts

1917, Home Edition; "New Bridge and Double Tracks to Be Built to Big Concentration Camp," *The Des Moines Evening Tribune*, June 13, 1917, Home Edition; "Union Labor Co-Operates In Building Big Camp," *The Des Moines Evening Tribune*, June 13, 1917; "Many Hundreds of Cars of Clothing for Boys," *The Des Moines Evening Tribune*, June 13, 1917; "Mayor Tom Tels Baker He's Glad We Got Camp," *The Des Moines Evening Tribune*, June 13, 1917; "Military Matters of Interest Concerning Big Concentration Camp of Forty Thousand Men," *The Des Moines Evening Tribune*, June 14, 1917, Home Edition; "Plan Paved Road to Military Camp," *Des Moines Evening Tribune*, June 14, 1917; Arthur W. Park, "Government Moves Rapidly on Army Camp," *The Des Moines Evening Tribune*, June 22, 1917, Home Edition; "Camp Developments Today," *The Des Moines Evening Tribune*, June 22, 1917; "Laborers Make Dirt Fly at Army Camp," *The Des Moines Evening Tribune*, June 29, 1917, Home Edition; "Crack French Officers at Camp Dodge," *The Des Moines Evening Tribune*, August 28, 1917, Home Edition; "A Visit to Camp Dodge," *The Iowa State Bystander*, November 23, 1917; J. L. Thompson, "Camp Dodge Christmas," *The Iowa State Bystander*, December 28, 1917.

¹⁴ "A Visit to Camp Dodge." Buxton, Iowa was a coal-mining township approximately 60 miles southeast of Des Moines. From the 1880s until the early 1920s, this company town was integrated in employment, wages, housing and schools. By all accounts, including oral histories, African-Americans and white residents, many of whom were Scandinavian immigrants, lived and worked without discrimination. After the coal mine closed the town quickly disappeared. Almost nothing of the town remains today, but in 1983, the site of Buxton was added to the National Register of Historic Places. For further reading on Buxton, see: David Mayer Gradwohl and Nancy Osborn Johnsen, "Chapter 1: 'A Kind of Heaven To Me: The Neil Family's Experience in Buxton, Iowa,'" in *Outside In: African-American History in Iowa, 1838-2000* (Des Moines, IA: State Historical Society of Iowa, 2001), 3-21.; George W. McDaniel, *Health and Home: Preserving a People's Culture* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1982).; and David M. Grandwohl and Nancy M. Osborn, *Exploring Buried Buxton: Archaeology of an Abandoned Coal Mining Town with a Large Black Population* (Ames, Iowa: Iowa State Press, 1984).

will be made to send the feminine camp followers out of town as rapidly as they arrive.¹⁵

Around the same time as Camp Dodge won the bid from the Army, important news for Fort Des Moines, on the south side of the city, became public. President Woodrow Wilson ordered the War Department to begin training African American officers on April 12, 1917, just one week after the United States entered the war.¹⁶ On May 19, 1917, Washington, D.C. announced that Fort Des Moines would be the site of a training camp specifically for African Americans to receive commissions as officers.¹⁷ According to the article, 1,200 African American men would be admitted to the training program consisting of 205 from regular army units, non-commissioned officers, and privates who had demonstrated aptitude for command, men from the National Guard and graduates of educational institutions for Negroes.¹⁸ Volunteer applicants were required, according to the *Des Moines Register*, to be between the ages of twenty year and nine months old to forty four years of age, and provide three letters of recommendation attesting, "to their mental and moral qualifications from reputable officers."¹⁹

Like Camp Dodge, the plans for launching the officer-training program at Fort Des Moines also moved quickly. The *Des Moines Evening Tribune* informed the city that the first candidates would arrive just two weeks after the decision to place the program at the fort became public.²⁰ Initial announcements of the training camp for

¹⁵ "Add 75 Police to Force When Troops Come," *The Des Moines Evening Tribune*, June 18, 1917.

¹⁶ R. B. De Frantz, "The 'Opportunity,'" *The Iowa State Bystander*, June 29, 1917.

¹⁷ "Negro's Camp at Fort Des Moines," *The Iowa State Bystander*, May 25, 1917.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ "Plans for Negro Army Camp," *The Des Moines Register*, May 27, 1917, Sunday edition.

²⁰ "Negroes Expected at Fort in Week," *The Des Moines Evening Tribune*, May 31, 1917, Home Edition edition.

African Americans at Fort Des Moines, printed in newspapers for primarily white audiences, are short in length and the language is clearly designed to reassure the white majority population in the city that the African Americans would be kept busy and away from the city. *The Des Moines Evening Tribune* stated:

In about a week the 1,250 Negroes who will be enrolled in the officer's training camp at Fort Des Moines will begin arriving.

The men are being carefully chosen from among a host of applications from Negroes in all parts of the country for the camp. Virtually all the men who are to be admitted are college graduates- all of them will have had some college instruction.

There will be very few men in the camp less than 30 years old, and most of them will be men who have been successful in professions or business.

The men will be drilled from early morning until late at night, the day's work consisting from fourteen to eighteen hours a day. It is probable that none of them will get away to visit town more than once or twice, and then on Saturday night only.²¹

In another article, the senior officer of the Fort Des Moines training camp, Lieutenant Colonel H. T. Ferguson denied that Des Moines was selected as the site of the officer training camp for African Americans due to politics, but rather out of practicality.

The Des Moines Evening Tribune states:

The camp could not be held in the south, because of race prejudice. The choice was between Fort Des Moines and an army post in Montana, and Fort Des Moines was selected because of its convenience. "I hope," said Lieutenant Colonel Ferguson, "that the people of Des Moines will take a friendly attitude toward the camp. The United States belongs to the colored men just as much as it does to us, and these men will prove as heroic as any in the service." The lieutenant colonel, it may be remarked, is a southern man, and sentiments of that sort do not often come from southern lips.²²

²¹ Ibid.

²² "At Fort Des Moines," *The Des Moines Evening Tribune*, June 1, 1917, Home Edition. For similar articles see: "Preparing Camp for Colored Men," *The Des Moines Register*, June 2, 1917; "Colored Troops Reach

While the white newspapers were busy reassuring their audiences that the African American training camp would have little impact on society in the city, the *Bystander* printed articles supporting the camp. "There will be brought here some of the race's greatest men, as well as some of our race's great army officers. It will give the northern white man an opportunity to see the Negro military man at his best. We welcome this training camp here, as well as the colored men who are to make up this school."²³ *The Bystander*, and to a lesser extent the white owned newspapers, continued to follow the training of the African American men at Fort Des Moines throughout the summer of 1917.²⁴

Army Post," *The Des Moines Evening Tribune*, June 5, 1917, Home Edition; "Negro Soldiers Arrive," *The Iowa State Bystander*, June 8, 1917; Atty. S. Joe Brown, "Official Notes of the Colored Officers," *The Iowa State Bystander*, June 15, 1917; and "Form Regiments at Ft. Des Moines," *The Iowa State Bystander*, June 15, 1917.

²³ "Colored Training Camp," *The Iowa State Bystander*, June 1, 1917. Similar articles include, "Colored Officers' Military Camp," *The Iowa State Bystander*, June 15, 1917; "Negro Training Camp Opened," *The Iowa State Bystander*, June 22, 1917; "Attitude of the American Negro," *The Iowa State Bystander*, June 8, 1917; and "How Training Camp for Colored Men Happened to Be Established," *The Iowa State Bystander*, August 31, 1917. This last article states, "The officers' training camp at Fort Des Moines, Iowa, marks a great epoch in the history of the Negro race. It is recognition that the black race has never before received from any country in modern times. The training and commissioning of approximately one thousand Negro officers to lead thirty thousand Negro troops in the titanic war for democracy marks a new era in the history of the Negro race throughout the world."

²⁴ "Ft. Des Moines Officers' Camp News," *The Iowa State Bystander*, June 22, 1917; An additional sampling of similar articles include: Atty. S. Joe Brown, "Colored Cadets Are Sworn In," *The Iowa State Bystander*, June 22, 1917; "Ft. Des Moines Negroes Take Federal Oath," *The Des Moines Evening Tribune*, June 18, 1917, Home Edition; "Soldiers at Fort Des Moines Training Camp for Negroes Kept on Jump," *The Des Moines Evening Tribune*, June 19, 1917, Home Edition; "Take Oath of Enlistment," *The Iowa State Bystander*, June 29, 1917; "Officers' Training Camp Notes," *The Iowa State Bystander*, July 6, 1917; "Uncle Sam's Only Negro Colonel Here," *The Des Moines Evening Tribune*, July 18, 1917; "Three Regular Soldiers," *The Iowa State Bystander*, July 13, 1917; "Training Camp Cadets Make Long Marches," *The Iowa State Bystander*, July 13, 1917; "More Recruits at the Fort," *The Iowa State Bystander*, July 27, 1917; "Graduates and Teachers in Booker Washington's School Now in Army Training Camp, The Great Sprit of Booker Washington Still Lives," *The Iowa State Bystander*, August 10, 1917; "Negro Troops Maneuver for Fair Crowds," *The Des Moines Evening Tribune*, August 25, 1917, Home Edition; "Iowa Boys at Fort Des Monies," *The Iowa State Bystander*, August 31, 1917; "Training Camp Here Longer," *The Iowa State Bystander*, September 14, 1917; "Our Colored Men Commissioned," *The Iowa State Bystander*, October 12, 1917; "Negroes Officially Given Commissions," *The Des Moines Tribune*, October 16, 1917; "Finish Studies at Camp," *The Iowa State Bystander*, October 19, 1917; and, Sylvanus Brown, "Recapitulation,"

Racism and the Training of African Americans in Des Moines

Perceptions of Iowa as a historically progressive state are common. In June 1865, the State Legislature debated universal male suffrage. Lieutenant Governor Enoch Eastman stated, "how can you [fellow legislators]... insist that loyal negroes shall vote in South Carolina when you refuse to allow the colored soldiers of your own Iowa colored regiments to vote here?"²⁵ Iowa unanimously passed the Iowa Civil Rights Act of 1884, nine years after the Federal Civil Rights Act of 1875.²⁶ While it may be true that Des Moines has never had the level of violence seen in the South, it is critical to not forget that racial discrimination was still a part of life in the city and the North as a whole. Since before becoming a state, white populations have dominated Iowa. In 1910, Iowa had around 15,000 African Americans, and by 1920 that number was still under 20,000.²⁷ Bill Douglas' "Wartime Illusions and Disillusionment: Camp Dodge and Racial Stereotyping, 1917-1918" gives a fine analysis of racism in Des Moines during the First World War, and offers a more thorough discussion of the stereotypes of African Americans in newspapers at the time.²⁸

The Iowa State Bystander, October 26, 1917, this article is a list on the front page of the *Bystander* of all of newly commissioned African American officers-under Special Order 110 of the War Department on October 15, 1917, and where their first assignment would be.

²⁵ Richard Lord Acton and Patricia Nasif Acton, "Chapter 4: A Legal History of African Americans: From the Iowa Territory to the State Sesquicentennial, 1838-1996," in *Outside In: African-American History in Iowa, 1838-2000* (Des Moines, IA: State Historical Society of Iowa, 2001), 70.

²⁶ For a more in depth look at the legal history of African Americans in Iowa see: Lord Acton and Acton, "Chapter 4: A Legal History of African Americans: From the Iowa Territory to the State Sesquicentennial, 1838-1996."

²⁷ Willis Goudy, "Chapter 2: Selected Demographics: Iowa's African-American Residents, 1840-2000," in *Outside In: African-American History in Iowa, 1838-2000* (Des Moines, IA: State Historical Society of Iowa, 2001), 23-41. 39.

²⁸ Bill Douglas, "Wartime Illusions and Disillusionment: Camp Dodge and Racial Stereotyping, 1917-1918," *The Annals of Iowa* 57, no. 2 (Spring 1998): 111-34.

Regional media regularly reported on conflicts between races in the summer of 1917, throughout the west and, these accounts no doubt added to the pressure of the men training at Fort Des Moines.²⁹ Nina Mjagkij outlines the largest of the race riots, in East St. Louis, in which whites killed 39 African Americans and significant damage was done to property.³⁰ Not two months later, with the violence of the St. Louis Riots still fresh in the minds of the public, two companies of the African-American Twenty-Fourth Infantry Regiment, rioted in Houston resulting from discrimination and violence from local police. By the morning of the 24th of August, sixteen men were dead including civilians, black soldiers, a white officer, and white police officers. Patrols of white regular Army, Illinois National Guard, and Coastal Artillery soldiers, who were in Texas to support operations along the Mexican border, sought to arrest 125 rioters, and Houston was placed under martial law.³¹ The riots of Houston resulted in the removal of African-American troops from Texas.³² Military courts dispensed over forty life sentences and ordered the execution of nineteen African American soldiers who had rioted in Texas.³³

²⁹ For more on race riots of the summer of 1917, see: Associated Press, "Guardsmen Holding Negroes in Check," *The Des Moines Evening Tribune*, July 2, 1917, Home Edition; The Associated Press, "Negroes Are Fearing Riot in Chicago," *The Des Moines Evening Tribune*, July 4, 1917, Home Edition; The Associated Press, "E. St. Louis Quiet; Troops in Control," *The Des Moines Evening Tribune*, July 4, 1917; "Illinois Race Riot," *The Iowa State Bystander*, July 6, 1917; and Martha Hart, "Another Recruit," *The Des Moines Evening Tribune*, August 17, 1917, Home Edition.

³⁰ Nina Mjagkij, *Loyalty in Time of Trial: The African American Experience During World War I* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, inc., 2011), 161–66.

³¹ The Associated Press, "125 Soldiers Gone After Riot: Sixteen Men Are Slain in Camp Battle," *The Des Moines Evening Tribune*, August 24, 1917, Home Edition.

³² The Associated Press, "Negro Troops Are Sent to Columbus," *The Des Moines Evening Tribune*, August 25, 1917, Home Edition.

³³ For more information on the Houston Riot of 1917 see: Bruce A. Glasrud, "Chapter 3: The Houston Riot of 1917," in *Anti-Black Violence in Twentieth-Century Texas* (College Station, Texas: Texas A&M University Press, 2015), 67–83. A sampling of primary sources related to the trial include: "Negro Soldiers in Mutiny Killed 16 Whites," *Evening World*, August 24, 1917; "Riotous Negro Troopers Held for 17 Deaths," *Sun*, August 25, 1917; "Forty Soldiers Indicted for Houston Riots," *New-York Tribune*, August 26, 1917; and "13 U.S. Negro Solders Hanged for Raid," *Evening World*, December 11, 1917.

The proceedings of the first round of executions at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, on December 11, 1917, are themselves important. Announcement of the date of the execution was not made public nor circulated around a camp of nearly 40,000 soldiers, and only around 225 soldiers were present. As the *New York Times* described:

In the dark of the night army motor trucks conveyed the lumber for the scaffold to a little clearing in a lonely mesquite thicket on the Government reservation where the negroes, convicted by court-martial, were to die. There by the light of bonfires, army engineers erected the death traps to which, at 5 o'clock in the morning, other motor trucks hurried the condemned negroes and the officers and men of the military guard. It was the army motor truck that enabled the officers in charge to keep secret the time and place of the hanging. It was the army truck that so quickly obliterated all traces of the execution and carried the bodies to a place nearby, which is as indistinguishable as the execution site...³⁴

The Army clearly wanted to bring as little attention as possible to the event in order to quickly move past the whole incident out of concern not to incite other incidents. African American newspapers would not be so reticent. The *Bystander* published a lengthy and scathing letter from Lillian Smith, a Des Moines NAACP activist. Smith's letter, "Tribute to Our Heroes of Twenty-Fourth Infantry, U.S.A.," stated:³⁵

Three cheers for our glorious heroes of the 24th U.S.A. How noble to die fighting the southern "Hun" instead of the German one. How perfectly splendid for the southern white to know that underneath the black skin flows a wealth of good red blood. How bravely they faced death on the scaffold to appease the southern despotism and autocracy, and the bourbons and demagogués sitting in the national legislature by reason of stolen votes. The white man has to standards of justice, one for the white man, and one for the black. He was swift to exact payment from our boys, but what about the militia men in East St. Louis, who after murdering poor helpless blacks who had done nothing but wear a skin pigment a different hue from theirs, murdered and maimed and tortured and threw little colored

³⁴ "13 Negro Soldiers Hanged for Rioting," *New York Times*, December 12, 1917.

³⁵ Lillian Smith, "Tribute to Our Heroes of Twenty Fourth Infantry, U.S.A.," *The Iowa State Bystander*, December 28, 1917.

babies into the fire and the military generally before whom the inquiry was held said, "Oh, the boys probably be boys, you know."³⁶

In closing, Smith offered a warning, "We never expected justice from a white investigation of a military inquiry, especially in the Prussian south, but we did not look for execution of thirteen colored men and at a time when Germany knows so well to approach the fathers, mothers, sisters and brothers as well as a race who is as one against the southern Hun."³⁷

In order to reassure the white population of Des Moines that that similar acts of violence would not happen in their city, the Des Moines Chamber of Commerce met with the military affairs committee of Fort Des Moines to discuss issues of race and commerce. The day after the Houston Riots, 1,000 of the African-American cadets were put on display for the public attending Des Moines Day of the summer fair. A, "two-hour demonstration of drilling and other maneuvers," which demonstrated "the efficiency of the colored soldier... attracted large crowds and were exceedingly popular."³⁸ The *Des Moines Evening Tribune* printed an article proclaiming, "No "Jim Crow" Stuff Will Be Permitted," assuring soldiers that, "no discrimination between whites and Negroes are allowed under the laws, and no theaters nor restaurants may insist upon Negroes occupying sections set aside for the Negroes."³⁹

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ "Negro Troops Maneuver for Fair Crowds."

³⁹ "No 'Jim Crow' Stuff Will Be Permitted," *The Des Moines Evening Tribune*, July 3, 1917, Home Edition.

The training of African-American officers at Fort Des Moines concluded on October 15, 1917.⁴⁰ Commissions were only granted to soldiers to fill existing vacancies, and as such 624 of the 900 completing the training received officer ranks.⁴¹ At the commissioning ceremony, Dr. Emmitt J. Scott, Special Assistant to the Secretary of War, barked: "you will remember always that you are on trial. It will be for you to prove that the men of your race, when lead by competent and efficient, fearless men of the same race, are not afraid to do, to dare and to die."⁴² As the newly commissioned officers departed on trains for their two week furlough, the *Bystander* proudly proclaimed, "this was indeed the greatest sight and epoch in the history of the American Negroes as it marks his beginning as a commissioned officer in the United States army and those men who have one to the different cantonments re some of the best representatives of our race in these country."⁴³

On the back page of the *Des Moines Register* next to the announcement of the African-American officer commission ceremony was another announcement that some 3,800 African-American soldiers from Alabama, as part of the first 6,600 drafted, would beginning training at Camp Dodge.⁴⁴ In addition to the Southern African-Americans there would be, "321 men from Iowa, Illinois, North Dakota, and Minnesota."⁴⁵ The first 1,700 of the Alabama soldiers arrived on the same day as the Houston Riot court-martial

⁴⁰ "Negroes Finish Studies at Camp," *Des Moines Register*, October 16, 1917; and "Our Colored Men Commissioned"; "Negroes Officially Given Commissions," "Colored Officers," *The Iowa State Bystander*, October 19, 1917; and "Special Order No. 110," *The Iowa State Bystander*, October 26, 1917.

⁴¹ "Des Moines Men Win Commissions in Negro Division," *Des Moines Capitol*, October 11, 1917.

⁴² "Finish Studies at Camp."

⁴³ "Colored Officers."

⁴⁴ E.R. Appel, "Alabama Negroes Ordered to Report," *The Des Moines Register*, October 16, 1917.

⁴⁵ "First Alabama Negroes in Camp," *The Iowa State Bystander*, November 2, 1917.

began in San Antonio- the *Bystander* reported on each event with articles appearing next to one another.⁴⁶

Shortly before the commissioning of African-American officers at Fort Des Moines, the *Bystander* published H. T. Toles' lengthy poem, which celebrated their training. One paragraph near the end captures the feeling at the time:

The question now that's being discussed,
And, too, has caused so much disgust,
Is where on earth and what to do,
With those we know are "faithful few,"
From north, from south, from east, and west,
"Don't send them here," comes the request;
But they have all been made good, fit,
The colored boys, to do their bit.⁴⁷

H.T. Toles' question would be answered in quick fashion with the execution of the 13 soldiers in Texas in December of that year, but the greatest of ironies was that Des Moines would not transcend racially targeted violence against the African American soldiers training in Des Moines. The demonstration of 'Northern superiority' and progressiveness was to be decisively shattered. As previously stated, Douglas examines in his article the portrayal of stereotypes in newspapers of the 'grateful southern negro,' and the fostering of paternal attitudes of the white majority.⁴⁸ This attitude was perpetuated in order to mask discrimination within Des Moines, and demonstrate to the United States as a whole the ability to utilize African Americans in combat roles and prove their unquestionable loyalty. The great farce however is that on the night of April

⁴⁶ "First Alabama Negroes in Camp," *The Iowa State Bystander*, November 2, 1917; and "Start Riot Trial at San Antonio," *The Iowa State Bystander*, November 2, 1917.

