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National Acts: Performance, Commemoration, and the Construction of American Public Memory in the Aftermath of the Civil War

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Abstract

National Acts: Performance, Commemoration, and the Construction of American Public Memory in the Aftermath of the Civil War
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"National Acts: Performance, Commemoration, and the Construction of American Public Memory" explores how sites of public commemoration created during and after the American Civil War crafted conceptions of American public memory and identities through performative processes. This dissertation looks at three commemorative efforts: the Freedmen's Memorial Monument to Abraham Lincoln, the Statue of Liberty, and the Stephen Douglas Tomb. Each selectively upheld "American" ideals of freedom and liberty through their erection and continued presence in public space. While upholding these ideals, the social scripts prompted by human interactions with these monuments simultaneously expose the fractures generated by American identity-creation for people who did not fit within white, male, and privileged classes' understandings of American identity. By investigating these forms of rhetorical experience as performance, this project demonstrates how acts of public commemoration constructed American identity through constitutive performative practices such as oratory, parades, audio tours, and (re)dedication ceremonies. It brings insights from performance to bear on the commemorative landscape of monuments in the United States in order to illustrate how material memorial objects are rhetorically understood across time in public discourse.

Understanding these monuments as sites of performance for visitors, "National Acts" utilize methodologies from rhetoric, museum studies, memory studies, and critical race studies to augment understanding of social performance by visitors engaging in a continual process of public memory creation. The project follows three distinct phases of this process—rising (1861-1886), reification and revision (1941-1986), and reckoning (2001-2023)—to demonstrate how

monuments change over time and how performance sheds light on this process. This dissertation examines disagreements over who should have final say in monument design, where a monument should be placed and what should go around it, and what any given monument should mean over time to show how these different phases are reflective of changes in American public memory over time.

The interactions prompted by these monuments are embodied acts that occur over time, imbuing monuments with multiple layers of meaning. This project aims to define commemoration as a recurrent performative process that depends on discourses by which various groups both in and out of hegemonic power structures contribute to the memory work. While interactions may change because of the material nature of monuments and their presence in public space, they perpetuate over time. This project demonstrates how the contemporary contestation around commemoration is not a new phenomenon but rather a part of a sustained performative process.

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List of Collections and Organization Abbreviations

American Antiquarian Society – AAS

Boston Athenaeum – BA

National Archive for Black Women's History – NABWH

Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island Foundation – SOLEIF

National Council of Negro Women – NCNW

National Park Service - NPS

Dedication

To John Brassil (1949-2016), who I wish was here to read and critique this work.

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Introduction: The Performative Process of Commemoration

> Over there are some Civil War veterans. Iron flags on their graves . . . New Hampshire boys . . . had a notion that the Union ought to be kept together, though they'd never seen more than fifty miles of it themselves. All they knew was the name, friends—the United States of America. The United States of America. And they went and died about it.
> — Thornton Wilder, *Our Town* (1938)[1]

In this epigraph, the Stage Manager sets the stage (literally and figuratively) for *Our Town*'s final act. Speaking in the cemetery of Grover's Corners, New Hampshire, the Stage Manager uses these veterans' graves to provide a sense of place for the audience, noting the power of the ideal of America before stating, "there's something way down deep that's eternal about every human being."[2] Yet this moment in the play resonates beyond Wilder's assertion about human nature. Wilder specifically mentions the Civil War, then 75 years past, as a conflict about how "the Union ought to be kept together."[3] In 1938, when *Our Town* premiered, that was how white public memory of the Civil War was understood by the audience in the theatre: a fight of brother against brother to keep the Union together.[4] The play prompted the audience to briefly remember that the United States symbolized something essential for the men who "went and died about" keeping the country united.[5]

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[1] Thornton Wilder, *Our Town: A Play in Three Acts* (New York: HarperCollins, 1938; 2003 edition), 87.
[2] Wilder, *Our Town*, 87.
[3] Wilder, *Our Town*, 87.
[4] There are hundreds of books about the Civil War and how it has been remembered. Some that I have consulted through the course of this research are David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2001); John E. Bodnar, *Remaking America: Public Memory, Commemoration, and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1991); Daphne Brooks, *Bodies in Dissent: Spectacular Performances of Race and Freedom, 1850-1910* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2006); Ari Kelman, *A Misplaced Massacre: Struggling over the Memory of Sand Creek* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2013); Manisha Sinha, *The Slave's Cause: A History of Abolition* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016) and Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877* (New York, New York: Harper Perennial, 2014), among others.
[5] Howard Sherman, *Another Day's Begun: Thornton Wilder's* Our Town *in the 21st Century* (London and New York: Methuen Drama, 2021), 27.