⁴⁷ H. T. Toles, "The Colored Boys of the U. S. A.," *The Iowa State Bystander*, September 7, 1917.

⁴⁸ Douglas, "Wartime Illusions and Disillusionment: Camp Dodge and Racial Stereotyping, 1917-1918."

16, 1918 almost 200 African American soldiers at Camp Dodge threatened to riot. The *Des Moines Capital* stated:

Negroes, entered Powell's cafe and made a small purchase. An altercation followed which Powell ordered the Negroes to leave the place. They went out back where one picked up a brick and walked toward the restaurant. Powell drew a revolver and drove them away. They returned shortly with others, and soon 200 were threatening violence to the restaurant keeper and destruction of the police. The military police and deputy sheriffs drove the Negroes back to camp without making any arrests.⁴⁹

Only one newspaper, the *Des Moines Capitol*, dared to report the incident.

General Charles Clarendon Ballou, commander of the African American 92nd Division published an order hardly two weeks prior, which might have gone unnoticed by most until the near riot in Des Moines. Two days after the incident outside Camp Dodge, the *Bystander* published Ballou's order 81 in its entirety. Ballou had ordered his soldiers:

all colored members of his command and especially officers and non-commissioned officers, should refrain from going where their presence will be resented. In spite of this injunction one of the sergeants of the medical department has repeatedly precipitated the precise trouble that should be avoided, and then called on the division commander to take sides in a row that should never have occurred, and would not have occurred had the sergeant placed the general good above personal pleasure and convenience. This sergeant entered a theater, as he undoubtedly had the legal right to do, and precipitated trouble by making it possible to alleged race discrimination in the seat he was given. He is strictly within his legal rights in this matter, and the theater is legally wrong. Never the less the sergeant is guilty of the greater wrong in doing anything, no matter how legally correct, that will provoke race animosity...

The division commander repeats that the success of the division, with all that that success implies, is dependent upon the good will of the public. That public is nine-tenths white. White men made the division, and they can break it just as easily if it becomes a trouble maker.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ "Negro Soldiers in Near Riot," *Des Moines Capitol*, April 17, 1918.

⁵⁰ "High Army Officer Is Prejudiced," *The Iowa State Bystander*, April 19, 1918.

The *Bystander* correctly criticized General Ballou's order. Essentially, General Ballou was threatening his men that exercising their legal rights as citizens of the United States was second to the ultimate success of proving the concept of the African American division. In doing so, Ballou made it official policy that the African American soldiers would be blamed for instances of racial discrimination against them. The language is parallel to that of blaming victims of rape. The grotesque irony of that language, is that it was in fact rape, or at least accusations of rape, which unleashed the General's threat, "white men made the division, and they can break it just as easily if it becomes a trouble maker."⁵¹

"Hang Three Negroes at Dodge Friday," the headline of the *Des Moines Capitol* proclaimed July 4, 1918.⁵² "Infantrymen Who Outraged 17-Year-Old White Woman to Suffer Death at 9 A.M." read the byline.⁵³ Three of the African-American soldiers from Alabama had been convicted by a military court-martial of raping a white woman and assaulting her white soldier boyfriend on May 24th, 1917. The court-martial proceedings were characterized by an unprepared defense, unreliable witness testimony, and self-incrimination.⁵⁴ The Army was making damn well good on their threat to 'break' the 'trouble maker' Negro. The court-martial was swift, broke legal procedures, filled with contradictory evidence, and allowed unconstitutional self-incrimination. There was not time for appeals, and President Woodrow Wilson quickly approved the verdicts.⁵⁵

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² "Hang Three Negroes at Dodge Friday," *Des Moines Capitol*, July 4, 1918.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Douglas, "Wartime Illusions and Disillusionment: Camp Dodge and Racial Stereotyping, 1917-1918," 128-29.

⁵⁵ "Hang Three Negroes at Dodge Friday."

According to Bill Douglas, the execution of the three men at Camp Dodge reflected the stereotyping of race in Des Moines during the war. The execution itself was a staged ceremony that served as a warning. Douglas observes:

Hundreds of civilians, who had been banned from the base for the morning, craned and pointed opera glasses at a much larger gathering inside the camp. There the forty thousand white troops of the 88th Division and the three thousand African-American troops of the 92nd witnessed the hanging of three African-American conscripts from Alabama - Robert Johnson of Tusculumbia, Fred Allen of Georgianna, and Stanley Tramble of Roanoke or Stroud - for the rape of a white woman. Attendance was compulsory.⁵⁶

The executions of the men convicted in the aftermath of the Houston Riots was generally suppressed from view. Large crowds were not in attendance, the scaffolding quickly erected at night in the woods and immediately destroyed after the hangings. The hangings at Camp Dodge on the other hand, were made into a spectacle. Given the improper courtroom proceedings, rapid conviction with no opportunity to appeal the judgments, the executions at Camp Dodge were nothing less than an institutionalized lynching. The purpose of a lynching is to make a public display of terror. The exhibition by the Army was clearly designed to scare the African American soldiers so as to never 'step out of line'. The African-American troops were formed up closest to the gallows and were unarmed, the white soldiers behind-rifles at their sides. As if the grizzly spectacle was not enough, the *Des Moines Register* printed the military's goal in their own words:

A very painful duty was forced upon the command in the execution of the only three bad Negroes who have shown themselves in camp, said Col. James P. Harbeson, commander of the military police, last night. "The execution was

⁵⁶ Douglas, "Wartime Illusions and Disillusionment: Camp Dodge and Racial Stereotyping, 1917-1918," 1.

mainly to prevent others from going astray, not for vengeance on the men sentenced."

The bodies were taken to the base hospital and will be sent home under the same conditions as if death had occurred from natural causes.⁵⁷

The 'southern' Hun, as Lillian Smith referred to them in the winter of 1917, and his form of 'justice' was in fact present in the North as well. The message was clear, African-Americans could have their own military units, but it needed to be made absolutely clear to everyone that they must be reminded of 'their place'- and it was 'inferior' to white units. It was also, as Douglas correctly argues, a statement to the white population that there was no need to fear an increased number of African-Americans receiving military training near the city.⁵⁸ Whites were in control, and would not hesitate to 'break' the Negro in order to maintain that control.

The white newspapers widely covered the story of the executions, while the *Bystander* was nearly silent on the event- everyone got the message, nothing more needed to be added.⁵⁹ Instead, on the 5th of July, the *Bystander* printed articles about great successes of African-American troops fighting next to the French. Only one line of passing anger was printed: "the Negroes have less reason to fight for our government than the whites."⁶⁰ This one line was buried in a short article and sandwiched between editorials on "Why We Celebrate July 4," and "Negroes Prove Their Fighting Qualities,

⁵⁷ "Bodies Not Yet Claimed: Execution of Three Negroes in Perfect Order," *The Des Moines Register*, July 6, 1918.

⁵⁸ Douglas, "Wartime Illusions and Disillusionment: Camp Dodge and Racial Stereotyping, 1917-1918," 129-30.

⁵⁹ "Negroes Are to Be Hung for Assault," *The Des Moines Register*, July 5, 1918.

⁶⁰ "Negroes Are Making Good," *The Iowa State Bystander*, July 5, 1918.

Repelling Hun Raid."⁶¹ There can be little doubt that the African American community of Des Moines was outraged by the hangings, but it is likely that fear of civilian reprisals for criticizing the actions of the Army subdued public statements.

Colonel Harbeson's words were in line with Army actions. The executions were a message rather than a policy. Frustratingly, the Army demonstrated that it could take hard stances against racism within its ranks when it wanted to, making the executions that much more of a statement. Two weeks after the hangings at Camp Dodge, the Army dishonorably discharged Captain Eugene C. Rowan, a white southerner, for refusing to drill a company of men with African-American troops. His subordinate, Lieutenant Robert H. Hall of Brooklyn, New York, was even given a prison sentence at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas for the incident.⁶² In another instance, the War Department forced the Student's Army Training Corps, a predecessor to contemporary Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC), at Drake University of Des Moines, to desegregate. Two African-American students had been denied acceptance to the program because of race. The Provost Marshal General wired to the commandant at Drake University the next day that he must, "admit all citizens of the United States who were otherwise qualified regardless of race or color."⁶³

When the fighting of the First World War came to an end on November 11, 1918, citizens throughout the United State celebrated. In Des Moines, a parade of around 10,000 white and black troops became the focal point of jubilation. After the African-

⁶¹ "Why We Celebrate July 4," *The Iowa State Bystander*, July 5, 1918; and Frank J. Taylor, "Negroes Prove Their Fighting Quality, Repulsing Hun Raid," *The Iowa State Bystander*, July 5, 1918.

⁶² "Captain Rowan Dismissed as He Drew Colored Line.," *The Iowa State Bystander*, July 19, 1918.

⁶³ "War Department Stops Segregation at Drake University," *The Iowa State Bystander*, October 11, 1918.

American officers had been commissioned in 1917, Fort Des Moines transitioned to a hospital for wounded black troops returning from France. The parade in Des Moines included, "the colored company from Camp Dodge commanded by Captain Cooper and a full corps of colored officers and the black heroes from France who are now recuperating at the U.S. Military Hospital at Ft. Des Moines."⁶⁴ Civilians in the United States hoped their family members would be quickly redeployed and demobilized from France. While it was not expected that the entire 92nd Division would return immediately, the 366th Regiment, the first group of African-Americans from Camp Dodge- including their Fort Des Moines officers- would be returning by January 1, 1919.⁶⁵

The *Bystander* regularly reported praise for the contributions made by African-American soldiers in the war. According to one editorial, more than 2,000,000 black troops had fought on the side of the Allies, the United States mustering 400,000.⁶⁶ Despite national and international recognition of success, the African-American troops from Camp Dodge and Fort Des Moines did not receive the welcome in Des Moines so desperately hoped for by the local community. An editorial in the *Bystander* explained:

The people of Iowa and especially Des Moines, both colored and white, were much disappointed over the fact that our 366th Regiment, which was organized and trained at Camp Dodge from October, 1917, until May, 1918, with their colored officers became well acquainted with the citizens of Des Moines they were almost a part of our city, in fact most of the Iowa officers were also stationed here at Camp Dodge. Therefore we all thought and expected that this 366th Regiment should have been returned here to be demobilized from where

⁶⁴ "Negro Heroes in Des Moines Peace Parade," *The Iowa State Bystander*, November 15, 1918.

⁶⁵ "92nd Division Will Not Be Home Soon," *The Iowa State Bystander*, December 13, 1918.

⁶⁶ "2,000,000 Negroes Fought in War," *The Iowa State Bystander*, January 17, 1919. All see: "What a French General Thinks of the Negro Soldier," *The Iowa State Bystander*, January 31, 1919; Associated Press, "Our Gallant Heroes Reach America," *The Iowa State Bystander*, February 21, 1919; "What the North American Thinks About the American Negro," *The Iowa State Bystander*, March 7, 1919.

they were mustered in, especially when both races here asked that they be sent here as we were planning a big reception for them. Our mayor, governor, legislature and members in congress from Iowa ask that they be returned to Camp Dodge, but some military authority for some unknown reasons revoked the order that first ordered them here and sent all of them to southern camps to be demobilized except 116 which came here last Saturday night, notwithstanding a very short notice of a few hours that they were coming and the cold rain there were fully 2,000 citizens at Union Station to receive them, and the mighty cheers and many tears that evening made the evening really historic. The detachment marched to the Interurban station, where the men entrained for Camp Dodge.⁶⁷

The men of who had trained at Camp Dodge and Fort Des Moines had been denied the formal recognition hoped for by so many. While it logistically made sense to transport the southern soldiers back to the South for demobilization, racism almost certainly played some role. At the end of the war, a confidential memorandum from General Marlborough Churchill, Director of Military Intelligence, to the War Department, recommended the African American troops be immediately brought back under the control of the United States military authority, redeployed stateside for rapid demobilization and strictly prevent whites and blacks from crossing paths in places of prostitution. They feared interracial marriages.⁶⁸ The return and demobilization of the

⁶⁷ "Few of 336th INF. Returned," *The Iowa State Bystander*, March 21, 1919. The editorial concludes: "Among the 116 soldiers who returned last night were many Des Moines men. The officers were Lieut. Macco Richmond, former football star at Des Moines college; Lieut. Harry Wilson, winner of the distinguished service cross; Lieut. Nathan C. Smythe, former East High and Iowa University athlete; Lieut. Owen Richmond, Grinnell college orator; Lieut. V. L. Jones, local undertaker; Lieut. Charles Howard, East High and Drake university fotoball [football] star, and Lieutenants Brooks, Morris and Dr. Madison of Nebraska."

⁶⁸ Walter H Loving, "Military Intelligence Records That Black Troops Be Returned to the United States with the Least Possible Delay, November 18, 1918," in *Loyalty in Time of Trial: The African American Experience during World War I* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, inc., 2001), 181–82.

African-American soldiers brought with it both renewed calls for equality in a country still holding onto inequality despite widely recognized service.⁶⁹

Post-War Fallout and the Monuments of Des Moines

The First World War had been generally positive for Des Moines. The city and state as a whole benefited greatly from increased demand for coal and food. However, the celebration of victory was short lived for the people of Iowa. After the war ended the demands for food, fuel and soldiers plummeted. The Polk County coal production, which peaked at nearly 2,000,000 tons in 1917, quickly dropped off after the war with the lack of demand from outside the state.⁷⁰

Iowa's agriculture also suffered tremendously. During the First World War, farmers took advantage of crop prices and purchased additional land and machinery. When the war ended prices began to decline, while loans on land and machinery continued. In 1920, the price of a bushel of corn was \$1.19, by 1921 the price had dropped to 41 cents.⁷¹ With the value of crops dropping, so too did the value of the land causing farmers to become 'upside-down' on their loans. The chain reaction of defaulting loans caused banks- in the pre-federally insured banking era- to close, devastating communities and ruining those who were not farmers. To make matters worse, thousands

⁶⁹ "Opportunity for Negro Race," *The Iowa State Bystander*, May 2, 1919; and "Who Is the Real Hero After the War?," *The Iowa State Bystander*, May 2, 1919.

⁷⁰ "Abandoned Underground Coal Mines of Des Moines, Iowa and Vicinity," 5.

⁷¹ Dorathy Schwieder, Thomas Morain, and Lynn Nielsen, *Iowa Past to Present: The People and the Prairie*, 3rd ed. (Ames, Iowa: Iowa State Press, 2002), 268.

of soldiers were returning to their homes to find no work. By 1931 the Great Depression had set in, and the cost of a bushel of corn sold for ten cents.⁷²

Federal money, which had poured into Des Moines beginning in 1917 with the rapid building program at Camp Dodge and tens of thousands of soldiers training, rapidly disappeared as well. 114,224 Iowans served in the First World War, the vast majority of whom were discharged shortly after the war.⁷³ Camp Dodge became a near ghost town. Some 40,000 soldiers and civilians at any given time during the war became a token force of just 600.⁷⁴ The State of Iowa took over full control, and thus the financial burden, of Camp Dodge in March 1922.⁷⁵

Despite the significant role Des Moines had played in the war, the local and state government would do little to financially support remembrance of the people or events. It would be many years before public funding was used to support First World War remembrance. Instead, the people of Des Moines, through private action, took on the burden to finance and erect their own monuments. The source of funding, and who was being remembered, would have a significant impact on the monuments in Des Moines.

⁷² Ibid., 269.

⁷³ Ibid., 267.

⁷⁴ Mary Jones and Michael Vogt, *Images of America: Camp Dodge*, Images of America (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2009), 39.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

Fort Des Moines Memorial Park



Figure 13: Fort Des Moines Monument (Close-Up).

Eighty years after the opening of the training camp for African Americans at Fort Des Moines, work began on a proper memorial for recognition of this significant event and place. After the First World War the fort served as a hospital. Fort Des Moines transitioned during the Second World War from a hospital to the first training camp for female United States Army officers. After World War II the fort transitioned again to a reserve training post and gradually shrank over time as military need diminished and residential demand in the city increased.

In February 1998, state legislator Wayne Ford told the *Des Moines Register*, "there would be no Colin Powell without Fort Des Moines."⁷⁶ Community leaders had decided it was time to recognize the important roll it had played in the world wars,

⁷⁶ Mandy Stadtmiller, "\$6 Million Memorial Will Honor Black Officers," *Des Moines Register*, February 18, 1998, sec. Metro.

launching a restoration project of two of its historic properties while announcing a wish to build a monument. The restoration project planned to adapt one building into a museum. The anticipated opening of the museum and, "Fort Des Moines Black Officers Memorial Park," was the fall of 2000. The intended message of the, "memorial park will serve not only as a legacy to the military command integration and excellence for veterans of all colors, but will generate national and international recognition as a symbol of Iowa's progressive social climate at a critical turning point in American history."⁷⁷ In addition to telling the stories of the African American officers who trained at Fort Des Moines and served in France, the museum officials also wanted to, "tell the story of the Women's Auxiliary Army Corps (WAAC), later renamed the Women's Army Corps (WAC), which trained 72,000 women at Fort Des Moines between 1942-1945 for non-combat duty during World War II. The Army's first female officers were commissioned at Fort Des Moines, including a number of African-Americans."⁷⁸

The chair of the memorial project was Robert Morris, whose grandfather, James B. Morris, was one of the graduates from the



Figure 14: Fort Des Moines Monument (Sculpture).

⁷⁷ James Bowman E. and Gerald M. Kirke, "Fort Des Moines Black Officers Memorial Park," *Des Moines Register*, July 26, 1998, sec. Nation/World.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

African American officer's training camp in 1917. Additional to Morris, other members of the committee included, former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Colin Powell, Iowa Senators Charles Grassley and Tom Harkin, Nebraska Senator Bob Kerrey, Congressman Greg Ganske, Governor Terry Brandstad, state Representative Wayne Ford and Des Moines Mayor Preston Daniels. Financial support included \$1,000,000 in pledged funds through fundraising by July 1998, but corporate sponsorship poured in with donations including \$25,000 from Bank of America, and \$10,000 from Prairie Meadows Racetrack and Casino.⁷⁹

By far the largest financial contribution came from the federal government. On May 18, 2000 the *Des Moines Register* announced a U.S. Senate subcommittee approved a \$2,000,000 appropriation for the memorial park.⁸⁰ The Senate appropriation brought the total federal contribution to \$4,000,000. As of the fall of 2000, nearly \$500,000 from the state of Iowa, \$125,000 from Polk County, and \$30,000 from the City of Des Moines had also been contributed to the project.⁸¹ In addition to the restoration work and museum creation, the memorial park would contain an abstract sculpture, designed by Richard Hunt, and a reflecting pool. The abstract nature of the sculpture was a shift towards inclusivity of the WAC soldiers, as the original design called for an African American officer.⁸²

⁷⁹ "\$25,000 given to War Memorial," *Des Moines Register*, November 15, 1999; and "Memorial Park given \$10,000," *Des Moines Register*, January 15, 2004.

⁸⁰ Jane Norman, "\$2M OK'd for D.M. Memorial," *Des Moines Register*, May 18, 2000, sec. Metro.

⁸¹ "A New Iowa Landmark," *Des Moines Register*, September 24, 2000.

⁸² Stadtmiller, "\$6 Million Memorial Will Honor Black Officers."

Newspaper articles reporting on the progress of the memorial park were quick to celebrate the progressive nature of the African American officers training and WAC camps. The Des Moines reported:

Long before sit-ins and demonstrations would force this nation to examine its legacy of racial inequality, the U.S. military encouraged the inclusion and integration of African-Americans and women. One of the greatest chapters of the story dealing with race unfolded right here in central Iowa, at Fort Des Moines Army Post.⁸³

The costs of the project skyrocketed. By 2003, the proposed \$6,000,000 park and museum was expecting its final cost to run near \$20,000,000.⁸⁴ Additional problems occurred when in March of 2004 Robert Morris, left the Fort Des Moines Memorial Park Inc., to begin his own nonprofit organization- the Fort Des Moines Memorial Park and Education Center- out of fear that the new organization would compete for necessary funds to complete the monument.⁸⁵



Figure 15: Clayton Hall Education Center, Fort Des Moines.

⁸³ "A New Iowa Landmark."