I start here, with *Our Town,* to highlight how public remembrance can be shaped in even the smallest of moments and the unlikeliest of places. This scene in *Our Town* opens with an image of public commemoration: gravestones. *Our Town* is a play written in the 1930s, depicting the foibles of small-town life at the turn of the twentieth century and demonstrating how nostalgia can be a trap.[6] This brief moment in the play offers an awareness, almost eighty years after the conflict, of how the Civil War was remembered in that moment. The cultural and intellectual discourse of mainstream white public memory of the Civil War in the mid-twentieth century was not interested in the institution of chattel slavery or its abolishment due to the Union's win, but rather was focused on the sentimentality of the fight to keep the Union together.[7] To remember the Civil War was to think only of unification.[8]

In the contemporary United States, issues of public commemoration have become increasingly urgent and fraught, from the removal of Confederate statues to historical contextualization of the racist histories of outdoor organizations such as the Audubon Society and the Sierra Club.[9] Despite what some scholars and artists claim, this is not a new debate.[10] Americans have grappled with commemoration of "national acts" since the nation's founding.[11] In July 1776, New Yorkers tore down a monument to King George III in New York City after a

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[6] Sherman, *Another Day's Begun,* 2.
[7] Blight, *Race and Reunion*, 100-110.
[8] Blight, *Race and Reunion*, 120.
[9] Gregory Noble, "The Myth of John James Audubon," July 31, 2020, The Audubon Society, https://www.audubon.org/news/the-myth-john-james-audubon; Dan Ritzman, "Growing Our Roots: Anti-Racism in Conservation Work," August 27, 2020, The Sierra Club, https://www.sierraclub.org/articles/2020/08/growing-our-roots-anti-racism-conservation-work.
[10] Ulrich Baer, "Kehinde Wiley, Wangechi Mutu, and Kara Walker Upstage the Monuments Debate," *Hyperallergic*, January 20, 2020, https://hyperallergic.com/536619/kehinde-wiley-wangechi-mutu-and-kara-walker-upstage-the-monuments-debate/.
[11] One of the first acts of the Second Continental Congress in January 1776 was to commission a memorial to General Richard Montgomery, killed in the failed campaign in Quebec in 1775 during the first year of the American Revolution. The monument, which still sits in front of St. Paul's Church in Lower Manhattan, was the first to honor the military dead of the fledgling United States and memorialize a person deemed important by the men fighting the British Empire; see Sally Webster, *The Nation's First Monument and the Origins of the American Memorial Tradition: Liberty Enshrined* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2015).

public reading of the Declaration of Independence. They repurposed the monument, melting down its metal to make bullets for the Continental Army.[12] After the Americans won independence, monuments were purposefully integrated into city planning, such as when city planner Pierre L'Enfant left spaces for commemorations to George Washington in his plans for the nation's capital of Washington, D.C.[13] Yet, in 1800, a North Carolina congressman proclaimed that "monuments are good for nothing."[14] For over fifty years, the Washington Monument remained unfinished due to lack of funds and lack of will. Arguably, the American desire to commemorate itself is matched by an inability to act on that commemorative impulse in a timely manner.[15] The process of creating commemoration in the United States has always been fractious, contingent on the intersection of money, time, and public interest to happen at all.

Monuments which reify and uphold national ideals, such as liberty and freedom, rely on the relationship between visitor, object, and its surrounding contexts to make meaning. Art historian Erika Doss notes the modern United States has "memorial mania," creating affective repositories in the form of monuments and memorials in response to the nation's relationship with history and memory.[16] Doss argues that the people of the United States use commemoration to create symbols of American nationalism. Visitors at monuments, memorials, and historic sites are invited to experience affective encounters, prompting emotions such as shame, grief, and gratitude.[17] Building on Doss's work, I argue that performance is a useful framework for understanding *how* people make these affective encounters and *why* monuments inevitably fail to

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[12] Wendy Bellion, *Iconoclasm in New York: Revolution to Reenactment* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2019). See also Erin L. Thompson, *Smashing Statues: The Rise and Fall of America's Public Monuments* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2022).
[13] Kirk Savage, *Monument Wars: Washington, D.C., the National Mall, and the Transformation of the Memorial Landscape* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 110-140.
[14] Savage, *Monument Wars,* 1.
[15] Savage, *Monument Wars,* 120-130.
[16] Erika Doss, *Memorial Mania: Public Feeling in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), 2.
[17] Doss, *Memorial Mania*, 52-4.

commemorate national ideals such as liberty.[18] Commemoration is a recurrent performative practice in which those who build monuments and those who visit them ascribe meaning onto the monument through symbolic action.

My basic research questions, based on my formulation of commemoration as a recurrent performative process, are these: how do monuments come into existence? How do monuments change over time and what does that change show? How does the change in a monument's meaning impact how visitors understand the past of the United States? Most critically, how does performance—in conjunction with other disciplines—help us understand commemoration in the United States as a political process? Within this dissertation, I examine three monuments that were conceived and constructed in the period immediately following the Civil War. Each monument attempts to depict a facet of the ideals of liberty and freedom that motivated the Civil War. These three monuments—the Stephen Douglas Tomb in Chicago, IL, the Freedmen's Memorial Monument to Abraham Lincoln in Washington, D.C., and the Statue of Liberty in New York City—differ in size, scope, purpose, date of installation, and location. They are linked by several factors: what they broadly commemorate; how ideals of liberty and freedom became centralized in these commemorations, how their attempts to capture liberty and emancipation in stone and metal did not live up to those ideals; and what has happened to these monuments since their erection. All three monuments illustrate how the commemorative process in the United States has been dominated by the public memory needs of white male stakeholders. They have also been revised and reified by marginalized groups, specifically Black Americans, who have worked to enact their own visions of freedom and liberty through performative means at these monuments. By looking at the histories of these monuments, I demonstrate how commemorative

[18] For more on monumental failure, see the forthcoming Christina Sharpe, *Ordinary Notes* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2023).

actions of the past have striking similarities to struggles to memorialize in the contemporary moment, where reckoning with monuments has become a battleground for public memory in the United States.

This dissertation takes inspiration from performance scholar Joseph Roach's brief invocation in *Cities of the Dead* of monuments as sites that "eternalize" relationships between people and nation through performance processes.[19] To engage with a monument is to enact a performance that creates a connection between monument, individual, and the nation. My work also builds on performance theorist Rebecca Schneider's assertion that "inter(in)animation," or performance, occurs and makes meaning between a commemorative object and its spectator. Schneider's theory suggests that any form of memorialization (historical or contemporary) changes meaning over time as people interact with any given monument through performative means.[20] Perhaps most crucially, my project utilizes performance scholar Robin Bernstein's concept of "scriptive things," in which objects prompt a person to enact particular social scripts.[21] As monuments are material objects of remembrance, their presence in a space can suggest particular types of engagement. In the moments of rising, reification, reckoning, and, in some cases, removal of monuments, individuals engage with commemoration differently. This changing, dynamic process constitutes a recurrent performance, where additional meanings are generated with each individual's interpretation of the site of commemoration. Thus, monuments change over time despite their seemingly unchangeable material form. Performance sheds light on the process.

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[19] Joseph Roach, *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 105.
[20] Rebecca Schneider, *Performing Remains: Art and War in Times of Theatrical Reenactment* (London and New York: Routledge, 2011), 146.
[21] Robin Bernstein, *Racial Innocence: Performing American Childhood from Slavery to Civil Rights* (New York: New York University Press, 2011), 72.

This project utilizes theories and methods from multiple disciplines: theatre and performance studies, rhetoric, critical race studies, memory studies, history, and art history. Such an approach is necessary to explain phenomena that are inherently historical, artistic, rhetorical, and performative. An interdisciplinary framework helps account for why, for instance, the tomb of Illinois Senator Stephen Douglas sits locked up in a predominantly Black neighborhood in Chicago. The monument's raising was shaped by rhetorical moves which connected Douglas to Abraham Lincoln and the project of Western expansion; its reification came from the political function the public memory of Douglas served; and the lack of reckoning with the Tomb in the contemporary moment results from the absence of a consistent audience to the site to whom the monument would prompt performances of white supremacy. Performance theory is particularly critical to this project, as it explains how monuments create audiences, operate in conditions of time, and engender particular discourses (and not others) for visitors.