⁸⁴ Deanna Truman-Cook, "Military Memorial Work Moves Ahead," *Des Moines Register*, February 19, 2003.

⁸⁵ Associated Press, "Foundation Suing Founder," *Des Moines Register*, March 29, 2004, sec. State and Regional, lexisnexis.com.

Despite the lengthy fundraising process and issues with committee members the monument was successfully completed in 2004. The project included the Clayton Hall Education Center- a National Historic Register site- turned museum, historic chapel, courtyard, abstract monument including the names of the first graduating classes of women and African-Americans carved in red marble, and reflecting pool.⁸⁶ The south side of the memorial park is a concrete wall with the words, "we learned and grew and were transformed not so much by what we did, but why and how we did it." The opening of the memorial park brought with it much local attention recognizing the significance of the monument and its commemoration of the men and women who broke important boundaries.⁸⁷

The museum certainly addresses the racism which existed in the United States, thus highlighting the importance of the Fort Des Moines officers. The connection is lost, however, between the impact of the war on Des Moines and the memorialization of its significance. Support for memorials in Des Moines in the years following the war were focused almost exclusively on those from Iowa who had died. From a practicality standpoint, the economic collapse of the economy in Iowa following the war, and national veterans' organizations were more interested in remembering the dead than supporting African Americans- most of whom were not from Iowa. Exploration

⁸⁶ "Fort Des Moines Memorial Park & Education Center to Open Summer 2004," *PR Newswire*, March 31, 2004, lexisnexis.com. The site was also anticipated to draw 300,000 visitors a year, a number almost certainly never reached.

⁸⁷ For a sampling of news coverage surrounding the opening of the Fort Des Moines memorial see: Leslie Parrilla, "Memorial Honors Army's First Women and Black Officers," July 8, 2004, sec. State and Regional; Tom Harkin, "Sen. Harkin Issues Statement on Dedication of Fort Des Moines Memorial Park and Education Center," July 23, 2004, lexisnexis.com; and Tim Paluch, "Visitors Hail Fort D.M. Memorial Park," *Des Moines Register*, July 26, 2004.

monuments in Des Moines will come, but suffice it to say, those who received memorials were predominantly white.

In addition to little support from the white community to provide support for an African American monument, the impact of racism should also not be forgotten. The training of African American officers at Fort Des Moines and enlisted soldiers at Camp Dodge is a significant moment in progressivism, but to the African Americans in the military and the local civilian population it was closely tied to residual racism and institutionally supported violence. In the aftermath of the First World War, the local community simply did not have enough sons, brothers, or fathers who were part of the Fort Des Moines training camp to justify the spending of scarce resources. There was also little public interest in reopening the painful, racially divisive memories of the riots and executions of 1917 and 1918. Instead it was more important to attempt to capitalize on the success of African American troops in the United States. And so for eighty years, the memory of the African American officers of Fort Des Moines were ignored, not forgotten, but ignored.

"The Negro Soldier"

The colored troops have been called out to fight for Uncle Sam,
 Nor yet have they exemption claimed, but answered here I am,
 And boldly donned the uniform to fulfill honor's call,
 And plant the true democracy around the world for all.

They're mostly from the southland where they were born and raised,
 For ages their parents were stigmatized as slaves;
 They all of them were treated as only common pests,
 But they entered with a spirit that showed an honest zest.

And now they cross the ocean and for liberty they'll stand

Defy the sub, the gas, the shell, till in Germany they land,
 And there with equal valor, with all their pep and vim,
 Uphold the glorious honors their fathers left to him.
 In the bloody siege of Yorktown, and the war with Mexico,
 In our dark hour of rebellion where blood ran to and fro,
 In San Juan and Carrizal they also there won fame,
 And our heroes that have gone today will surely do the same.

Now I wonder when the war is o'er and they come marching home,
 When north and south with heart and soul shall join in one acclaim,
 Pronouncing everlasting love for those that on them fame;
 Yes, I wonder if the south will take the negro by the hand
 And say "For years you've been a slave but now you are a man."

-J. Kane.⁸⁸



Figure 16: Fort Des Moines Monument.

⁸⁸ J. Kane, "The Negro Soldiers," *The Iowa State Bystander*, August 16, 1918.

CHAPTER III: "THAT LIBERTY SHALL NOT PERISH FROM THIS EARTH": FIRST WORLD WAR MONUMENTS IN DES MOINES, IOWA

Introduction

The Grand Army of the Republic (G.A.R.) was a large national veteran's organization, consisting of both African Americans and whites who served in the Union Army during the Civil War.¹ In September 1926, Des Moines was the host of the G.A.R.'s annual "National Encampment." Thousands of Civil War veterans came to the city and local newspapers closely followed the activities of the elderly veterans. Among the many issues discussed during the encampment, the veterans agreed that designs and fundraising would take place for the construction of a memorial tower in Des Moines. According to an article in the *Des Moines Register*, their plan was to create a tower, "the Greatest Monument in the World," the cost of which would be \$2,500,000.² The tower proposed would be similar in design to that of the Eiffel Tower in Paris, France, and at 1,000 feet in height, slightly taller.

The G.A.R., Spanish American War, and First World War veterans, as well as Mayor Fred F. Hunter, supported the tower project. Judge L. W. Forgrave of St. Joseph, Missouri, had drafted the proposal and observers anticipated that the G.A.R. would have little difficulty raising the money. Mayor Hunter said, "the great compliment paid to Des Moines by serious consideration of the proposal to erect the memorial tower here is

¹ For more information on the G.A.R. see: Barbara A Gannon, *The Won Cause: Black and White Comradeship in the Grand Army of the Republic*, Civil War America (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011).

² "Veterans of Three Wars Support Plan to Build \$2,500,000 Tower in City," *The Des Moines Register*, September 21, 1926.

deeply appreciated by the citizens of the city."³ Supporting the mayor, Frank Miles, editor of the *Iowa Legionaire*, stated, "there has been great need for a national memorial to the soldiers of the county's three major wars. Des Moines, in addition to its geographical qualifications, is the logical place for such a memorial because it is most perfectly typical of dozens of cities throughout the country which are the backbone of the country in times of war and in peace."⁴ By the next day, the projected total needed for the monument had ballooned from \$2,000,000 to \$6,000,000. Organizers believed the money could be raised through one dollar subscriptions. Since the tower would honor not just the Civil War veterans but also those from the Spanish American War and the First World War.⁵

Today it is difficult to imagine such a structure in Des Moines. The terrain of the state allows the gold leaf of the Capitol building to be seen for miles, a monument like the one proposed would be visible even further, and could have completely altered the city's future skyline. The great Eiffel Tower of the Prairie was never built of course. The plan was practically doomed the moment it was agreed upon. The day after the announcement of the tower in Des Moines, another group revealed that its plans for a separate memorial in Washington, D.C. with a projected cost of \$10,000,000. The proposed D. C. monument had support from national organizations including the American Legion Auxiliary, and wealthy backers like Henry Ford.⁶ The building would

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ "Plan Huge Memorial: Vets Propose \$6,000,000 Structure Here," *The Des Moines Evening Tribune*, September 22, 1926.

⁶ "Reveal Plan for \$10,000,000 Memorial," *The Des Moines Evening Tribune*, September 22, 1926.

be, "...the climax of the work of the G.A.R. since its founding."⁷ The national G.A.R. memorial was headed by Reverend Cariton Clark of Pittsburgh, and president of the G.A.R. , headed the D.C. effort for the national memorial, projecting a monumental building similar to that of the Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Hall in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.⁸

In the mid-1920s, the three major veterans organizations were the G.A.R, the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) and the American Legion. Of the three, the membership, and thus power, of the G.A.R. had markedly declined as members passed away. The VFW and Legion on the other hand were desperately trying to increase their membership, since members brought pools of money for monuments. The headquarters of the VFW in Kansas City, and the American Legion's headquarters in Indianapolis, had heavily supported huge monument plans in those cities. In November 1926, the 217 foot tall Liberty Memorial was completed in Kansas City.⁹ The Soldiers and Sailors Monument, in Indianapolis incorporated a plaza, and together with a large memorial building, fundraising began in the early 1920s with the monument's dedication coming in 1933. These multi-million dollar projects naturally pulled any realistic funding possibilities for the tower in Des Moines. More importantly though, these large projects, which used money from their national membership roster, including members in Iowa,

⁷ "Drive for Memorial Will Be Launched in December," *The Des Moines Evening Tribune*, September 23, 1926.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ For more information on the Liberty Memorial in Kansas City see: Derek Donovan, *Lest the Ages Forget: Kansas City's Liberty Memorial* (Kansas City, MO: Kansas City Star Books, 2001); and Maureen Picard Robins, *World War I Memorial* (Vero Beach, FL: Rourke, 2010).

pulled scarce private funding out of the state and thus limited the monument possibilities within the city.

Attempts to create a large First World War memorial in Des Moines, honoring all of those from Iowa, were further harmed as a result of the large building projects city of Des Moines had recently undertaken. As part of the City Beautiful Movement of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Des Moines had landscaped its river front and removed unsightly buildings for new Classical Revival look. The Federal building had been built in 1890, Iowa State Historical building in 1899, public library in 1903, county courthouse in 1907, Coliseum auditorium in 1909, Des Moines Municipal building in 1910, Locust and Walnut street bridges in 1909 and 1910, and the YMCA building in 1912.¹⁰ After the First World War was over, few in Des Moines clamored for large civic buildings to commemorate the war. Additionally, due to the post-war economic collapse in Iowa, support for traditional monuments, let alone massive projects like the tower or civic buildings similar to those in Indianapolis or Nashville, would be impossible. Iowa would therefore go without a state monument to the First World War. Instead, it was up to the people of the city of Des Moines to remember their sons, brothers and fathers in other ways.

Merle D. Hay Monument

A sketch was published on the front page of the *Des Moines Register* on November 8, 1917, depicting Uncle Sam, shin deep in water, billowing cloud of smoke

¹⁰ For more information on the building projects of Des Moines in the late 19th and early 20th centuries see: Craig McCue and Ron Playle, *Des Moines: Postcard History Series*, Postcard History Series (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2007), 12–20; and Sarah C. Oltrogge, *Images of America: East Village*, Images of America (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2009), 24–34.

over land in the background, and a dead soldier in his arms.¹¹ Titled, "Bringing the Truth Home to US," the sketch summed up the sentiments of the previous few days. Shortly after the soldiers of Fort Des Moines received their first assignments as commissioned officers, and just two days after the soldiers from Alabama reached Camp Dodge, the war truly came home to America. On the night of November 3rd, 1917, a German raid left three American soldiers dead; James Bethel Gresham of Evansville, Indiana, Thomas Enright of Bloomfield (Pittsburgh) Pennsylvania, and Private Merle D. Hay of Glidden, Iowa. They were the first three American servicemen killed in Europe.

News of the death of the Americans was widely reported throughout the United States, and received attention in allied countries.¹² In Iowa, the story gravitated to Hay, and newspapers from around the state recounted every known detail surrounding Hay from birth to the circumstances of his death.¹³ The *Glidden Graphic*, the weekly paper

¹¹ J. N. "Ding" Darling, "Bringing the Truth Home To Us," *Des Moines Register*, November 8, 1917.

¹² For a sampling of newspaper coverage of the deaths of Gresham, Enright and Hay see: "Americans Killed in Action," *The Times*, November 6, 1917; "Praise from England," *Des Moines Register*, November 6, 1917; "Three Americans Killed, 5 Wounded, Twelve Captured In German Raid; Were Cut Off By Heavy Gun Fire," *New York Times*, November 5, 1917; "Iowa Boy Among the First Sammies Slain," *Cedar Falls Daily Record*, November 5, 1917; and "Three Americans Slain, Five Hurt, Twelve Captured By Hun Raiders," *Des Moines Register*, November 5, 1917.

¹³ "Pershing's Men in First Clash," *Waterloo Evening Courier*, November 5, 1917; Associated Press, "Pershing's Men Fought Hand-to-Hand Against Overwhelming German Force, Battling Fiercely with Aid Cut Off," *New York Times*, November 6, 1917; "Here Are Iowa's First Victims of the World War; One Is Dead and One Is a Prisoner of the Germans.," *Waterloo Evening Courier*, November 7, 1917; "Dead Soldier's Mother to Get First Benefits," *Waterloo Evening Courier*, November 7, 1917. Also see secondary sources: Ray Murray, "Merle D. Hay," ed. John Ely Briggs, *The Palimpsest XXIV*, no. 5 (May 1943): 141–53; Joan Muyskens, ed., "Merle Hay And His Town," *Annals of Iowa* 39, no. 1 (Summer 1967): 22–31; and Bernice Reida and Ann Irwin, "Merle Hay- Lost In Action," in *Hawkeye Adventure* (Lake Mills, IA: Graphic Publishing Co; Inc., 1966), 254–61.

from Hay's hometown, was most focused on the loss, printing bizarre letters received by his mother and a story of him coming to a man in a dream.¹⁴

Enright, Gresham and Hay were given a full military funeral in France, with both American and French officers and soldiers in attendance. "In the name of the French army and in the name of France I bid farewell to Private Enright, Private Gresham and Private Hay of the American army," stated the presiding French officer.¹⁵ Next to the three graves, a sign was posted declaring, "here lie the first soldiers of the great republic of the United States who died on the soil of France for justice and for liberty, November 3, 1917."¹⁶ Hay was also awarded the French Croix de Guerre.¹⁷

Ideas immediately began circulating on ways to remember the fallen Iowa boy. Clinton County, where Glidden is located- approximately 90 miles northwest of Des Moines-, recommended to the State that Hay's birthday be made a holiday as, "Iowa can find a great lesson in patriotism in his death."¹⁸ The holiday never came to be, but the Des Moines City Council quickly renamed the main road connecting Des Moines to Camp Dodge 'Merle Hay Road'.¹⁹ Replacing the 58th street markers was only the beginning, within a month of his being killed in France, discussions surrounding an

¹⁴ "Fanatical Socialist Writes Mrs. H. D. Hay a Letter," *Glidden Graphic*, November 22, 1917; and "Man Claims Merle Hay Spoke To Him In Dream," *Glidden Graphic*, December 13, 1917.

¹⁵ Associated Press, "3 U.S. Dead Buried With Honors; Touching Tribute by Frenchman," *Waterloo Daily Courier*, November 8, 1917.

¹⁶ "Where Merle Hay And Comrades Are Now Sleeping," *Glidden Graphic*, January 10, 1918.

¹⁷ "Handsome Medal Awarded Merle Hay by the French Republic," *Glidden Graphic*, February 7, 1918.

¹⁸ "Suggests Birthday of Merle Hay as Holiday," *Glidden Graphic*, November 8, 1917.

¹⁹ "'Merle Hay Road' From Camp Dodge to the City," *Glidden Graphic*, November 22, 1917; "The Merle Hay Road," *Glidden Graphic*, December 6, 1917; and "Merle Hay Road Open to Traffic," *Camp Dodger*, May 17, 1918.

appropriate monument for Hay began to circulate.²⁰ However, while the war was still raging, practicality would reign supreme and the allocation of funds and resources would have to wait.²¹

Ultimately, it was settled upon that a large boulder would be placed at the high point of road that now bears his name. On the 30th of May, 1921 officials unveiled the monument boulder. During the dedication ceremony, Major Casper Schenk stated to the crowd that, while memories faded, "here will be a permanent tribute that will stand 1000 years, defying time's erosion, to silently proclaim the name of Iowa's premier hero to the millions that pass along this highway."²² Etched in the front of the granite boulder are the words, "Merle Hay Road 1917," and on the backside of the boulder is a bronze plaque which reads:

In Memoriam
Merle Hay
The First Iowa Soldier Killed in the Great War.
Born Carrollton, Iowa - July 30, 1896.
Killed November 3, 1917, Near Bethelmont, France, on the first raid.

Nearly a century has passed since the dedication of the Merle Hay boulder. In that time, Merle Hay road has become the dividing line between the cities of Des Moines and Urbandale-a suburb. The neighborhood that has developed around is heavily commercialized featuring a shopping mall, strip malls, chain restaurants, hotels, and several car dealerships. As the neighborhood grew, the Merle Hay boulder became less

²⁰ "Merle Hay Memorial Now Being Discussed," *Glidden Graphic*, December 6, 1917.

²¹ "Merle Hay Battle Year Ago Today," *Des Moines Register*, November 3, 1918.

²² Ray Murray, "Merle D. Hay," 151.

visible as traffic increased and landscaping changed.²³ Road expansion projects caused the monument to Hay to be moved in order to accommodate construction. Finally, a local Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) post relocated the monument across the street into the Chapel Hill Gardens cemetery.²⁴ The move was not technically legal, and to an extent removes it from its historical context as a marker for



Figure 17: Merle D. Hay Monument (Des Moines, IA).

the road itself, but the move promotes more viewership as it now rests near the entrance of the cemetery's funeral home.²⁵ At the rededication ceremony in November of 2007, the VFW added second smaller plaque on a marble tablet next to the boulder which reads:

This memorial was originally commissioned in July of 1921
 TO HONOR MERLE HAY
 The first American soldier killed in combat action during WWI
 It is hereby rededicated this 11th Day of November, 2007

²³ While this description is my own, John Zug made comment on the "Speeding motorists" and their rare notice of the boulder monument. See: John Zug, "Memorials Last, Memories Fade," *Des Moines Register*, November 11, 1950, Vertical File-World War I Veterans-Iowa, Des Moines Public Library.

²⁴ "Veterans Revive Memory of Iowa's First WWI Casualty," *Des Moines Register*, March 25, 2006, sec. State and Regional.

²⁵ "Iowa Officials Say Veterans Memorial Wrongly Moved," *Des Moines Register*, October 28, 2008, sec. State and Regional. New regulations governing VFW posts from moving veteran's monuments had come into existence, but no charges were filed.

TO HONOR EVERY SERVICE MEMBER EVER KILLED IN COMBAT
 SINCE THE BIRTH OF THIS NATION.
 YOU ARE NOT FORGOTTEN AND YOUR SACRIFICE WAS NOT IN VAIN.
 Des Moines Fairground Post 738
 Veterans of Foreign Wars

The Hay monument is similar to that of the Lieutenant James Simmons Timothy monument and tree in Centennial Park in Nashville. Both combine a metal plaque with a natural element, a boulder for Hay and a tree for Timothy. Both men are commemorated for being a 'first dead', Hay as first Iowan and American, and Timothy as first officer from Tennessee. This is

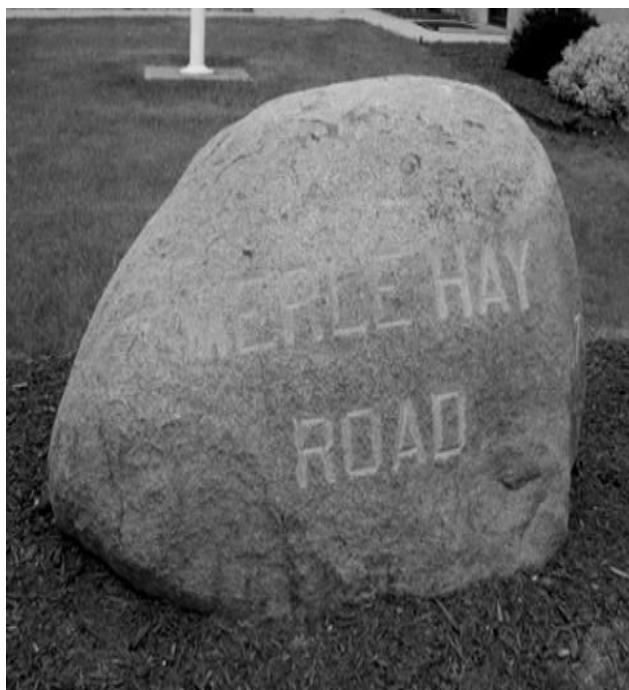


Figure 18: Merle D. Hay Monument Boulder (Des Moines, IA).

where the similarities end however. The Timothy monument, created by the Catholic Children of Nashville, tightly connects his public memory to religion and patriotism. The public memory surrounding Hay on the other hand, is completely secular- focusing on being a 'first killed'.

The need of the public to find meaning in loss and grief stems in large part from early twentieth century attitudes towards death. In Chapter 2 of Erika Doss' *Memorial Mania*, she argues that culturally, death was no longer public as it had been in the past, instead public interactions with death were connected at the funeral and memorialization.

As a result, "American interest in "reclaiming" death: in making death more meaningful on personal and individual levels challenging an "American way of death" largely dominated."²⁶ Hay was not significant in the way, for instance, 'Stonewall' Jackson or Abraham Lincoln, but had also sacrificed his life for a national cause. Rather, Hay was significant to the nation, but particularly Iowa, for two reasons.