In the pages that follow, I outline my project's core concepts, key methods, and theoretical and temporal structures. An interdisciplinary framework that centers performance and rhetoric will shed new light on historical processes of commemoration, illuminating why we commemorate, how we commemorate, and how these commemorations shape Americans and their understandings of the past.

Critical Concepts: Commemoration and National Identity

This project relies on two interconnected concepts—commemoration and national identity. Commemoration is traditionally understood as public remembrance, through acts of ceremony or memorialization.[22] The study of commemoration (and, by extension, the study of

[22] Bodnar, *Remaking America*, 10.

public memory) is inherently interdisciplinary, allowing for broad interpretation of what is considered a commemorative act.[23] By focusing on statues, I am concerned with an aspect of commemoration that is understudied in theatre and performance studies.[24] Fundamentally, I understand commemoration as a process, from the spark of the idea for the public commemoration to site selection, design, fundraising, building, and dedication to what happens after it becomes part of the public scenography. My approach to commemoration does not focus on the definitions that separate monuments (understood as commemoration of a single person or idea) and memorials (defined as commemoration of ideas or conflicts).[25] Rather, I follow heritage scholar Laurajane Smith's assertion that "heritage is not the historic monument, archaeological site, or museum artifact, but rather the activities that occur at and around these places and objects."[26] As Smith suggests, a commemorative action is not only the monument, but also how people interact with it. I am interested in understanding commemoration through statuary as a recurrent performative process because it offers a better understanding of how and why people commemorate in public space.

I theorize commemoration as a process that is both recurrent and performative. It is recurrent because the memorialization of a person or idea is ostensibly fixed in space and continuous. The erection of any monument starts at the impulse to create the commemorative

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[23] The field of memory studies is vast, but some works that have been critical to this project are Andrea A. Burns, *From Storefront to Monument: Tracing the Public History of the Black Museum Movement* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2013); Edward T. Linenthal, *Sacred Ground: Americans and Their Battlefields* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991); Denise D. Meringolo, *Museums, Monuments, and National Parks: Toward a New Genealogy of Public History* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2012); Viet Thanh Nguyen, *Nothing Ever Dies: Vietnam and the Memory of War* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2016) and Jeffrey Olick, "Collective Memory: The Two Cultures," *Sociological Theory* 17.3 (1999): 333-349, among others.
[24] See Elizabeth W. Son, *Embodied Reckonings: "Comfort Women," Performance, and Transpacific Redress* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2018); Roach, *Cities of the Dead*; Schneider, *Performing Remains.*
[25] Doss, *Memorial Mania*, 37-8.
[26] Laurajane Smith, "The 'doing' of heritage: heritage as performance," in *Performing Heritage: Research, Practice and Innovation in Museum Theatre and Live Interpretation*, edited by Anthony Jackson and Jenny Kidd (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2011), 71.

object and its building but continues as most monuments are meant to be permanently set in a specific public space.[27] The physical persistence is conducive to performative analytics because, as performance theorist Richard Schechner asserts, to study performance is "to investigate what the object does, how it interacts with other objects or beings, and how it relates to other objects or beings."[28] Interpretation from commemoration arises from the relationship between the object and its spectators, singular and plural, in public space. Just as theorist Judith Butler's definition of public assembly as a performative space includes action and gesture both individually and collectively, so public commemoration requires individual interaction and community engagement to sustain its presence in public space.[29] The act of remembrance is a continual process that needs an audience to make meaning in relation to other objects and to people in space: a subject that requires not only a sculpture that symbolizes something but spectators to engage with it.

Art historians Erika Doss and Kirk Savage and historian Karen Cox have examined commemoration in the United States, but their scholarship, like most on commemoration, focuses on the first step in the commemorative process: building and dedication.[30] Art scholar Erin Thompson has studied the erection and removal of public monuments in the United States, but does not examine the years between the building of a monument and its reckoning.[31] By focusing on temporal processes, my research takes into account how commemoration changes

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[27] Marita Sturken, *Tangled Memories: The Vietnam War, the AIDS Epidemic, and the Politics of Remembering* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 15.
[28] Richard Schechner, *Performance Studies: An Introduction*. 2nd ed.. (New York: Routledge, 2006), 30.
[29] Judith Butler, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2015), 75.
[30] Savage*, Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves*; Doss, *Memorial Mania*, Karen L. Cox, *Dixie's Daughters: The United Daughters of the Confederacy and the Preservation of Confederate Culture* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2003).
[31] Erin L. Thompson, *Smashing Statues: The Rise and Fall of America's Public Monuments* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2022).

over time, or as Kirk Savage describes, how monuments are built to last beyond original intent.[32] This dissertation aims to take up the challenge of documenting such processes of change over time in order to demonstrate how monuments become objects with multiple layers of public memory and meaning.

Kirk Savage's *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves* both exemplifies the importance of commemoration as a research subject and the limitation of only looking at the construction phase of a monument. In the case that Savage and I share, the Freedmen's Memorial Monument to Abraham Lincoln (the D.C. monument of Abraham Lincoln standing over a kneeling Black man), he takes great care to analyze *how* the monument came to be, focusing on the various artists who competed to win the design commission and the fundraising for the statue.[33] However, his inquiry stops at the dedication ceremony, giving a brief sketch of Frederick Douglass's dedication speech before returning to other designs by sculptors interpreting freedom in the 1870s and 1880s.[34] I am indebted to Savage's work, but by following a monument's history after its dedication, I consider how it functions as a public memory object over time, examining how original impact of a monument shifts as new generations of people with different perspectives interact with it. By doing so, I demonstrate how monuments are used as rhetorical and performative objects for understanding the past, and how this use can diverge greatly from how the statue was seen and used when newly unveiled. Highlighting these complications from dedication to the contemporary moment allows for a clearer understanding of the function of monuments in public space.

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[32] Savage, *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves,* 211.
[33] Savage, *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves,* 89-121.
[34] Savage, *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves,* 122-128.

My approach elucidates the tension between commemorative practice and historical fact. As cultural theorist Pierre Nora writes of *lieux de memoire*, or sites of memory, memory and history are intrinsically linked, but: "Memory attaches itself to sites, whereas history attaches itself to events."[35] For Nora, memory is how people make meaning through their connection to the past but is linked to a place rather than an object or commemorative event. My project focuses on the relationship between people and the commemorative object, arguing that memory is attached to these objects through a performative process that changes over time, and that the scriptive action prompted by the monument changes as well.[36]

Attention to the full timeline of a monument's life is essential because, as philosopher Edward Casey argues, the meaning of a monument is contingent upon the presence of particular people in a place at a moment in time. In Casey's article "Public Memory in Place and Time," he stresses the importance of communal understandings of public memory. He cites how, in the immediate aftermath of 9/11, hundreds gathered in quiet contemplation of the tragedy in a public space, articulating how public memory and meaning-making need both time and space.[37] I understand these actions in my study as dramaturgical choices, where meaning is made between object and spectator in space over many moments in time, construing the act of memory-making as performative action.

In the United States, public memorializing (and the related historicizing) is consistently intertwined with formations of national identity.[38] As memory scholar James Young argues: "the

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[35] Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History," *Representations* 26 (Spring 1989), 22.
[36] Bernstein, *Racial Innocence,* 74.
[37] Edward S. Casey, "Public Memory in Place and Time," in *Framing Public Memory*, edited by Kendall R. Phillips (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2004), 42.
[38] See Casey, "Public Memory in Place and Time"; Naomi J. Stubbs, *Cultivating National Identity Through Performance: American Pleasure Gardens and Entertainment* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013); Sanford Levinson, *Written in Stone: Public Monuments in Changing Societies*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998); Dell Upton, *What Can and Can't Be Said: Race, Uplift, and Monument Building in the Contemporary South* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015).

usual aim of any nation's monuments is not solely to displace memory or to remake it in one's image: it is also to invite the collaboration of the community in acts of remembrance."[39] The relationship between commemoration, national identity formation, and community is especially critical for my project. Because the monuments under consideration were made with particular audiences in mind, in addressing matters of national memory their meanings transform over time to suit the needs of the hegemonic (white male) community in order to be completed and to maintain relevance. As the national memory of communities viewing these monuments changed, the monuments' meanings also shifted.