First, culturally, the people of the United States prize uniqueness. Recognition of being first at just about anything is commonplace. Hay being among the first three Americans killed in the First World War was naturally recognized by the country and the people of Iowa. Hay's death made Iowa's contributions to the war seem that much more legitimate or official. An attitude became associated with Hay that, 'it was Iowa who was first ready to offer a sacrifice'. The claim of Hay as the first American killed is of course complicated by Enright and Gresham being killed at the same time. Those two men were celebrated and memorialized in their own ways, as explored in the next chapter.

The second reason for Hay's significance is in part due to how ordinary he was. Merle Hay grew up in a small farming community in Iowa- the 'heartland' of America. He was not from a famous family, nor did he perform any significant feat on the battlefield. In all reality, Hay was not the first American killed as a result of the war- those who died on the Lusitania alone disproves this.

But Hay, Enright, and Gresham were the first American soldiers of the American Expeditionary Force (AEF), to be killed in France. A minor difference in semantics, but

²⁶ Erika Doss, "Chapter 2: Grief: Temporary Memorials and Contemporary Modes of Mourning," in *Memorial Mania: Public Feeling in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 100.

an important one if we are to remember the global nature of the war before the United States entered into the fighting. Hay had enlisted upon the entrance of the United States into the war. He was young, white, and a volunteer. His death therefore was a death relatable by the majority of families across the country who had sons, brothers, fathers and friends serving overseas. The country could not have recognized non-combatant deaths in the same way as they did Hay- or Enright or Gresham for that matter- because he was not in an American uniform fighting for America when he was killed. Hay's death, therefore, could be better eulogized and therefore memorialized.

Hay became one of the many thousands of repatriated soldiers in 1921. As discussed previously in this thesis, repatriation was not supported by all.²⁷ Hay's own mother reportedly believed that repatriation would be a disturbance to her son's peace, but would allow the government to return his body if the mothers of Enright and Gresham wished for the same.²⁸ In late July 1921, Merle Hay was buried in Glidden in front of an estimated crowd of 10,000.²⁹ An examination of the monument on Hay's grave in Glidden will take place in the next chapter.

Gold Star Monument and the Gold Star Cemetery

The closest thing to a large state monument is the Gold Star monument at John Burke Park in Des Moines. Today the small park is next to Iowa Lutheran Hospital on

²⁷ Lisa Budreau, *Bodies of War: World War I and the Politics of Commemoration in America, 1919-1933* (New York: New York University Press, 2010).

²⁸ "Bringing the Bodies Home," *Glidden Graphic*, July 21, 1921.

²⁹For more on the funeral of Merle Hay see: "Merle Hay's Body Placed in Grave on Hawkeye Soil," *Waterloo Daily Courier*, July 25, 1917; "Merle Hay Funeral At Home Today," *Des Moines Register*, July 24, 1921; "Obituary of Merle D. Hay," *Glidden Graphic*, July 28, 1921; "To Honor Memory of Merle Hay," *Cedar Falls Daily Record*, July 21, 1921; "10,000 Render Proud Homage to Merle Hay," *Des Moines Register*, July 25, 1921; and "Ten Thousand Attend Funeral of Merle Hay," *Glidden Graphic*, July 28, 1921.

East University Avenue, approximately one mile north of the Capitol building. The Gold Star Monument honors the Polk County men who died during the First World War. The story behind the monument actually begins three miles to the east at Woodland Cemetery.

On June 30, 1920 citizens created, the Gold Star Cemetery Association. The proclaimed function of the association was to:

...provide [a] burial place for the bodies of soldiers, sailors, marines, including officers and enlisted men of any rank, including all enlisted men in the Army of the United States in the late war with Germany who died during the period of said war whether in a foreign country or in the United States who were citizens and residents of Polk County and State of Iowa at the time of their enlistment, and, to that end to accept a deed from the City of Des Moines to certain lots in Woodland Cemetery...³⁰

In partnership with the City Council of Des Moines, lots 76-78 of block 22 in Woodland Cemetery were donated for the war dead of Polk County. In the resolution by the City Council, there is a provision which states that all of the grave makers would be uniform but not paid for by the City of Des Moines.³¹ In other words, the City would provide the land for repatriation but memorialization would be up to the families- known as the Gold Star Association.

As part of the cemetery plot, the Gold Star Association wanted to erect a monument dedicated to all of the Polk County soldiers who died in the war regardless of where they were buried. A committee in the early 1920s was formed with the purpose of raising funds and selecting a design. The committee consisted of Mrs. Lou McHenry,

³⁰ "Articles of Incorporation of the Gold Star Cemetery Association," June 30, 1920, State Historical Society of Iowa.

³¹ "Polk County Gold Star Cemetery," Resolution No. 1565 § (1920).

Mrs. Minnie Fleur, W.D. Baldwin, Fred Crowley, and T.B. Moore. The members of the committee were all members of a Polk County Gold Star family. The committee's monument selection was printed in the July 30th, 1922 edition of the *Des Moines Capitol*, which informed its readers that the monument would be sculpted by Charles H. Niehaus of Grantwood, New Jersey, and cost approximately \$55,000.³²

When expenses of the monument were finalized, the total cost was nearly \$75,000. The Capitol Hill Monuments Co., received \$36,865, Charles Niehaus received a \$20,000 commission and daughter Marie Niehaus received \$13,900.³³ A levy, approved by the Polk County Board of Supervisors, provided the funding for the monument.³⁴ Originally, the monument to the Gold Star soldiers of Polk County was to be incorporated into the Gold Star plot in Woodland Cemetery. In addition to the monument would be headstones of matching material-not the government provided markers- one for each of the repatriated soldiers interred in the plot. It is unclear precisely why the plan did not come to be but given the size of the memorial design, and the size of the Gold Star plot donated by the City of Des Moines, there was not enough space to accommodate the monument and forty burials.³⁵ It would be five more years before the monument was funded and built.

³² "Model for Gold Star Memorial," *The Des Moines Capitol*, July 30, 1922. Charles H. Niehaus born around 1855 in Ohio. Niehaus worked as a famous sculptor and lived with his daughter Marie in the 1920s. See: "1920 U.S. Census: Cliffside Park, Bergen, New Jersey; Roll: T625_1017; Page: 3B" (United States Federal Census, 1920), Ancestry.com. Niehaus was a member of the National Academy of Design in New York, and had created monuments for John Paul Jones in Washington, D.C., "The Scaper" in the Metropolitan Museum in New York, as well as the Soldiers and Sailors Monument in Newark, New Jersey.

³³ "Gold Star Monument Account," 1926, State Historical Society of Iowa.

³⁴ Unknown, "Letter from Unknown to Rev. Frank H. Webster," July 3, 1934, State Historical Society of Iowa.

³⁵ "Articles of Incorporation of the Gold Star Cemetery Association."

Consequently, it took five more years before the monument would be funded and built. At 2 o'clock in the afternoon on Tuesday September 21, 1926 a parade of First World War veterans, Grand Army of the Republic (G.A.R.) members, Spanish American War veterans, cavalry from Fort Des Moines, city and county officials, and members of the Des Moines Arts council marched in front of a crowd from the Capitol grounds north to Burke Park.³⁶ The parade began the dedication ceremony for the Gold Star monument. Mrs. Lou McHenry and Mrs. Minnie Fleur unveiled the monument and Des Moines Mayor Fred Hunter accepted it on behalf of the city.³⁷

The final design was nearly identical to the proposed model from 1922. The large granite monument is divided into three sections. The center portion is the tallest of the three, and displays a large bronze sculpture. Niehaus' sculpture depicts a nude man, classical helmet on his head, round shield upon his back, 'doughboy' helmet covering his groin. In the arms of the man are two swords and flowers, classical centurion helmet and equipment at his feet. The man, on the left side of the sculpture, is presenting this equipment-that of the dead- to the angel of death on the right, sword at her side and draped in a classical dress. As the man is presenting the equipment, the angel inscribes the names in a book, the word "NECROLOGY," or list of dead, written at the top of each page. The book rests upon a slab labeled "ALTER OF THE NATION." Below the bronze sculpture is inscribed in the granite the words, "Erected in grateful remembrance of the men from Polk county who made the supreme sacrifice in the world war that government by the people shall be maintained and that liberty shall not perish from the

³⁶ "Memorial Dedication," *The Des Moines Evening Tribune*, September 20, 1926.

³⁷ John Zug, "Memorials Last, Memories Fade."

earth." Flanking the center section are two granite eagles, wings half spread. The left and right sections of the monument display two bronze plaques with the names of the 165 men of Polk County who died in the war. The names are listed in alphabetical order, with no distinction of rank, unit, religion, country of origin, military being served in at time of death, or race.³⁸ Of the names listed, 65 were killed in action or died from wounds, 80 from disease, and 20 from accidents, lost at sea or suicides.³⁹



Figure 19: Gold Star Monument (Polk County, IA).

³⁸ "Gold Star Men of Polk County, Iowa" (Historical Department of Iowa, July 25, 2013), Des Moines Historical Society. Examples of the inclusive nature of the Gold Star Monument include: Sylvain M. Block was Jewish. Charles W. Brindley was a member of a Canadian regiment when he was killed in France. Luther Dale part of the 31 Infantry Regiment died of Pneumonia while in Vladivostok, Siberia. Neal Davis drowned near Russia in July of 1919. Theodore Kime was a member of a Canadian cavalry unit and died of pneumonia in England, he was repatriated to Laural Hill Cemetery in Des Moines- his head stone was provided by the British Government. Demorse Grale McClintic was wounded and discharged from the United States Army in 1917, he enlisted in the Canadian Army in 1918 and was killed in action in France one month to the day before the end of the war. Clifford V. Johnson, John Walker, and Harry C. Welch were African Americans.

³⁹ Ibid.

Rather than the Christian sacrifice, a woman in mourning or an advancing soldier, the monument's design is somehow more stoic. The imagery is less about celebrating the 'glorious dead' than it is about recording for all time the names of the lost. The words under the bronze sculpture are also interesting to note. "Erected in grateful remembrance of the men from Polk County Iowa who made the supreme sacrifice in the world war so that government by the people shall be maintained and that liberty shall not perish from this earth." The first half of the statement links the ideas of eternal tribute to and First World War memory to the sculpture, while the second half of the statement draws from Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address.

We are met on a great battle field of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of it, as a final resting place for those who died here, that the nation might live. This we may, in all propriety do. But, in a larger sense, we can not dedicate-- we can not consecrate-- we can not hallow, this ground-- The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have hallowed it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here; while it can never forget what they did here.

It is rather for us, the living, we here be dedica-ted to the great task remaining before us-- that, for these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they here, gave the last full measure of devotion-- that we here highly resolve these dead shall not have died in vain; that the nation, shall have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people by the people for the people, shall not perish from the earth.⁴⁰

The people of Iowa were once again on the victorious side of a war, having supplied thousands of soldiers in the Civil War for the Union, again in the Spanish American War, and then in the First World War. The narrative of their war memories needed little justification. The involvement and sacrifice of Iowans had been for the

⁴⁰ Abraham Lincoln, "Draft of the Gettysburg Address: Nicolay Copy" (ourdocuments.gov, 1863), Abraham Lincoln Papers, American Memory Project, Library of Congress, Manuscript Division (Washington, D.C.), ourdocuments.gov.

'righteous' cause of liberty, and freedom. Quoting the Gettysburg Address, connects the dead of the First World War to those of the Civil War. The field of battle could be made no more sacred by the words or actions of those who had not been a part of the battle.

The distant battlefields of Europe removed the ability of the American people to mourn in traditional ways. The trenches of the Western Front did not belong to the United States, and thus for the average citizen it was not possible to visit the place where their loved one had died. The Gold Star Monument therefore could offer a remembrance of the sacrifice these men made.



Figure 20: Gold Star Monument (Polk County, IA) (Close-Up).

The manner in which the names are displayed on the Gold Star Monument is also important. The alphabetical listing demonstrates equality through sacrifice. On a deeper level it also demonstrates an active interest of the population of Polk County to be inclusive. The East Village neighborhood, between the Des Moines River and Capitol Hill, was in itself a diverse neighborhood of Jews, Scandinavian immigrants, and African Americans.⁴¹ Therefore, the location of the monument on the hill-essentially overlooking this diverse neighborhood- is in itself a gesture of inclusivity if in practice this was not always the case. It is a subtle acknowledgement of healing from the pointed hyper-racism of the 1918 Camp Dodge executions, and recognition of immigrant service in the face of Governor William L. Harding's 1918 edict requiring only English to be spoken in public.⁴²

Despite the fanfare at the dedication, and as gathering location for Armistice Day celebrations for many years, by the end of the Second World War, the Gold Star monument was all but abandoned. By Veteran's Day 1950, trash and graffiti covered the site, the concrete steps and walkway had crumbled and were beginning to be reclaimed by grass.⁴³ An effort by local VFW posts in the late 1970s raised several thousand dollars in order to repair the monument, add a new flag and provide lights.⁴⁴ Today the

⁴¹ Oltrogge, *Images of America: East Village*, 7–8.

⁴² Leland Sage L., "The First World War and its Aftermath, 1914-1928," in *A History of Iowa* (Ames, Iowa: The Iowa State University Press, 1974), 249-268. Other 'English Only' laws throughout the country were quickly found to be unconstitutional. Several immigrants are part of the 165 names listed on the Gold Star Monument. Of note: Private William Dodge of Bath, England; Private Ivar Asse, who would be repatriated to Norway; and Sergeant Luis G. Gonzalez of Porto Rico.

⁴³ John Zug, "Memorials Last, Memories Fade"; "Burke Memorial Carries Names of Polk County's...," 1950, Vertical File-World War I Veterans-Iowa, Des Moines Public Library; and Lillian McLaughlin, "Sad Neglect of Monument: Memorial to 165 Fallen Sons Going to Weeds," *Des Moines Tribune*, May 30, 1977.

⁴⁴ Lillian McLaughlin, "Monument's New Look Unveiled," *The Des Moines Tribune*, May 24, 1980.

monument is graffiti free, but overgrown trees from the 1980s restoration provide shelter for the homeless.

The construction of the Gold Star Monument at Burke Park in 1926 was not the end of the Gold Star Association. The family members of the men repatriated and interred at Woodland Cemetery still wished for some sort of monument to be placed with their sons and husbands, similar to sections of the cemetery dedicated to G.A.R. members. In the 1930s, new attention was given to replacing the government makers with privately funded markers and a smaller monument. After a lengthy review process, granite like that used on the Gold Star Monument was selected. The association had interviewed and requested several recommendations from experts and monument companies on the best material for long term survival of the markers and monument, granite being selected over marble.⁴⁵ Of those buried in the Gold Star plots, twenty were killed in action, seven died of wounds, eleven from disease, and two from accidents. Ranks included one lieutenant colonel, two captains, three first lieutenants, two second lieutenants, seven sergeants, six corporals, seven private first class', and eight privates. The majority, fifteen, were part of the 168th Infantry Regiment of the 42nd 'Rainbow' Division, from Camp Dodge in Des Moines.

⁴⁵ For further reading on the information requests regarding the durability of granite and marble see the following correspondence: V.U. Sigler, "Letter to Bernard F. Norwack from V. U. Sigler," October 18, 1932, State Historical Society of Iowa; Mel Harny, "Letter from Mel Harny to Bernard F. Norwack," December 3, 1932, State Historical Society of Iowa; Bureau of Standards, "Letter from Bureau of Standards to Bernard F. Norwack," May 10, 1933, State Historical Society of Iowa; J. N. Darling, "Letter from J.N. Darling to Bernard F. Norwack," May 12, 1933, State Historical Society of Iowa; T. W. Rowat, "Letter from T. W. Rowat to Bernard F. Norwack," May 13, 1933, State Historical Society of Iowa; "Letter from Unknown to Rev. Frank H. Webster"; Jas. H. Laubach, "Letter from Jas. H. Laubach to Bernard F. Norwack," July 23, 1934, State Historical Society of Iowa; "Gold Star Association Meeting Minutes," June 29, 1934, State Historical Society of Iowa; and Bernard F. Norwack, "Letter from Bernard F. Nowack to Gold Star Cemetery Association," June 6, 1933, State Historical Society of Iowa.

The Gold Star Association contracted the Glendale Memorial Company of the east side of Des Moines to produce the forty markers for the Gold Star Cemetery plot on June 5, 1933. While fundraising took place, debate on the central monument was also taking place. By this time, interest in the Gold Star Cemetery had slowed as the Great Depression made donations more difficult, but more importantly most of the parents and spouses of the men buried there had died or were in deteriorating health.⁴⁶ When attention was again placed on the granite markers, local VFW posts such as the Argonne and Baldwin-Patterson posts increased fundraising activities to include special bridge parties. African Americans were also included in the fundraising activities, as one letter stated, "the colored people are much interested because of one member of their race resting in the Plot. The colored folks are united in designating a particular Sunday as the day in which their race shall contribute their share. The children of the Sunday School will bring their pennies toward a fund from the colored people."⁴⁷

The markers of the Gold Star plots are flat granite blocks, the sides are rough, the face is polished with the name of the soldier, birth and death year, rank, unit, and the U.S. Veteran star in the center. Only Lieutenant Colonel Emory J. Pike's marker varies from the others, it bears an extra line of text announcing him as an awardee of the Medal of Honor.

⁴⁶ Unknown, "Letter from Unknown to Rev. Frank H. Webster."

⁴⁷ "Letter to Mr. O. D. Orr," n.d., Gold Star Cemetery, State Historical Society of Iowa.; Sergeant John Walker, Bakery Co. 333., died of Pneumonia in 1918.

In 1999, at the same time that the campaign for the Fort Des Moines monument began, sixteen schools from around Des Moines raised \$3,840 for the construction of a central monument for the plot.⁴⁸ The 1999 monument is a large headstone, commonly used to designate family plots. The grey granite matches the forty markers, and the top corners display a U.S. star like those of the markers. The inscription reads, "World War I Gold Star Memorial," and a sub-line of text reads, "Most of the 165 lie in graves marked "Unknown" in France. Those who lie here were originally buried in France." This inscription is quite likely incorrect. The Gold Star plot at Woodland Cemetery contains 40 soldiers. The Jewish section of Woodland contains one soldier, the St. Ambrose Catholic cemetery of Woodland contains seven, and there are at least six others buried throughout Woodland. Additionally, at least twenty-one soldiers are interred throughout other cemeteries in Des Moines including, Glendale, and Laural Hill. At least fifteen are buried



Figure 21: Gold Star Cemetery.

⁴⁸ "In Memory," *The Des Moines Register*, May 26, 1999, sec. Around Town. The backside of the monument reads, "Dedicated May 19, 1999 by students of the following schools." The Schools who raised the money are: Callanan Middle School, Douglas Elementary, East High School, East High Alumni Association, Edmunds Academy of Fine Arts, Howe Elementary, Hoover High School, Karen Acres Elementary, Lincoln High School, Lovejoy Elementary, Madison Elementary, Merrill Middle School, North High School, Perkins Elementary, Roosevelt High School, Western Hills Elementary, Willard Elementary. The project was coordinated by Gerald Lablanc.

elsewhere in Iowa, twelve in other states, two in other countries, and seven were buried or lost at sea. Five of the soldiers have unknown burial locations, but death took place in the United States or in a European hospital and it is likely they have markers. Ten of the soldiers died of wounds or disease in France and likely would have had their burials marked. Only seven of the 165 Polk County soldiers were killed in action with no known burial location and are likely part of mass or unknown graves.⁴⁹ It is possible some of the known burials throughout the United States and France are markers with no remains, but it is unlikely that "most" of the 165 lie in unmarked graves in France as the central Gold Star Plot monument claims.

Behind the monument are two matching granite benches with the words Gold Star inscribed on the seat. The base of one reads, "World War I 114,213 Iowans Served 3,758 Died", the reverse states John R. Grubb donated the bench. The base of the second bench reads, "In Memory of Gen. John J. Pershing Commanding Col. Douglas MacArthur Commander." General Pershing of course was the commander of the American Expeditionary Force, and Colonel MacArthur, who would gain

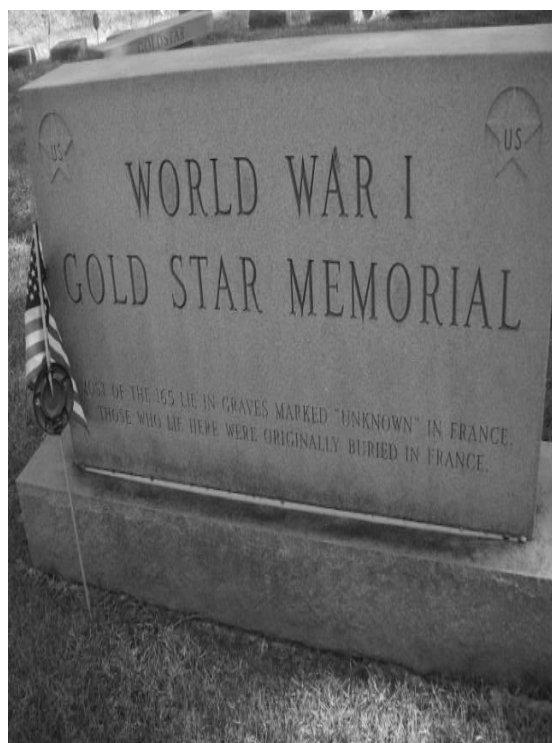


Figure 22: Gold Star Cemetery Monument.

⁴⁹ "Gold Star Men of Polk County, Iowa."

most fame in World War Two and Korea, had been the chief of staff of the 42nd Division during the First World War. Centered in the back row markers is a sculpture of an angel. It is unclear when this sculpture was added to the Gold Star plot, but pre 1979 photos do not show the angle, it is possible that it was added at the same time as the benches and monument at the end of the twentieth century.⁵⁰

From the inception of the Gold Star Association, the members made it clear that there would be no discrimination in the burials of the repatriated Polk County soldiers. On the one hand, it would have been illegal in Iowa to do so, but distinguishing Sergeant Walker as 'Colored' was possible. Perhaps as part of the agreement for the donation of the plots from the City of Des Moines, segregation was not permitted, or perhaps the shared bereavement simply meant there was no interest. Fundraising for a central monument in the plot was welcomed from the African American community, but the letter to Mr. Orr, mentioned above, does give the impression that there was separation in fundraising efforts.⁵¹ Regardless, the forty markers of the Gold Star Cemetery share the same granite of the Gold Star Monument in Burke Park, as a way to reinforce the connection between the two.

The letter to Mr. Orr also reveals that interest in the Gold Star Cemetery continued to an extent over the years. While the number of immediate family members passed away, local veterans organizations took interest. "The Plot has been lacking in improvements, so much so that it has taken on the appearance of a "potter's field" rather

⁵⁰ "Service Star Legion Scrapbook," n.d., State Historical Society of Iowa.

⁵¹ "Letter to Mr. O. D. Orr." Mr. O. D. Orr was a member of the Baldwin Patterson Post of the VFW in Des Moines, his son Corporal Frank Orr is one of the forty soldiers in the Gold Star Cemetery plots.

than the Military Cemeteries that we see all over the Nation to which the people have given so generously of their time and money."⁵² Interest in the cemetery beyond basic maintenance dwindled over the decades, but the 1999 monument-donated primarily through student fundraising shows that local interest in veteran's memorials do foster a sense of community even when no direct family connection exists.

Parks

In 1949 a fire destroyed the Des Moines Coliseum auditorium. The building of a new auditorium prompted questions about the future of monuments in Des Moines. Veterans organizations spent considerable effort and money in order to name the new building, Veterans Memorial Auditorium.⁵³ One newspaper article questioned the usefulness of static memorials compared to "living memorials".⁵⁴ The article asks, "should a memorial to the dead and living of wars in which the United States has engaged be strictly ornamental?"⁵⁵ The article debates the community value of monuments like the Polk County Gold Star Memorial and Soldiers and Sailors Monument on Capitol Hill. This transition to 'useful' monuments became prominent in the United States in the wake of Second World War and Korea.

In Erika Doss' *Memorial Mania*, she quotes from the 1946 *Report on War Memorials* produced by the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts, "since war memorials are generally the product of community effort, constructed with local funds and materials, the

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ In 2010, Veterans Memorial Auditorium became part of the Iowa Events Center alongside the Wells Fargo Arena. While still referred to as Vet's Auditorium, the naming rights were sold and the official name is now the Community Choice Credit Union Convention Center.

⁵⁴ "D.M. Auditorium Petition Raises Memorial Questions," *Des Moines Register*, October 28, 1945.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

community itself has the responsibility of determining the form of memorial best adapted to its needs."⁵⁶ The commission recommended communities create functional memorials such as bridges, buildings, parks and auditoriums instead of the more classic statuary figures like the doughboy or advancing Civil War soldier. Doss places the roots of this mentality in the creation of the American Battle Monuments Commission, with the shift in memorialization taking hold around the end of the Second World War.

The preservation of battlefield landscapes for the purposes of public use as parks is unquestionably a form of memorialization. The types of parks the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts endorsed, and Doss uses as a benchmark, are the spaces created for public use with no historical attachment and dedicated to a person or group of people. These types of parks begin well before the Second World War. In Des Moines it became easy to garnish public support for neighborhood parks named in honor of local men who had died in the First World War. In total, five parks in Des Moines were created or renamed for local First World War casualties;

Baldwin-Patterson Post Memorial
Park, Burke Park, Crowley
Playground, MacRae Park, McHenry
Park. Today, only three of these parks
serve their original purpose.

McHenry Park, approximately
three miles northwest of the Capitol



Figure 23: McHenry Park Sign.

⁵⁶ Erika Doss, *Memorial Mania: Public Feeling in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 192.

Building, is named for Captain Harrison Cummins McHenry, commander of Company B, 168th Infantry Regiment, 34th Division. On March 5, 1918, German Artillery killed Captain McHenry. His death was important to the people of Des Moines for two reasons. First, he had come from a prominent Des Moines family. Harrison's grandfather, William H. McHenry, Sr., was the first Mayor of Des Moines, and his father William H. McHenry Jr., was a district judge and law lecturer at Drake University for nearly thirty years.⁵⁷ Harrison McHenry, who graduated from Drake Law School, had enlisted in the Iowa National Guard in 1912. McHenry was deployed to the Mexican border, and quickly rose through the ranks, receiving a promotion to Captain by 1917.⁵⁸ When he was killed, not only was news shocking due to his status within the local community, but he also now held the distinction of Iowa's first officer killed in the war.

In 1921, the Coliseum, the large auditorium of Des Moines, held a memorial service for McHenry and three other Iowa soldiers; Corporal Donald MacRae, Corporal Marvin Dunn, and Daniel Bracelin of Norwalk, who were also killed or died of wounds received in the same raid as McHenry. According to one newspaper account of the



Figure 24: McHenry Park.

⁵⁷ "William Harrison McHenry Jr.," *The Annals of Iowa* 15, no. 4 (Spring 1926): 318–19.

⁵⁸ "Harrison Cummins McHenry," *The Annals of Iowa* 13, no. 3 (1922): 229.

memorial service, "thousands of men and women who went Sunday to the Coliseum to pay tribute to four Iowa soldiers who gave their lives for democracy, felt that the service was not one which warranted tears. Rather it was a time for triumph, that these heroes had given "their last full measure of devotion" that the ideals of America need not fall before Prussianism."⁵⁹ The Mayor of Des Moines, John MacVicar, addressed the crowd stating, "we may be proud of our soldiers, and of these men, the first to sacrifice their lives [from Des Moines]. We can remember their cheery faces, as the train pulled out last fall. We knew then that they would uphold the valor and ideals of the nation."⁶⁰ Mayor MacVicar also announced the Des Moines City Council had resolved to change the name of God Park to Harrison McHenry Park and South Park to Donald MacRae Park. Good Park was likely selected as the logical location to rename in memory of McHenry given its proximity- approximately one mile east- from Drake University. Good Park was not renamed McHenry instead, in 1919, his name would replace H. B. Frase, the Commissioner of Parks and Public Buildings.⁶¹



Figure 25: MacRae Park Sign.

⁵⁹ Dorthy Ashby, "Honors Paid To Brave Iowa Boys Victims Of Huns," *Des Moines Capitol*, March 18, 1918, Vertical File-World War I Veterans-Iowa, Des Moines Public Library.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Des Moines Parks Department, "McHenry Park Historical Sign Final Reduced.pdf," accessed February 1, 2017, dm.gov.org.

When McHenry's body was repatriated to Des Moines in 1921, he received a full military funeral. His flag draped casket, having been placed upon display in the rotunda of the State Capitol Building, was carried by gun caisson, was accompanied by a full company of National Guard soldiers and an estimated 10,000 mourners to his final resting place in the Gold Star plots of Woodland Cemetery. Reverend Charles S.

Medbury spoke during the service

offering the family and friends

within earshot the following

words of comfort, "I think of this

service today not as a funeral

service- the funeral service was

read that first time he was laid to

rest in France- but I think of it

more as a glorious memorial

service in which we pay tribute to

the heroism and sacrifice of this boy."⁶²

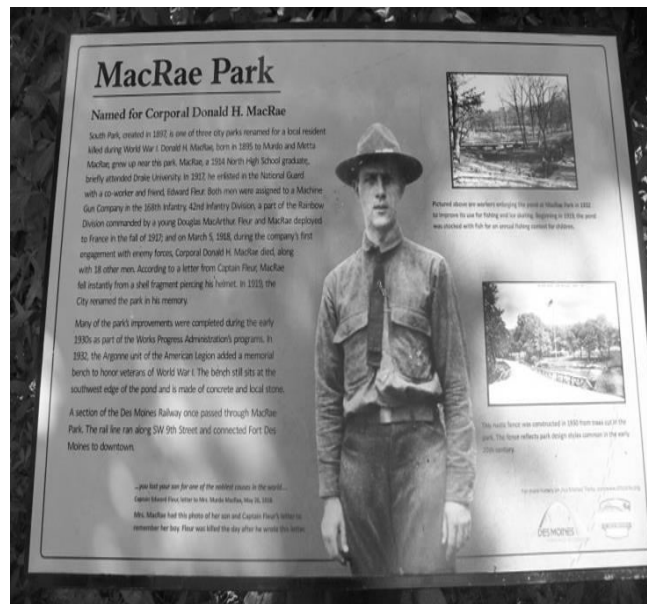


Figure 26: MacRae Park Interpretive Sign.

Corporal Donald H. MacRae, Machine Gun Company, 168 Infantry Regiment, 34th Division, grew up on the south side of Des Moines. MacRae briefly attended Drake University and worked at Chase and West Store. MacRae and his co-worker, Captain Edward Fleur enlisted in 1917. Like McHenry, MacRae was killed by artillery on March 5, 1918. In a letter to MacRae's mother, Nietta MacRae, from his friend Captain Fleur, from May 26, 1918, he said, "I have (MacRae's) helmet with me in my own bags, and

⁶² "Thousands Pay Tribute to M'Henry," *The Des Moines Evening Tribune*, November 7, 1921.

will bring it home to you, if you want, and if I get home myself."⁶³ MacRae's body was never repatriated to the United States. The 63 acre park, originally named South Park, was renamed for MacRae in 1919.⁶⁴ The selection of South Park for the rededication was likely due to its close proximity- less than two miles northeast- from his home.⁶⁵

Captain Edward Fleur, commander of the Machine Gun Company, 168 Infantry Regiment, 34th Division, was killed in a German gas attack the day after he wrote the letter to Mrs. MacRae, on May 27, 1918. Fleur, an immigrant from Sweden, was a veteran of the Spanish-American War, and remained in the Iowa National Guard. While he was not honored with a park in his name, a major road connecting downtown Des Moines to the airport was named after him.

Little is known about several of the men who had parks named after them. Sergeant John Hubert Burke, Medical Detachment, 168th Infantry Regiment, 34th Division, died of pneumonia on November 9, 1918 while recovering from wounds received in combat. Burke was repatriated to the Gold Star Cemetery, and the park dedicated to him, approximately a mile northeast of his home, and would also be the site of the Polk County Gold Star Monument.⁶⁶ As part of a city wide initiative to plant 500

⁶³ Chris Taylor, "What's in a Name?: A Dig down to Des Moines' Roots on How City Streets, Parks and Buildings Were Named.," *City View*, February 5, 2014, www.dmcityview.com.

⁶⁴ Des Moines Parks Department, "MacRae Park Historical Sign," n.d.

⁶⁵ "U.S. Directories, 1882-1995 for Murdo MacRae, Des Moines, Iowa, City Directory, 1917.," 1917, ancestry.com.

⁶⁶ "Iowa, State Census Collection, 1836-1925.," 1905, ancestry.com.

trees a year, Burke Park received \$1,000 worth of improvements to include trees and shrubbery in 1929.⁶⁷

Private First Class Alonzo F. Baldwin, Machine Gun Company, 168th Infantry Regiment, 34th Division was killed June 18, 1918. Private First Class John Patterson, C Battery, 101 Field Artillery, 26th Division, died on November 6, 1918 from wounds. Patterson would have a street named after him, and the names of Baldwin and Patterson



Figure 27: Baldwin-Patterson Park Sign.

would share a park. Originally considered for commercial development, the land next to the Amos Hiatt Junior High School was chosen for the park and dedicated May 25, 1943.⁶⁸ Parents of the students of Amos Hiatt as well as American Legion members argued that additional development to the area would make an already dangerous intersection more perilous with the increase in traffic associated with commercial development.⁶⁹ Today the park has been converted into a soccer field for Amos Hiatt and the white headstone shaped marker is still present.

⁶⁷ "Work To Begin In Burke Park," *Des Moines Tribune*, April 24, 1929, Vertical File-Parks and Playgrounds, Des Moines Public Library.

⁶⁸ "East Side Park Dedicated," *Des Moines Register*, May 26, 1943, Vertical File-Parks and Playgrounds, Des Moines Public Library.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

Lieutenant Rodney Crowley, Company B, 302 Battalion, Tank Corps died in a shipwreck off the coast of Ireland. His body was repatriated to the Gold Star Cemetery, and through a trust fund created by his mother, a playground was created in his name.⁷⁰

The playground included a shelter, and wading pool and two concrete block pillars served as an entryway.⁷¹ The playground, created in 1946-47, no longer exists today. The Joshua Christian Academy, a private elementary school, has converted the grounds into a green space. Though the pillars with Crowley's are all that

remain of the former playground, the community did not lose sight of its value. As the neighborhood shifted, becoming predominantly African American, a new larger community park, named for Martin Luther King, Jr, was built one block to the west in order to continue to serve the local people.



Figure 28: Rodney Crowley Playground Marker.



Figure 29: Rodney Crowley Playground Entrance.

⁷⁰ Lillian McLaughlin, "Residents Honored, Their Names Live On In the Parks of D.M.," *Des Moines Tribune*, March 20, 1971.

⁷¹ "Memorial Playground Nearly Ready," *Des Moines Register*, May 3, 1947, Vertical File-Parks and Playgrounds, Des Moines Public Library.

It is not surprising that most of the men who received some kind of memorial were members of the 168th Infantry Regiment of the 34th Infantry Division. Formerly the Iowa 3rd Infantry Regiment, the regiment mustered out of Camp Dodge on the north side of Des Moines. While we know little about many of the men who have parks named in honor of them, the collaboration between their mothers and wives with local American Legion and VFW posts demonstrates the value placed upon remembering local individuals. A letter to Miss Agnes Patterson in 1934 included a roster of the Gold Star Association members. Of the 53 names listed, all six families associated with the parks were represented, though some had passed away.⁷² Mrs. Lou McHenry-mother of Captain McHenry- and Mrs. Minnie C. Fleur- widow of Captain Fleur- had unveiled the Polk County Gold Star Monument in 1926. Mrs. Fleur became well known in Des Moines when she was appointed Deputy County Recorder, the first woman in Iowa to hold the position. In 1922, Mrs. Fleur was elected to the County Recorder's Post and held that position until she passed away in 1930.⁷³ Mrs. Lillian Crowley-mother of Lieutenant Crowley, was well known in Des Moines as a clubwoman and poet, she also presided over the unveiling and was the chairman of the memorial commission.⁷⁴ In addition to well-known women in the community, American Legion posts had been named for some of the men recorded on the Polk County Gold Star Monument. The Baldwin-Patterson Post number 659 and Bellizzi-MacRae Post number 274 supported efforts to lobby for the creation of parks that could bear the names of the local heroes.

⁷² Bernard F. Norwack, "Letter from Bernard F. Norwack to Agnes Patterson," July 3, 1934, State Historical Society of Iowa.

⁷³ McLaughlin, Lillian, "Faded Memories of Men Who Sleep in Eternity," *The Des Moines Tribune*, November 9, 1968.

⁷⁴ John Zug, "Memorials Last, Memories Fade."

The parks have changed over time. McHenry Park has had recent improvements including shelters, playground equipment, and landscaping. MacRae Park received various improvements from the Works Progress Administration in the 1930s, and the Argonne post of the American Legion added a stone bench in 1932.⁷⁵ Crowley playground is all but gone, the stone pillars being all that remains. Baldwin-Patterson Park has been converted into a soccer field, and if it were not for the Polk County Gold Star Monument, Burke Park would appear to be little more than undeveloped land next to Iowa Lutheran Hospital. Though interpretive signage has been developed for McHenry Park, it is at this time not in place. MacRae Park does have an interpretive panel located near a viewing area which overlooks the city. Periodically, the local newspapers published articles reminding the public for whom the parks are dedicated to.⁷⁶ As family members died, it fell to the community, generally in the form of veterans organizations, to care for the monuments of Des Moines, and as national membership declines this could become an issue for future preservation of the memories associated with the parks.

Despite being the state capitol, the people of Des Moines chose to use their resources in support of monuments and memorial parks for their local heroes. The *Des Moines Register* argued that the people of the city turned from static memorials towards 'living' monuments in 1934, but as demonstrated, this movement began before the Great Depression.⁷⁷ Three of the parks in Des Moines: McHenry, McRae, and Burke, as well as Patterson and Fleur roads, had already existed. It became a cost effective and

⁷⁵ Des Moines Parks Department, "MacRae Park Historical Sign."

⁷⁶ McLaughlin, Lillian, "Faded Memories of Men Who Sleep in Eternity.,"; Lillian McLaughlin, "Residents Honored, Their Names Live On In the Parks of D.M.,"; and Bonnie Wittenburg, "Overlooks of City," *Des Moines Register*, May 20, 1973, sec. 4C, Vertical File-Parks and Playgrounds, Des Moines Public Library.

⁷⁷ "D.M. Auditorium Petition Raises Memorial Questions."

powerful statement of commemoration to rename these public places for local First World War dead. Judicious spending was important due to the economic difficulties examined in the previous chapter. The Crowley Playground and Baldwin-Patterson Park came to be in the 1940s during the movement for 'useful' monuments. The disappearance of the park features in the Crowley and Baldwin-Patterson locations demonstrate the flexibility of these memorials as public spaces, but the erosion of the memory of the people associated with these spaces calls into question the effectiveness of parks as lasting monuments. As mentioned above, only one of these locations has any sort of interpretation or plaque telling contemporary generations who: McHenry, Crowley, Baldwin, Patterson, Burke, or Fleur were.

All of the monuments in Des Moines, be it a boulder, large statue, cemetery plot, road, park or veterans organization post, demonstrate the importance the people of Des Moines placed upon remembering those of their community who died in the First World War. The selection of manifestation of each monument is itself a reflection of community resources and the significance of remembering individual name. In contrast to the Soldiers and Sailors Monument on the Des Moines Capitol Hill-which bears no names- the people of Des Moines felt it was important to select specific individuals to dedicate monuments too. Some like McHenry belonged to prominent families of the city, while others like Hay were important because of historical distinction. At the same time, the Gold Star Cemetery and Polk County Gold Star Monument represent a desire of the people of Des Moines to remember all of their individual losses as a community statement.

CHAPTER IV: REMEMBERING OUR BOYS: CONNECTIONS BETWEEN FIRST WORLD WAR MONUMENTS

Introduction

The First World War memorials of Nashville and Des Moines are linked beyond the manifestations of remembrance of famous soldiers. Connections exist between the non-famous as well. Of the thousands of soldiers from Tennessee who served in the First World War, twelve African Americans were selected to train as officers, and received commissions at Fort Des Moines.¹ Two of the selected men were from Nashville, Virgil M. Boutte and Henry Alvin Cameron.

Cameron was an African American science teacher at Pearl Junior High School, on the south side of Nashville near present day Interstate 40 and Lafayette Street. At the age of 45, Cameron joined the Army and was selected to train in the African American Officers Training Camp at Fort Des Moines. After receiving a commission as a First Lieutenant in the Regular Army, Cameron served in the 365th Infantry Regiment, 92nd Division, until he was killed in France on October 30, 1918.

Buried in the Saint Mihiel American Cemetery in Lorraine, France Cameron was not forgotten by the communities that he had belonged to in the United States.² Henry Alvin Cameron of Nashville is remembered on four different monuments and one building in two states. In Nashville, Cameron's name appears on the Gold Star

¹ The distribution of the selected African Americans from Tennessee who received commissions at Fort Des Moines are as follows: Albert P. Bentley, Lane G. Cleaves, and George Lee of Memphis, Walter Smith of Chattanooga, Marion C. Rhotan of Fayetteville, William W. Robinson of Franklyn, Benedict Mosley of Sewanee, Victor C. Lightfoot of South Pittsburgh, Jesse M. H. Graham of Clarksville, William L. Bryson of Cannon County, Virgil M. Boutte and Alvin Henry Cameron of Nashville.

² "Lieut Henry Alvin Cameron," Database, *Find A Grave*, (January 3, 2015), findagrave.com.

Monument of Davidson County, the War Memorial building, and the gates of Hadley Park. Additionally, the school board of Nashville voted to rename Pearl Junior High School as Cameron Junior High School on November 26, 1928.³ Cameron is also listed on the memorial wall of the Fort Des Moines monument.

First Lieutenant Cameron's military record did not bring him recognition, he was not a 'first dead', nor was he from a prominent family; yet, he met the requirements for memorialization in multiple locations. Due to the geography of his birth, when he was killed, he was placed on memorials at the local, county, and state level. Given our two examples of Nashville and Des Moines, and their various monuments, it is likely that examples similar to Cameron are more commonplace than one might think. Cameron, however, is a rare example of an individual, not widely known, yet is remembered on memorials outside of his community.

The study of monuments and memory is a persistent subject in the scholarship of public history. Erika Doss' monograph *Memorial Mania: Public Feeling in America* has been a key work in the study.⁴ Her book, "explores the culture, social, and political conditions that inform today's urgent feelings about history and memory...Memorials, I argue, are archives of public affect."⁵ Doss insists: "contemporary American memorials

³ Donald L Johnson, "Cameron School History," Alumni Relations, *Cameron High School Alumni Association, INC (CHAA)*, accessed February 11, 2017, cameronalumni.net.

⁴Erika Doss, *Memorial Mania: Public Feeling in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010).

⁵*Ibid.*, 13.

embody the feelings of particular publics at particular historical moments, and frame cultural narratives about self, identity and national purpose."⁶

Doss examines many different types of memorials, statues, and monuments. Three of the categories explored are those that depict, heroic sacrifice, honoring dead soldiers, living memorials. Heroic sacrifice memorials are viewed in the context of the September 11, 2001.⁷ Honoring dead soldiers, she focuses on "statue mania" in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.⁸ In the years immediately following the First World War, cities, and towns, all across the United States erected statues to commemorate the soldiers who fought and died in the war.

In the 1920's, they spent their civic dollars on "fighting doughboy" memorials depicting rifle-thrusting World War I infantrymen seemingly lifted from the European trenches of the Western Front...professional artists who saw themselves as the cultural custodians of American taste and viewed their statues as a way to educate the public about "official" and hence appropriate national histories and ideas."⁹

Individual soldier statues are less common than those dedicated to groups of soldiers or events. Scholars have argued that these works of bronze and granite usually are in remembrance of famous politicians or generals.¹⁰ Our two case cities, Des Moines and Nashville, have demonstrated that it is rare for an individual to receive a statuary

⁶Ibid., 59.

⁷ Doss, "Chapter 2: Grief: Temporary Memorials and Contemporary Modes of Mourning," in *Memorial Mania*, 61–116.

⁸ Erika Doss, "Chapter 1: Statue Mania to Memorial Mania," in *Memorial Mania: Public Feeling in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 17-60.

⁹ Ibid, 24.

¹⁰ For more on war remembrance see: Jay Winter, "Forms of Kinship and Remembrance in the Aftermath of the Great War," in *War and Remembrance in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Jay Winter and Emmanuel Sivan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 40–61.; and George Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers: Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990).

memorial. Alvin York would be the exception to this rule. He was neither a politician nor a general, but his actions in the Argonne Forrest did turn him into a celebrity hero for which he was commemorated with a statue. To limit our views of monuments dedicated to individuals only through statuary manifestations however is to miss the whole point of these monuments. Many examples of First World War monuments dedicated to an individual exist in Nashville and Des Moines. These examples include James Timothy, Merle Hay, and various parks. It is a mistake to limit ourselves to viewing only large monuments, as such a focus ignores not only many individuals who have various forms of remembrance to them, but also the people and communities who chose to remember these individuals.

The previous three chapters have explored the First World War monuments in Nashville and Des Moines as statements about their respective cities and communities. This chapter looks to explore the various ways communities have chosen to memorialize the different identities of an individual and begins to explore the connections between monuments across communities, states and regions.

The Fort Des Moines Memorial, completed in 2004, is a rare example of a war monument of with names from around the United States, following the earlier precedent of the Vietnam Memorial Wall, completed in 1982, in Washington, D.C. The Fort Des Moines Monument straddles the lines between the truly nationally inclusive war monument, like the Vietnam Memorial, and the much more common Regular Army unit memorial, such as the 1st Tennessee Infantry Regiment Monument in Percy Warner Park.

The African American officers who trained at Fort Des Moines came from around the country but were part of the 17th Provisional Training Regiment.

First World War monuments can be linked to one another in a variety of ways: geographically, like county and state monuments; by special distinction, like those for the "first dead" and by monument design, such as the advancing doughboy or plaque of names on a wall. Some monuments combine both elements, like those of James Bethel Gresham, Thomas Enright, and Merle D. Hay.

Newspapers announced the death of the three men on November 5, 1917.¹¹ The people of the hometowns of Gresham and Enright, Evansville, Indiana and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, reacted similarly to those of Glidden, Iowa- Hay's hometown, and Des Moines on a larger scale. All three received some sort of memorial in their home communities, even Van Buren in Crawford County, Arkansas, erected a granite monument to the three men, despite having no connection with the three men.¹²

In 1929, Pittsburgh opened a new 'fireproof' theater dedicated to Enright.¹³ Unlike Gresham and Hay, a traditional monument was never created for Enright. After his body

¹¹For examples of newspaper articles following the death of Gresham see: "Evansville Soldier Killed By Germans," *Evansville Journal*, November 5, 1917; "To Pay Tribute To Memory Of Gresham," *Evansville Journal*, November 6, 1917; "Memorial Meeting to Honor Gresham to Be Held Sunday," *Evansville Courier And Press*, November 6, 1917; "James Gresham Died Fighting Like Tiger In French Trench," *Evansville Courier And Press*, November 6, 1917; Indianapolis Star, "Private James R. Gresham. Hero.," *Evansville Courier and Press*, November 7, 1917; "War Cross For Hero Gresham," *Evansville Courier and Press*, November 27, 1917; and "Gresham's Death Brings Recruits," *Evansville Courier and Press*, November 26, 1917.

¹²"Shaft To Gresham Raised In Arkansas County Seat," *Evansville Courier and Press*, December 1, 1917.

¹³For more information on the Enright Theater see: "Unique Lighting In New Theater," *Evansville Press*, December 30, 1928, vertical File-Pittsburgh-Theater-Enright, Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh; "Three Minutes: Entire Enright Theater-Cross- Aisled- Can Be Emptied Quickly," *Evansville Press*, December 30, 1920, vertical File-Pittsburgh-Theater-Enright, Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh; "East Liberty's New Theater Nearing Completion," *Evansville Press*, September 16, 1928, vertical File-Pittsburgh-Theater-Enright, Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh; "Name Theater For World War Hero," *Evansville Press*, October 21, 1929,

was repatriated to the Saint Mary Cemetery in Pittsburgh, he was left with a modest marker which reads:

THOMAS F. ENRIGHT
 PVT. CO. F 16TH INF,
 ENLISTED KILLED
 SEPT. 15, 1909 IN ACTION
 BORN MAY 8, 1887 NOV. 3, 1917



Figure 30: Corporal James Bethel Gresham Monument Plaque.



Figure 31: Corporal James Bethel Gresham Monument.

vertical File-Pittsburgh-Theater-Enright, Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh; "New Enright Theater Fittingly Dedicated," *Evansville Press*, December 29, 1928, vertical File-Pittsburgh-Theater-Enright, Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh; "Celebration of Theater Opening Observed in Festive Manner," *Sun-Telegraph*, December 29, 1928, vertical File-Pittsburgh-Theater-Enright, Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh; "Open Enright Theater With Huge Parade," *Evansville Post-Gazette*, December 29, 1928, vertical File-Pittsburgh-Theater-Enright, Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh; "Enright Theater Sold, Pitt May Buy Schenley," *Evansville Gazette-Times*, June 9, 1958, vertical File-Pittsburgh-Theater-Enright, Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh; and David Bollinger, "Enright Sale Ends Friday," *Evansville Press*, June 8, 1958, vertical File-Pittsburgh-Theater-Enright, Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh.

James Gresham received a white marble government military marker. He was repatriated to the Locust Hill Cemetery of Evansville. At the center of the rows of military headstones in the cemetery is a flag pole, benches and shrubbery donated by the Disabled Veterans American Veterans. While no date is provided, the idea for this memorial space dates back to 1928.¹⁴

The people of Evansville and Indianapolis struggled to agree upon a suitable monument for Gresham and where it should be located.¹⁵ Their thoughts first went to his mother. Less than a week after his death in 1917, the a subscription service began for the purpose of building a house for Gresham's mother, Mrs. Alice Dodd.¹⁶ Money poured in, nearing \$1,500 in just two days.¹⁷ The community offered support in the form of labor and materials as well in lieu of money.¹⁸ The bungalow style home created by:

...Clifford Shopbell, architect, and call for removable walls in the home. When the home reverts to the city at the death of Mrs. Dodd the walls can be torn away

¹⁴ "Gresham Is Now Coming Into His Own," *Evansville Press*, November 4, 1928.

¹⁵ For newspaper coverage of the debate over dedicating a monument to Gresham see: "City Can Make Shrine At Grave Of First To Fall," *Evansville Press*, July 18, 1924; "Korff Will Endeavor to Have Gresham Memorial Erected in City If Constituents So Wish," *Evansville Courier And Press*, March 1, 1925; "Plan To Honor Gresham Gets Board Approval," *Evansville Press*, January 28, 1925; "Indianapolis Is After Gresham Memorial Claim," *Evansville Courier And Press*, February 26, 1925; "Gresham Memorial Fund Drive Opens," *Evansville Courier And Press*, November 29, 1928; "To Call Meet On Memorial Plans," *Evansville Courier and Press*, November 9, 1928; "To Ask Legislature to Give \$75,000 For War Hero Memorial," *Evansville Press*, December 28, 1928; "Plaza Shrine Proposed For Gresham," *Evansville Courier And Press*, November 26, 1936; "Aid Is Pledged On Gesham Memorial," *Evansville Press*, March 20, 1938; Bill Greer, "Gresham: Still Remembered," *Evansville Courier and Press*, May 26, 1974; and "Gresham Tombstone to Go to DAV Group," *Evansville Press*, June 29, 1978.

¹⁶ "Plan Fund In Memory Of Gresham," *Evansville Courier and Press*, November 7, 1917.

¹⁷ "New Gresham's Great Grandsire," *Evansville Courier and Press*, November 9, 1917.

¹⁸ "Labor To Donate Services To Erection Of Gresham Hero Home," *Evansville Courier and Press*, November 10, 1917; "Plaster Will Be Tribute To Hero," *Evansville Courier and Press*, November 27, 1917; "Business Helps Gresham Tribute," *Evansville Courier and Press*, November 15, 1917; "Plans For Gresham Home About Ready," *Evansville Courier and Press*, December 7, 1917; "Accepted Plans for the Memorial Home for Mrs. Dodd, Mother of Hero Gresham," *Evansville Courier And Press*, December 23, 1917.

without defacing the remainder of the home in any manner, and the entire house thrown into a hall for relics and memorials to local heroes in the present war.

The Home will be a "made in Evansville" product and a "furnished in Evansville" home as well. Local merchants and manufacturers have agreed to furnish all the rooms in the home. Evansville labor unions have voted to do the work gratis.¹⁹

The James Gresham Memorial

Home blends in with the neighborhood which surrounds it. Only a sign above the veranda and a small plaque distinguish it. The plaque reads, "IN MEMORY OF JAMES BETHAL GRESHAM WHO DIED FOR HIS COUNTRY." The building of a house in honor of a soldier is rare. In Tennessee, groups and the State combined efforts to build a home for one of the most well



Figure 32: James Gresham Memorial Home.

known heroes of the First World War, Sergeant Alvin York.

Sergeant York Returns to America

George Pattulo's *Saturday Evening Post* article, published April 26, 1919, launched the celebrity status of Sergeant Alvin York.²⁰ No longer was there to be public

¹⁹ "Accepted Plans for the Memorial Home for Mrs. Dodd, Mother of Hero Gresham."

separation between the man and the mythology surrounding the man from rural Tennessee. Even after York returned to Pall Mall, his legend did not fade. The release of 1941 movie, *Sergeant York*, brought the mythology surrounding York to life, replacing the 54 year old man with the handsome movie star Gary Cooper.²¹ There were many requests for speaking engagements, book deals, and movies. Initially, he resisted. Sergeant York was concerned with returning to normal, and building a life with his wife, Gracie Williams. He was interested in becoming an active member of his community and working to improve it. "I don't want anything for myself, but I would like to see the right kind of school for our children."²² He continued saying, "We don't need a university in our country...we need a school, a good school that will take our boys and girls from the first grade up."²³

There were gifts bestowed upon Sergeant York, like a house and farm in Pall Mall. Initially set up as a gift from the Rotary Club of Nashville, subscription donations were used to fund the \$5,000 gift.²⁴ Both private citizens and prominent Nashville businesses contributed.²⁵ What was at first a blessing for the York family became a constant financial problem. Due to a misunderstanding, and a lack of all subscriptions actually being filled, the entire cost of the house and land was transferred to the York's

²⁰ George Pattullo, "The Second Elder Gives Battle," *The Saturday Evening Post*, April 26, 1919, sec. 3-4, 71, 73-74.

²¹ Michael Birdwell, "Alvin Cullum York: The Myth, The Man, and the Legend," *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 71, no. 4 (Winter 2012): 318-39.

²² "Elks Auditorium: Roatary Club Pamphlet," n.d., Davis Collection-Relating to Alvin C. York, 1920-1967, Small Collections 1X-B-6, Tennessee State Library and Archives, 8.

²³ *Ibid.*, 9.

²⁴ "First Gifts Are Received to Fund for Alvin York. Newspaper Clipping in Alvin C. York Scrapbook, Vol. 1, 13," n.d., Tennessee State Library and Archives.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 13.

but the entire cost was not paid, sending Sergeant York into debt. Working hard, York did buy the local general store, and a gristmill, all while continuing to farm. Needing money and seeing an opportunity to fund his school project, York agreed to allow his story to be portrayed in the 1941 film.²⁶ As Michael Birdwell details, the originally, York agreed to the picture with the understanding that his time in France would be a minor detail, focusing instead on his work after the First World War, calling not for patriotism but raising awareness for rural education.²⁷ Gradually though, the deteriorating situation in Europe caused more emphasis on the mythological story of Sergeant York, and its timely release, just months before Japan bombed Pearl Harbor, the propaganda element could not be ignored²⁸

²⁶ Howard Hawks, *Sergeant York*, VHS (Burbank, California: Warner Brothers, 1941). Garry Cooper won the Academy Award for Best Actor for his portrayal of Sergeant York.

²⁷ Michael Birdwell, "A Change of Heart: Alvin York and the Movie *Sergeant York*," *Film and History* 27, no. 1-4 (December 1997): 22-33.

²⁸ Tennessee Historical Commission, "Speech By Sergeant Alvin C. York at Milwaukee on Sept. 14, 1941.," September 14, 1941, Alvin C. York Project Records, 1987, Tennessee State Library and Archives. In this speech Sergeant York addresses members of the American Legion and chastises Senator Gerald Prentice Nye of North Dakota (1892-1971) United States Senate 1925-1945. York states in his speech, "If our lives are propaganda, and Senator Nye is against all propaganda, then he should start immediately to tear up all the history books in the country. He should destroy all the history books, just as Hitler made a bonfire of great literature in Germany, because the histories of this country tell story after story about every generation's fight to keep alive in this nation freedom of religion, freedom of speech, and freedom of thought." He continues to attack later stating, "If Mr. Nye is against anyone in this country making such references because they will make Hitler angry with us, then he is an appeaser. Now there is nothing wrong with a foreign policy of appeasement--except one thing. (Pause) It won't work. York then calls for support of Communist Russia against the greater enemy Nazi Germany. Drawing upon his experiences with many different groups of people in his unit during the First World War, Sergeant York concludes with a surprisingly inclusive statement for 1941, "Let any Protestant, Catholic, Jew or Mohammondan live, wherever he may be--so long as he believes firmly and underlyingly that this American way of living is the right way--and that the things that make up our way of living are worth fighting for, at any cost. May Almighty God help us to continue to believe that freedom of mankind, whatever race, color, or creed, is the most desperately important thing in our lives." York was vocal about his support for the United States, "On Nov. 11, 1941, in an Armistice Day speech that preceded the second war by 26 days, President Roosevelt paid tribute to Sergeant York and the common soldier by quoting the sergeant's answer to the cynics and scoffers who sneered at World War I. "The thing they forget," the sergeant had said, "is that liberty and freedom and democracy are so very precious that you do not fight to win them once and stop." "Sergeant York, War Hero, Dies," *New York Times*, September 3, 1964.

The money from the movie royalties would again be a blessing and a curse. The money helped create the York Institute- a school the children in the Pall Mall area. It also led to a long and costly battle with the Internal Revenue Service. In total, the IRS eventually claimed that Sergeant York owed \$172,579 in back taxes, and after a lengthy court battle, the case was settled for \$29,000.²⁹ A national campaign began to pay off the IRS debt and national legislation was also proposed.

On September 2nd, 1964, Sergeant Alvin York died at the age of 76 in a Veterans Administration Hospital, from an acute urinary tract infection.³⁰ Like many of the articles in newsprint that week, the *Chicago Tribune* published the notice of Sergeant York's death, reminding the public about his actions in the First World War.³¹ The eulogies across the country always presented the man as Sergeant York first. It is also important to mention that a majority of the articles also contained large pieces about his post World War I activities:

His preferred station in life was not that of national acclaim. Home from the battlefields where he had served his country, he lent his name and interest to establishment of a school-to provide a younger generation opportunities he hadn't enjoyed; the Alvin C. York Institute, created in his honor.³²

He built a school for mountain children, and feuded with the state over its control. He helped get a highway to Jamestown. He helped lead a fund-raising campaign for polio and in World War II he helped reactivate and inspire the men of his old

²⁹ John Perry, *Sgt. York: His Life, Legend & Legacy: The Remarkable Untold Story of Sergeant Alvin C. York* (Nashville, Tennessee: B & H Publishing Group, 1997), 305–8.

³⁰ R. Des Prez, M.D., "Certificate of Death," September 2, 1964, Alvin C. York Project Records, 1987, Tennessee State Library and Archives.

³¹ "SGT. York, 76, World War I Top Hero, Dies," *Chicago Tribune*, September 3, 1964. The bi-line states, "Killed 25 Germans and Captured 132." There, like many of the other articles displayed a picture of Sergeant York dressed in uniform with medals on his chest.

³² "Alvin C. York," *Nashville Banner*, September 3, 1964.

82nd Division. He helped train infantrymen. He sold war bonds, and helped keep up America's moral during the dark and early days of World War II.³³

"He always wanted to be remembered as just one of the homefolks," said his minister son. "The greatest thing in his life was his religious emphasis. He was converted before the First World War and he had been a perfect Christian ever since."³⁴

The major papers of the United States, and local papers in Tennessee continued to report on the story for the remainder of the week, informing the public of the upcoming funeral. On September 5th, 1964, Sergeant Alvin York was laid to rest in the Wolf River Cemetery in Pall Mall, Tennessee. The *Nashville Tennessean* reported that, "A loudspeaker system has been set up outside for the benefit of the many who will be unable to crowd into the York Chapel."³⁵ According to one report, "4,000 mourners at the simple religious rites at York's Chapel and nearly 2,000 more at the burial at the Wolf River Cemetery. Very few were able to attend both because of the narrow mountain roads."³⁶ The former York Chapel pastor, Reverend R. D. Brown, stated at the funeral:

Sgt. York was not only a hero fo[of] World War I... He has won the battle of life and we hope this (Christian) life of his will continue to do more than he did in the Argonne Forest...We are resting our hopes for the future on the people who will live the type of life Sgt. York did.³⁷

President Lyndon B. Johnson issued a statement that read:

Sgt. Alvin Cullum York has stood as a symbol of American courage and sacrifice for almost half a century. His valor above and beyond the call of duty, in World War I, was recognized with the nation's highest award, the Medal of Honor. As the citizen-soldier hero of the American Expeditionary Forces, he epitomized the gallantry of American fighting men and their sacrifices in behalf of freedom. As

³³ "The Fighting Sergeant Leaves a Proud Legacy," *Nashville Tennessean*, September 3, 1964.

³⁴ Jim Lewis, "Pall Mall Suffers 'Saddest Day,'" *Nashville Banner*, September 4, 1964.

³⁵ "York Funeral This Afternoon," *Nashville Tennessean*, September 5, 1964.

³⁶ James Lewis, "Thousands See Final Rites For Sgt. York," *Nashville Banner*, September 7, 1964.

³⁷ Bill Kovach, "York Honored By Thousands," *Nashville Tennessean*, September 6, 1964.

Commander in Chief, I know that I express the deep and heartfelt sympathy of the American people to his wife and family.³⁸

Sergeant York was not forgotten after his funeral. Buildings were named for him, such as the Alvin C. York Veterans Hospital in Murfreesboro, Tennessee. Roads too took on his name like the Alvin C. York Memorial Highway that passes through Pall Mall. On April 12, 1981, the nationally published comic strip *B.C.* even mentioned Sergeant York.³⁹ One of the oddest ways that Sergeant York has been commemorated also took place in the 1983. A tank-like, anti-aircraft vehicle was named the Sgt. York Division Air Defense Gun System. It was the first time in the United States Army's history that a weapons system was named in recognition of an enlisted man, an honor previously reserved for Generals.⁴⁰ His image was placed on stationary paper for the Sgt. Alvin C. York Museum, Inc., Memorial Gardens and Cultural Center in Jamestown.⁴¹ Photographs of the hero and the man are sold in the Visitors Center at the Alvin York Home site.⁴² On May 3, 2000, the United States Postal Service launched a run of Alvin C. York stamps.⁴³ A campaign was started to save his most prized contribution to his community the Sgt. Alvin C. York Institute.⁴⁴

³⁸ "Sergeant York, War Hero, Dies."

³⁹ Johnny Hart, "B.C., April 12, 1981," April 12, 1981, Alvin C. York Project Records, 1987, Tennessee State Library and Archives.

⁴⁰ "Widow Says Sgt. York 'Would Be Honored,'" September 2, 1983, Alvin C. York Project Records, 1987, Tennessee State Library and Archives. Also "Program: SGT York Rollout Ceremony," September 1, 1983, Alvin C. York Project Records, 1987, Tennessee State Library and Archives.

⁴¹ Sgt. Alvin C. York Museum, Inc., "Sgt. Alvin C. York Museum, Inc. Stationary," n.d., Alvin C. York Project Records, 1987, Tennessee State Library and Archives.

⁴² See: "Sgt. Alvin C. York Uniformed Postcard," n.d., Alvin C. York Visitor Center, Pall Mall, Tennessee; and "Sgt. Alvin C. York with Alvin C. York, Jr. Postcard," n.d., Alvin C. York Visitor Center, Pall Mall, Tennessee.

⁴³ "First Day Issue of Alvin C. York Stamp and Envelope" (United States Postal Service, May 3, 2000), Alvin C. York Visitor Center, Pall Mall, Tennessee. York's stamp ran as part of a hero set that included three other stamps with the pictures of Audie L. Murphy, John L. Hines, and Omar N. Bradley.

⁴⁴ "Alvin C. York Institute Campaign Brochure," accessed February 1, 2016, sgtyork.org.

The visitor entering the cemetery where York is buried is first greeted with a Tennessee historic marker that tells the cemetery's importance to the community first, and Sergeant York second.

2C 14

Wolf River Cemetery

This cemetery was established in the early 1800's and was originally called Mt. Pleasant Burying Ground. The oldest known grave of approximately 800 burials is Charlie Paul, 1823. Wolf River's first settler, Conrad "Coonrod" Pile, is buried in an unusual above ground grave. Herein is the burial site of Sgt. Alvin C. York, decorate soldier of World War I and a descendent of the valley's first settler.⁴⁵

Almost immediately after Alvin York died in 1964, Gracie York set out on a mission to construct a proper monument on his grave. From 1964 to 1967, Mrs. York worked to have her husband's memory preserved. She was concerned foremost with Alvin York, not Sergeant York. She contracted with Roberts Marble Co. of Ball Ground, Georgia, and Edward Rehorn and Sons Cemetery Memorials to create the monument.⁴⁶ The project was estimated to cost \$5,000.⁴⁷ When Mrs. York could not pay for the memorial outright, she asked for help from both the American Legion, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and the Tennessee Historical Society.⁴⁸ All three organizations respectfully declined to help with this memorial for several reasons. The American Legion, was already working to get funding from the State of Tennessee for the construction of statue of Sergeant York at the State Capitol Grounds.⁴⁹ The VFW had

⁴⁵ "Widow Says Sgt. York 'Would Be Honored.'"

⁴⁶ "Alvin C. York Project Report," n.d., Alvin C. York Project Records, Box 1, Folder 9 (Burial Monument), 1987, Tennessee State Library and Archives.

⁴⁷ Samuel R. Rehorn, "Bill for York Pall Mall Monuments," August 3, 1965, Alvin C. York Project Records, 1987, Tennessee State Library and Archives.

⁴⁸ "Alvin C. York Project Report."

⁴⁹ Ibid.

just spent \$60,000 creating the Tennessee Cottage at the VFW National home in Eaton Rapids, Michigan.⁵⁰ The Tennessee Historical Society feared that creating a personal monument to Sergeant York would spark a rush of requests for the same from other individuals.⁵¹ Gracie York eventually took out a loan to pay the \$5,000 and dedication took place May 30, 1966.



Figure 33: Alvin and Gracie York Burial Site.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

The monument is constructed of granite, and has a bench, two grave slabs, one for Alvin York, and a preemptive slab for Gracie York. To the head of Alvin is a cross, and next to it above where Mrs. York now rests is an angel. In the rear is a flag pole. It was decided that upon Sergeant York's slab would be:

Gun, helmet, medal of honor, will be sandblast carved on granite ledger just above the bronze mounted picture. Immediately below will be Mr. York's government marker, permanently mounted on granite ledger. Immediately below this will appear the following lettering in an open book panel.

Born Pall Mall, Tenn. 1887
 World War I
 Awarded Congressional Medal of Honor
 and Croix de Guerre
 Established Alvin C. York Institute
 Proverbs 14:34

Mrs. York's ledger will have American Beauty rose, balancing off of Mr. York's gun and helmet arrangement. Her bronze mounted picture and her pre-need bronze marker, sandblast lettering in open book panel as follows:

Born Pall Mall, Tenn. 1900
 Mother of 10 Children
 "Therefore be ye also ready:
 For in such an hour
 as you think not
 the son of man cometh"⁵²

The granite and marble is impressive. Taking a moment to read the two ledgers and absorb the imagery that is depicted, it is evident that this site is many things in one.

Gracie York was interested in preserving her husband's memory as a man and Christian, Alvin York, not Sergeant York. At the dedication of the "tank" Gracie was quoted, "He

⁵² Ibid. Proverbs 14: 34 states, "Righteousness exalts a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people," in the King James Bible. See pictures.

never spoke of the war. He'd never tell anyone about it or brag about what he had done...In fact, I didn't know about his achievements until I read about them."⁵³ Gracie knew that her husband wanted to be remembered for what he did after the First World War. All the same she also knew that her husband was nationally significant and had not belonged to just her in years. Thus the Medal of Honor, rifle with helmet, government marker, and over half of the lower text is centered on his military service. There are also two interpretive panels by the gravesite. The left panel presents life in the Wolf River Valley, while the panel on the right shows Alvin York the spiritual man.



Figure 34: Gracie York Burial Slab.



Figure 35: Alvin C. York Burial Slab.

⁵³ "Widow Says Sgt. York 'Would Be Honored.'"

At the York home and visitor center, a bronze bust of York sits atop a tall square base, which included the names of the other men of his squad involved in the battle of October 8, 1918. Entering into the house the enclosed patio has been modified for visitors, a short video explains each room in the house, and its significance. Quietly passing through each room looking at the York family objects on display, it is clear that the family wishes to present Alvin York, but recognizes that visitors from outside of the community came to see Sergeant York. This results in military related objects placed in each room to keep the connection to the viewer. A few hundred meters further down the road is the York gristmill and small state park. The gristmill has two push button interpretive audio boxes that explain the operation of the mill.

The house, gristmill and burial site make up the Sgt. Alvin C. York State Park. The park is clearly divided in its interpretation. On the one hand, it consciously works to present Alvin York, the local mountaineer who was loved by family and neighbor. At the same time, outside of his community, Alvin York was not important except in the context of the Argonne. The very nature of the park's seclusion presents the need to attract visitors by continuing to connect them to Sergeant York. While Alvin York would probably prefer the small quiet life presentation, it is necessary for the survival of the park to generate visitation.

Sergeant Alvin C. York Monument

Walking up the hill towards the Capitol grounds, the statue of Sergeant York is easy to spot. It stands tall and impressive. Sergeant York himself stands ten feet tall, dressed in uniform, and helmet, rifle raised at the moment of a trigger pull. The base of

the statue is dark almost onyx colored marble. The front of the monument presents to the onlooker the following inscription:

ALVIN C YORK
 ARMED WITH HIS RIFLE AND PISTOL HIS COURAGE AND SKILL THIS
 ONE TENNESSEAN SILENCED A GERMAN BATTALION OF 35
 MACHINE GUNS KILLING 25 ENEMY SOLDIERS AND CAPTURING 132
 IN THE ARGONNE FOREST OF FRANCE OCTOBER 8 1918.

To the right the inscription reads:

FELIZ DE WELDON
 SCULPTOR
 MONUMENT ERECTED 1968
 BY ACT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
 OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE

The back of the statue base reads:

WHAT YOU DID TODAY WAS THE GREATEST THING ACCOMPLISHED
 BY ANY PRIVATE SOLDIER OF ALL THE ARMIES OF EUROPE
 MARSHAL FERDINAND FOCHE
 COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF ALLIED ARMIES

Finally, on the left side the simple inscription reads:

ALVIN C. YORK
 1887-1964
 PALL MALL FENTRESS COUNTY
 TENNESSEE.

This statue is overwhelmingly about Sergeant York, not Alvin York. The State of Tennessee was clearly making a statement on how they wanted to remember and inspire future generations. Sergeant York's day of heroism was how York connected to the

public and therefore the State who funded the project, therefore this was how the State chose to remember him.

I specifically switch between referring to him as Alvin York in the context of Pall Mall or his family, and Sergeant York when in the context of his military significance. Nationally, York is Sergeant York for his celebrity status that was perpetuated by the 1941 movie. He is important because of a few hours on one day nearly a century ago. Over the course of this past century those few hours have changed little in significance. As such the majority of the ways that we remember and commemorate York are a direct manifestation of that connection.

In contrast, Alvin York's home reminds visitors that, to the people of his hometown, he was more important as a community leader than he ever was as a soldier. Yet, knowing the overwhelming connection of the outside world to Sergeant York, Pall Mall has been forced to incorporate the imagery of Sergeant York as a means to attract visitation. York's home and his monument in Nashville present different interpretations. The York sites in Pall Mall, leaves one peaceful and at home, as Alvin York enjoyed it. The statue in Nashville serves to challenge and inspire fellow Tennessean, Sergeant York.

Ponder then, is one site more significant than the other? The Sergeant York Statue in Nashville is viewed momentarily by thousands every day; how many people actually have reflection triggered in their minds? The York Home and burial site, by contrast, receives a few thousand visitors a year, but immerses the visitor in the story of,

Sergeant York, but then more deeply Alvin York. The cognitive decision to travel to the Sergeant York State Park is in itself active thought, even if at first only on Sergeant York.

Alvin York was drafted in 1917. From the moment he answered his call to service, never again was he his own man. There after he belonged to the people of the United States, first as a soldier, belonging to the government and by extension the people, and then after October 8, 1918, as a hero, forever branded as Sergeant York. Even after the First World War, he was a hero to the people and could never get away from that. His memorials stand as examples of how we remember him. The monument for the public is in Nashville: Sergeant York is our hero. At his home, his family works hard to put forth their York, Alvin York, who was a family figure and community leader, but still are forced to give into outsider ownership of Sergeant York.

Merle D. Hay

Like Sergeant Alvin York, Private Merle D. Hay received monuments in both a state capitol and his hometown. Merle Hay was among the first American servicemen to die in Europe in the First World War as part of the AEF. In May 1921 a monument boulder was unveiled in Des Moines along the former 58th street, recently designated as 'Merle Hay Road'.

At the monument's dedication Major Casper Schenk told the Des Moines crowd that, while memories faded, "here will be a permanent tribute that will stand 1000 years, defying time's erosion, to silently proclaim the name of Iowa's premier hero to the

millions that pass along this highway."⁵⁴ The words, "Merle Hay Road 1917", are carved into the front of the boulder. The plaque on the rear states:

In Memoriam

Merle Hay

The First Iowa Soldier Killed in the Great War.

Born Carrollton, Iowa - July 30, 1896.

Killed November 3, 1917, Near Bethelmont, France, on the first raid.



Figure 36: Merle D. Hay Monument (Glidden, IA).

⁵⁴ Ray Murray, "Merle D. Hay," ed. John Ely Briggs, *The Palimpsest* XXIV, no. 5 (May 1943): 151.

Like thousands of bodies repatriated to the United States in 1921, Hay came home. French General Bordeaux had requested the bodies of Hay, Gresham and Enright, remain in the original site of burial in Bethlemont.⁵⁵ Hay's mother, Carrie Hay, who did not initially want to repatriate Merle, agreed she would follow suit with the mothers of Enright and Gresham.⁵⁶ On the day of Hay's funeral, Iowa Governor Nathan Edward Kendall issued a proclamation which ordered the flags of public buildings to be lowered to half staff in commemoration of, "Merle Hay, the first Iowa soldier to surrender his life in the World war...He was one of the first three American soldiers to offer the supreme sacrifice in defense of liberty and the great Commonwealth which gave him to the sacred cause thrills with solemn pride at his heroic death."⁵⁷ Hay's funeral on July 24, 1921 brought an estimated 10,000 mourners to Glidden.⁵⁸ This was a significant event for the small town of less than, just a few years earlier, had less than a thousand people.⁵⁹ The military funeral was balanced between patriotism and religious salvation.

Merle Hay's family purchased a modest headstone for his plot in Glidden's West Lawn Cemetery.⁶⁰ Glidden, and Carroll County as a whole was, and still is, a rural farming community, and the collapse of the agricultural economy at the end of the war,

⁵⁵ "Obituary of Merle D. Hay," *Glidden Graphic*, July 28, 1921.

⁵⁶ "Bringing the Bodies Home," *Glidden Graphic*, July 21, 1921.

⁵⁷ "To Honor Memory of Merle Hay," *Cedar Falls Daily Record*, July 21, 1921.

⁵⁸ For more on the funeral of Merle Hay see: "Merle Hay's Body Placed in Grave on Hawkeye Soil," *Waterloo Daily Courier*, July 25, 1917; "Merle Hay Funeral At Home Today," *Des Moines Register*, July 24, 1921; "Obituary of Merle D. Hay," *Glidden Graphic*, July 28, 1921; "To Honor Memory of Merle Hay.," "10,000 Render Proud Homage to Merle Hay," *Des Moines Register*, July 25, 1921.; and "Ten Thousand Attend Funeral of Merle Hay," *Glidden Graphic*, July 28, 1921.

⁵⁹ "The Years of the World War 1910 to 1920," *Glidden Graphic*, July 13, 1967, Glidden Centennial 1867-1967 edition.

⁶⁰ "Merle D. Hay," *Glidden Graphic*, July 13, 1967, Glidden Centennial 1867-1967 edition, sec. Merle D. Hay. When Merle's mother, Carroll Hay, died on January 30, 1967, Merle's original marker was resurfaced for her use.

meant that little money could be spared for anything more grand. The community did however feel that it was important to memorialize all of their fallen sons.⁶¹ Of the 137 men and women from Glidden and the surrounding community who had seen service during the First World War, 11 men died as a result.⁶² A modest granite boulder with a bronze tablet was placed next to the community's Grand Army of the Republic monument. The tablet reads:

IN MEMORY
OF GLIDDEN MEN WHO MADE THE
SUPREME SACRIFICE IN THE WORLD WAR
1917-1919
MERLE D. HAY SAMUEL K. MOLSBEE
JOY W. DILLAVOU JOHN KNUTER, JR.
RAYMOND G. DANKLE GARBRAND G. HAAS
HERMAN E. KNUTE JOHN H. PASLEY
ORVAL O'DELL

Though the community had erected a monument to their lost men, towards the end of the 1920s new interest in creating a more grand monument began to surface. State Senator John G. Merritt, from Glidden, managed to procure \$5,000 from the State for the purpose of erecting a monument to Hay in 1929.⁶³ Despite the initial plan to dedicate the monument to Merle Hay, the focus of the monument quickly shifted to include honoring all Iowans killed during the war. It is not surprising that tight state funding in the Depression era was to be used inclusively to remember all Iowans lost.

⁶¹ "1925," *Glidden Graphic*, July 13, 1967, Glidden Centennial 1867-1967 edition, sec. Years of Growth 1920-1930.

⁶² "The War Is Over!," *Glidden Graphic*, July 13, 1967, Glidden Centennial 1867-1967 edition, sec. The Years of the World War 1910-1920.

⁶³ "Merle D. Hay."

Despite the shift in purpose, the monument in Glidden clearly emphasizes Merle Hay. The granite monument stands eight feet high. It consists of three rectangular panels, the left and right wings are dominated by text, the center a sandblasted image. On the left wing the text reads:

THE STATE OF IOWA
HAS CAUSED THIS MEMORIAL TO BE ERECTED
TO COMMEMORATE THE SACRIFICE OF
MERLE D. HAY
AND ALL HIS IOWA COMRADES
WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES FOR OUR COUNTRY
DURING THE WORLD WAR.

The text of the right wing of the monument reads:
MERLE D. HAY
CO. F. 16TH INFANTRY A.E.F.
KILLED NEAR ARTOIS FRANCE NOV. 3, 1917.
THE FIRST IOWA SOLDIER AND ONE OF THE FIRST THREE SOLDIERS
OF THE UNITED STATES
KILLED IN ACTION IN THE WORLD WAR.

Above the text on the left and right wings are small decorative murals. On the left, a farm scene, of a homestead setting for a man in a wide brimmed hat behind a two horse plow. This imagery, coupled with the dedication- first to Hay- ties him and the monument to the local community. It serves to reinforce the significance placed upon Hay as an average American. Hay was a farmer, the man behind the plow could be him, or any number of his 'Iowa comrades.'

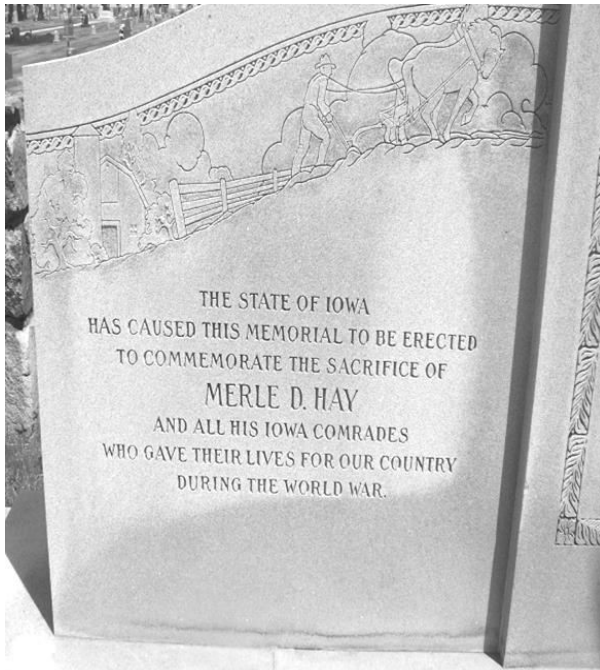


Figure 37: Merle D. Hay Monument (Glidden, IA) Left Wing.

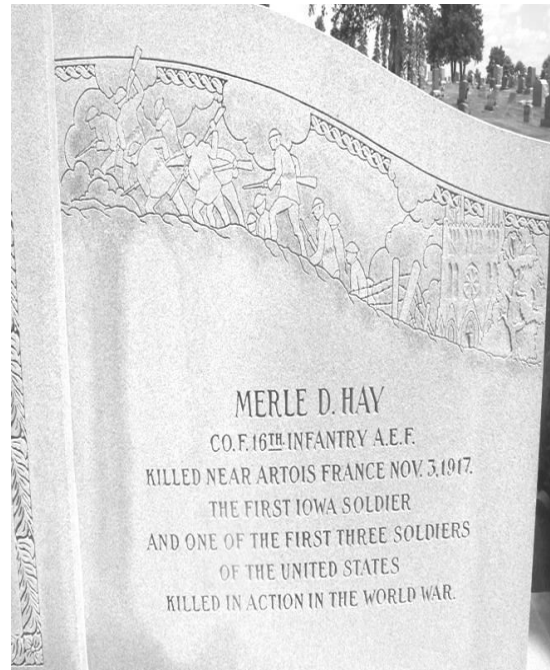


Figure 38: Merle D. Hay Monument (Glidden, IA) Right Wing.

The mural above the right wing of the monument is a scene of American infantrymen charging across an open field, the Cathedral of Notre Dame in the background. This mural, above the text proclaiming Hay as an infantryman, links Hay to the war in France.

The center panel of the Merle Hay Monument in Glidden is a famous image from that time, a sketch by Jay Norwood "Ding" Darling, titled "Bringing the Truth Home to US," published in the *Des Moines Register*.⁶⁴ It is a powerful image: Uncle Sam, shin deep in water, holding in his arms a dead soldier, with a smoldering landscape across the expanse of water. The imagery was symbolic at the time of the sketch for its sobering announcement that the United States had taken casualties.

The monument at Glidden also served another purpose; Merle Hay was buried beneath the monument. Below the center panel is a small marker stating, "In a special

⁶⁴ J. N. "Ding" Darling, "Bringing The Truth Home To Us," *Des Moines Register*, November 8, 1917.

fault in the base of this monument, resting in endless peace, is the body of Merle D. Hay." Darling, who grew up in Iowa, probably had Hay in mind when he created the sketch, despite Gresham and Enright also being killed in the same engagement. It was fitting then that the monument in Glidden, would bear the sketch as it was indeed, Merle Hay being brought home to us.

The monument was unveiled on May 25, 1930. The unveiling was part of a military parade, singing performances and speeches.⁶⁵ Another huge crowd, again estimated at 6,000-10,000 people, descended upon Glidden.⁶⁶ The *Des Moines Register* stated, "Hundreds of cars lined the roads near the cemetery in every direction and the crowd was larger than that which attended the memorial service when Hay's body was brought from France in 1921."⁶⁷

In contrast to Alvin York, Merle Hay was memorialized for the significance of his death. The people of Iowa, be it in Des Moines, or Glidden recognized the significance of Hay's death as a patriotic sacrifice. As the Glidden mayor, John F. Grace proclaiming during Hay's memorial service in 1921, "Providence decreed that Merle Hay should be in the vanguard of those who later died for the same noble cause, and thereby fixed his

⁶⁵ For more information on the proceedings of the unveiling ceremony see: "Hay Monument to Be Dedicated," *The Des Moines Register*, May 18, 1930; "Unveil Memorial Sunday, May 25," *Glidden Graphic*, May 22, 1930; "Iowa to Honor Her First Slain," *Des Moines Register*, May 25, 1930; "Hay Memorial Is Dedicated," *Des Moines Register*, May 26, 1930; and "Dedication of Hay Memorial," *Glidden Graphic*, May 29, 1930.

⁶⁶ "Dedication of Hay Memorial."

⁶⁷ "Hay Memorial Is Dedicated."

name and the name of his birthplace and life-long residence in history for all time."⁶⁸ Yet, there are nods to separation between man and soldier.

The renaming of 58th street in Des Moines, to Merle Hay Road, as well as the boulder bearing his name are without a doubt in memory of Hay's service and sacrifice. Merle Hay Road connects Camp Dodge, where Hay mustered, to Des Moines- the connection to the 'outside' world. This road, that follows Hay's path, serves to connect the people of Des Moines to Hay and Glidden. After all, Camp Dodge and the massive influx of soldiers from around the region and the South, had been a significant event to the people of Des Moines. While the death of Hay was the primary motivation for his memorialization in Des Moines, his commonality with 'average' Iowans linked all to his significance as a military casualty.

The text of both the monument in Des Moines and the one in Glidden serve to remind the audience of Hay's military significance. This is parallel to the Sergeant Alvin York statue in Nashville. The imagery is similar too. The Sergeant York monument in Nashville presents York as an infantryman, rifle raised, portraying his actions in combat which made him famous. The State funded monument in Glidden also portrays the military significance of Hay through the Darling sketch and the doughboy mural.

The very nature of a monument is to remember something or someone. The hometown monuments to both Hay and York work to separate the mythological status of these individuals from the real life flesh and blood individual that the people of their respective communities knew and loved. The home site of Alvin York, particularly his

⁶⁸ "Ten Thousand Attend Funeral of Merle Hay."

house and gravesite, serve to remind visitors of the community member, not just the soldier. Similarly, the Merle Hay monument in Glidden- which is also his grave- also works to remind visitors of the human side of Hay with the mural of a farmer behind his plow.

The monuments examined here demonstrate that public interpretation of an individual can be different depending on the group of people developing the physical expression. The examples above provide insight into connections that exist between monuments beyond the intended purpose of the creators. Ultimately these connections exhibit a shared national desire to preserve the individual experiences of sadness, triumph, sacrifice, patriotism, religion, and honor, of those who served and who were at home, within the context of the shared national memory of the First World War.

CONCLUSION

Monuments are impermanent in time. Moving beyond traditional studies of national artistic and thematic trends, this work has exposed deeper meanings behind two select groups of monuments. By studying them, we have learned a great deal more about the people who created them, and the times in which they lived. The First World War monuments of Nashville, Tennessee and Des Moines, Iowa, are examples of opportunities to use monuments as a lens to better understand locally prevailing trends of First World War constructed collective memory. We have also seen that similar local expressions of constructed collective memory can be compared to those of other cities. This comparison allows us to better contextualize the actions of citizens within a nationally experienced historical event, like the First World War.

The monuments themselves create culture. The erection of a monument honoring the dead, by a local community, became the expected practice. This is evident in seemingly redundant monument creation within a city. Perhaps the largest criticism I have of this work is that by using monuments as historical objects to observe culture, I have at times done so at the expense of their original purpose. I am, for instance, critical of the people of Des Moines for the racism against African Americans and its impact on commemorating the men who became Officers at Fort Des Moines, but lump the recent monument commemorating the historically significant event with those originally designed to remember those who died- a cultural healing mechanism.

Future work on this subject matter should look deeper into the records and roles of women in the creation of monuments in specific cities. As we have noticed

throughout, quite often the mothers and widows of the men killed championed efforts to memorialize their loved ones. As women gained political power with the ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment to the Constitution in 1920, the influence of women's organizations such as the American Legion Auxiliary grew as well. Since these organizations put such effort into the memorialization of the men, a study on such a connection would greatly benefit future research. As the title suggests, the vast majority of First World War monuments are in remembrance of men. Research should also look to find more information on monuments to women- particularly nurses- of the First World War.

By limiting the focus of this work on the Midwest, and the South, it allowed freedom to look more closely at the history of each of the monuments. The tradeoff is, of course, that we are geographically limited. Further scholarship should take the approach demonstrated here, but look at other cities. Of particular interest would be works focusing on the Great Plains, American Southwest, and the West Coast, as First World War scholarship of those areas is lacking as a whole. Comparisons could also be done internationally, border cities of the United States and Canada would add several new layers to complicate and analyze. Des Moines and Nashville are both state capitols. A few examples of non-capitol cities and towns have been included, such as Glidden, Iowa, Evansville, Indiana, and Pall Mall, Tennessee, but the coverage has been limited. It would be interesting to see what monument practices have taken place in other non-capital cities, both small- like those listed above, and large- like New York City. Studies

of this nature would allow us to discover if monument culture was similarly important outside of the communities where state government dwells.

The First World War monuments in Des Moines and Nashville, have proved to be valuable objects as material culture evidence. Future studies should look to use monuments for studies of people and place in relation to other collective memories throughout history. Not only is it possible to gain access to those of the past and what they valued remembering, but we can use monuments as a way to examine how our interpretations of the same event have shifted.

The First World War is unquestionably a watershed moment in history. Yet, despite the significant impact the war had on the twentieth century it is still largely ignored in the United States. Even as cities across the country begin remembrance efforts for the centennial of the entrance of the United States into the war, it is still overshadowed by the more recent memories of World War Two and Vietnam. The memorialization, post-First World War marks the highpoint in monument construction in the United States. Communities ceased trying to create, somewhat, redundant memorials within a city. Favoring instead a single 'catch all' monument to past and future wars. In 1948, the Veterans of Foreign Wars created a monument in Murfreesboro, Tennessee- approximately 30 miles southeast of Nashville- to honor the men and women of Rutherford County who served and died in the two world wars. Later additions have included the wars in Korea, Vietnam and Iraq.

While not a direct comparison, it will be possible to one day look at these monuments in juxtaposition to others remembering the casualties of the twenty-first

century wars. One day these monuments will be all that remain, and others, with little or no connection to the names inscribed upon them, and will reflect with their own questions about the past. Monuments today have already begun to see new shifts, commonly leaving space for future additions. Next to the Merle Hay monument in Glidden, Iowa for example, there is a monument of similar shape. The Glidden monument lists names from the Civil War through the Panama Invasion, the dedication reads:

THIS MONUMENT WAS BUILT IN 2009 BY AMERICAN LEGION POST 386, GLIDDEN, IOWA. TO HONOR THE MEMBERS OF THE ARMED FORCES WHO SERVED THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA DURING TIMES OF CONFLICT AND WHO ARE BURIED IN MERLE HAY MEMORIAL CEMETERY. MAY THE SACRIFICES OF THESE SERVICE MEN & WOMEN BE FOREVER REMEMBERED.

Studying the monuments of the past naturally causes us to look at future and makes us question how we will commemorate future wars. The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have lasted long enough that many communities have begun to create monuments to those killed in those wars, despite neither being over. For example, an American Legion monument in Johnston, Iowa- within sight of Camp Dodge- states, "DEDICATED TO ALL MILITARY VETERANS WHO SERVED OUR NATION AT THE TIME OF WAR AND PEACE."

My own former Army unit, 2nd Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment "No Slack", 1st Brigade Combat Team "Bastogne", 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), has its own set of monuments. The names of those killed in Iraq and Afghanistan over the past sixteen years are sandblasted into granite, next monuments of large battles the unit has

participated in dating back to the First World War. I have seen how men that I have served with, my friends, have interacted with these monuments. As difficult as the healing may be, having a monument with which to connect, has been an important comfort in dealing with the loss of many of their friends.

This work has been a long journey, both in years and distance traveled. I had little idea that forms of remembrance of the same historical event were so common throughout the cities in which I am connected to. I am left with many more questions than I began with, and have a much healthier understanding of the complexities of locally expressions of collective memory. No longer should monuments simply be looked at as little more than objects of remembrance. Instead, we should see these objects as evidence of much larger efforts and desires left behind by the people who created them. The people of the local communities examined in this work all experienced the catastrophe of 1914-1918. Though experienced differently, the efforts of the people of Des Moines, Iowa, and Nashville, Tennessee, to collectively remember and make public physical statements of that memory through monuments, demonstrates the reactions of local people and their connections to the global event of the First World War.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

PRIMARY

- “Alvin C. York Project Report,” n.d. Alvin C. York Project Records, Box 1, Folder 9 (Burial Monument), 1987. Tennessee State Library and Archives.
- “Alvin Cullum York Papers, 1967-1968, Box 1,” n.d. Tennessee State Library and Archives.
- “Alvin York Medal of Honor Citation,” n.d. Alvin C. York Project Records, Box 1, Folder 14 (Citations and Honors), 1987. Tennessee State Library and Archives.
- Austin Peay. “Davidson County’s War Dead.” In *Austin Peay: Governor of Tennessee: 1923-1925, 1925-1927, 1927-1929*, edited by T. H. Alexander, 412–16. Kingsport, TN: Southern Publishers, Inc., 1929.
- . “The War Memorial Speech.” In *Austin Peay: Governor of Tennessee: 1923-1925, 1925-1927, 1927-1929*, 417–18. Kingsport, TN: Southern Publishers, Inc., 1929.
- Des Moines Capitol*. October 11, 1917, April 17, 1918, July 4, 1918, September 2, 1964.
- Des Moines Register*. May 27, 1917, May 24, 1917, June 2, 1917, October 16, 1917, July 5, 1918, July 6, 1918, February 18, 1998, July 26, 1998, November 15, 1999, May 18, 2000, September 24, 2000, February 19, 2003, January 15, 2004, March 29, 2004, July 8, 2004, July 26, 2004.
- Des Moines Tribune*. May 31, 1917, June 1, 1917, June 5, 1917, June 12, 1917, June 13, 1917, June 14, 1917, June 18, 1917, June 19, 1917, June 22, 1917, June 29, 1917, July 2, 1917, July 4, 1917, July 18, 1917, August 17, 1917, August 24, 1917, August 25, 1917, August 28, 1917, October 16, 1917.
- Evening World*. August 24, 1917, December 11, 1917.
- George Pattullo. “The Second Elder Gives Battle.” *The Saturday Evening Post*. April 26, 1919, sec. 3-4, 71, 73-74.
- Iowa State Bystander*. May 25, 1917, June 1, 1917, June 8, 1917, June 15, 1917, June 22, 1917, June 29, 1917, July 6, 1917, July 13, 1917, July 19, 1917, July 27, 1917, August 10, 1917, August 31, 1917, September 7, 1917, September 14, 1917, October 12, 1917, October 19, 1917, October 26, 1917, November 2, 1917, November 23, 1917, December 28, 1917, April 19, 1918, October 11, 1918, May 2, 1919, July 5, 1918, August 16, 1918, December 13, 1918, January 17, 1919, January 31, 1919, February 21, 1919, March 7, 1919, March 21, 1919, May 2, 1919.
- Harkin, Tom. “Sen. Harkin Issues Statement on Dedication of Fort Des Moines Memorial Park and Education Center,” July 23, 2004. lexisnexis.com.
- “Honorary Lifetime Membership: Pawnee Tribe of Indians,” ca 1960. Alvin C. York Project Records, 1987. Tennessee State Library and Archives.
- Messrs. Hill, Todd Haston, Houk, etc. “Chapter NO. 122. Senate Bill No. 1132.” In *Public Acts Of The State of Tennessee Passed By The Sixty-First General Assembly 1919*, 357–68. Jackson, TN: McCowat-Mercer, 1919.

- Nashville Banner*. May 24, 1919, May 31, 1919, June 1, 1919, September 21, 1925 ,
April 17, 1950, September 2, 1964, September 3, 1964, December 13, 1968.
- Nashville Today*. November 12, 2015.
- Nashville Tennessean*. May 24, 1919, May 31, 1919, April 17, 1950, September 3, 1964,
December 14, 1968.
- New York Times*. December 12, 1917.
- New York Tribune*. August 26, 1917, September 3, 1964.
- Poe, Edgar Allan. "To Helen," 1841. poets.org.
- PR Newswire*. March 31, 2004 lexisnexis.com.
- R. Des Prez, M.D. "Certificate of Death," September 2, 1964. Alvin C. York Project
Records, 1987. Tennessee State Library and Archives.
- Smith, Rutledge, ed. *World War Record of Ex-Soldiers of Davidson County State of
Tennessee*. Department of the American Legion Auxiliary, 1935.
- Springfield Union*. October 23, 1918.
- "Tribute: Lt. James Simmons Timothy," 1919. Tennessee State Library and Archives.
- U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division. "Population of Counties, Earliest to 1990."
Census. Population of States and Counties of the United States: 1790 to 1990,
n.d..
- Wilson, Woodrow. "Address of The President of the United States Delivered at a Joint
Session of The Two Houses of Congress." 65th Congress, 1 Session, Senate
Document No. 5, April 2, 1917.
- "York Monument Committee Minutes," n.d. Alvin Cullum York Papers, 1967-1968, box
1. Tennessee State Library and Archives.

SECONDARY

- "Abandoned Underground Coal Mines of Des Moines, Iowa and Vicinity." Technical
Paper No. 8. Des Moines, IA: Energy and Geological Resource Division,
Geological Survey Bureau, December 1989.
- Allen, Barbara A. "The Genealogical Landscape and Southern Sense of Place." In *Sense
of Place: American Regional Cultures*, edited by Barbara A Allen and Thomas J.
Schlereth, 152–63. Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 1990.
- Birdwell, Michael. "A Change of Heart: Alvin York and the Movie Sergeant York." *Film
and History* 27, no. 1–4 (December 1997): 22–33.
- . "Alvin Cullum York: The Myth, The Man, and the Legend." *Tennessee
Historical Quarterly* 71, no. 4 (Winter 2012): 318–39.
- Budreau, Lisa. *Bodies of War: World War I and the Politics of Commemoration in
America, 1919-1933*. New York: New York University Press, 2010.
- Clements, Kendrick A. *Life of Herbert Hoover: Imperfect Visionary, 1918-1928*. 2010th
ed. Life of Herbert Hoover. Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.
- Connerton, Paul. *How Societies Remember*. New York: Cambridge University Press,
1989.
- Creighton, Thomas H. *The Architecture of Monuments: The Franklin Delano Roosevelt
Memorial Competition*. New York: Reinhard Printing Corporation, 1962.
- Doss, Erika. *Memorial Mania: Public Feeling in America*. Chicago: University of
Chicago Press, 2010.

- Douglas, Bill. "Wartime Illusions and Disillusionment: Camp Dodge and Racial Stereotyping, 1917-1918." *The Annals of Iowa* 57, no. 2 (Spring 1998): 111–34.
- Eicher, David J. *Mystic Chords of Memory: Civil War Battlefields and Historic Sites Recaptured*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1998.
- Evans, Suzanne. *Mothers of Heroes, Mothers of Martyrs: World War I and the Politics of Grief*. Montreal: Gill-Queen's University Press, 2007.
- Fussell, Paul. *The Great War and Modern Memory*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1975.
- Glasrud, Bruce A. "Chapter 3: The Houston Riot of 1917." In *Anti-Black Violence in Twentieth-Century Texas*, 67–83. College Station, Texas: Texas A&M University Press, 2015.
- Goudy, Willis. "Chapter 2: Selected Demographics: Iowa's African-American Residents, 1840-2000." In *Outside In: African-American History in Iowa, 1838-2000*, 23–41. Des Moines, IA: State Historical Society of Iowa, 2001.
- Grandwohl, David M., and Nancy M. Osborn. *Exploring Buried Buxton: Archaeology of an Abandoned Coal Mining Town with a Large Black Population*. Ames, Iowa: Iowa State Press, 1984.
- Halbwachs, Maurice. *On Collective Memory*. Edited and translated by Lewis A. Coser. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992.
- Jones, Mary, and Michael Vogt. *Images of America: Camp Dodge*. Images of America. Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2009.
- Leland R. Johnson. *The Parks Of Nashville: A History of the Board of Parks and Recreation*. Nashville, Tennessee: Metropolitan Nashville and Davidson County Board of Parks and Recreation, 1986.
- Lord Acton, Richard, and Patricia Nasif Acton. "Chapter 4: A Legal History of African Americans: From the Iowa Territory to the State Sesquicentennial, 1838-1996." In *Outside In: African-American History in Iowa, 1838-2000*, 61–89. Des Moines, IA: State Historical Society of Iowa, 2001.
- Loving, Walter H. "Military Intelligence Records That Black Troops Be Returned to the United States with the Least Possible Delay, November 18, 1918." In *Loyalty in Time of Trial: The African American Experience during World War I*, 181–82. New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, inc., 2001.
- Lucy Capdevila, and Danièle Voldman. *War Dead: Society and the Casualties of War*. Translated by Richard Veasey. Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Press, 2006.
- Mayer Gradwohl, David, and Nancy Osborn Johnsen. "Chapter 1: 'A Kind of Heaven To Me: The Neil Family's Experience in Buxton, Iowa.'" In *Outside In: African-American History in Iowa, 1838-2000*, 3–21. Des Moines, IA: State Historical Society of Iowa, 2001.
- McDaniel, George W. *Health and Home: Preserving a People's Culture*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1982.
- Mjagkij, Nina. *Loyalty in Time of Trial: The African American Experience During World War I*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, inc., 2011.
- Nelson, Robert S, and Margaret Olin, eds. *Monuments and Memory, Made and Unmade*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2003.

- Schivelbusch, Wolfgang. *The Culture of Defeat: On National Trauma, Morning, and Recovery*. Translated by Jefferson Chase. 2003 ed. New York: Picador, 2001.
- Schwieder, Dorathy, Thomas Morain, and Lynn Nielsen. *Iowa Past to Present: The People and the Prairie*. 3rd ed. Ames, Iowa: Iowa State Press, 2002.
- Stewart, Polly. "Regional Consciousness as a Shaper of History: Examples from the Eastern Shore." In *Sense of Place: American Regional Cultures*, edited by Barbara A Allen and Thomas J. Schlereth, 74–87. Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 1990.
- The Historical Commission of Metropolitan Nashville and Davidson County. "Luke Lea Heights (Historical Marker, No. 86)," 1990.
- Tidwell, Mary Louise. "Luke Lea." *The Tennessee Encyclopedia of History and Culture*. Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 2009.