A clear example of this phenomenon is the Statue of Liberty. The Statue was a gift from France to the United States, ostensibly intended to celebrate the abolition of slavery. An 1870 design by the sculptor Frederic Auguste Bartholdi featured a white, female Liberty holding broken chains in her right hand to symbolize the emancipation of Black Americans.[40] However, by the time the monument was finally erected in 1886, a national monument to abolition no longer suited the formulation of national identity originally intended for the statue as Reconstruction had ended and Jim Crow terror had begun.[41] The rhetoric around the statue shifted to celebrating European immigration and the American spirit of liberty, and the monument's design reflected this change; the chains that were in Liberty's hand were moved under its feet and robe, and the right hand instead held a tablet marking July 4, 1776.[42]

As this example demonstrates, national identity is historically malleable in symbols of commemoration. Key to my understanding of national identity is Benedict Anderson's

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[39] James Young, "Memory and Monument," in *Bitburg in Moral and Political Perspective*, ed. Geoffrey H. Hartman (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), 112.
[40] Edward Berenson, *The Statue of Liberty: A Transatlantic Story* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), 20.
[41] Francesca Lidia Viano, *Sentinel: The Unlikely Origins of the Statue of Liberty* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2018), 30.
[42] Viano, *Sentinel*, 115.

foundational work *Imagined Communities*. Anderson defines national identity as an imagined action; there is no way to know all members of such a large community.[43] Using print culture as his main source, he argues that national identity imagines a community and designates symbols of it. His argument begins, however, with Tombs of the Unknown Soldier, which he refers to as "no more arresting emblems of the modern culture of nationalism."[44] I use Anderson's invocation to consider how acts of commemoration perform as rhetorical spaces for American identity creation, as the monuments he describes lend themselves to be used as spaces of national ceremony.[45] I am interested in how monuments dramaturgically continue this act of identity creation in public discourse, as well as how they are invoked after their dedication.

Crucial to my analysis of these monuments is how they have been perceived and engaged with by marginalized groups, specifically Black Americans. Here, Salamishah Tillet's conceptualization of civic estrangement for Black Americans in relation to the civic myths that ground American identity is important.[46] In Tillet's formulation, civic estrangement is the process by which Black Americans are unable to relate to the monuments, ideals, and symbols of American identity because of their lack of representation within them.[47] Tillet posits this civic estrangement as a concept that post-Civil Rights Black American authors and artists use to allow enslaved African Americans "into the national narrative" through reconfiguring civic myths.[48] I

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[43] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Rev. ed. (New York: Verso, 2006), 30.
[44] Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 9.
[45] See also Mary Stuckey, Carole Blair, et al.
[46] Salamishah Tillet, *Sites of Slavery: Citizenship and Racial Democracy in the Post-Civil Rights Imagination* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2012). See also Teresa Goddu, *Selling Antislavery: Abolition and Mass Media in Antebellum America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2020). While Tillet uses African American throughout her book, I will (for the most part) use Black to refer to African people stolen from their homes to be bought and sold in the US chattel slavery system and their descendants. I do this not to denigrate African American as the term, but to more explicitly call out how these naming conventions work to create their own systemic issues of racism in how we talk about the one of the groups of people most marginalized in formations of American identity.
[47] Tillet, *Sites of Slavery*, 3.
[48] Tillet, *Sites of Slavery*, 5.

take Tillet's assertion of the relationship between monuments and civic ideals as the impetus to focus on the symbols of liberty and freedom as represented by statues in the wake of the Civil War.

In addition to Tillet's work, I use John Bodnar's delineation of two groups interested in creating and maintaining public memory practices. In Bodnar's formulation, "official" memory groups are generally governments and other authority-aligned organizations committed to maintaining the status quo in memory practices, whereas "vernacular" groups are from specialized groups in the population that reflect community interests. Both use commemoration to enact political change and form national identity.[49] By noting the different types of stakeholders and how they use commemoration through performative means, I am able to examine how the monuments change meaning over time.

A final note on commemoration and national identity in this project: the monuments I investigate represent foundational concepts for Americans. The ideals of liberty and freedom are so embedded in conceptions of American identity that to untangle them from how Americans conceive of themselves would be difficult.[50] By focusing on liberty and freedom as the nexus of national identity in this project, I am better able to fully articulate a major facet of how individuals and identity groups see themselves in the imagined community of the United States *and* how many are left out of that vision.

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[49] John E. Bodnar, *Remaking America: Public Memory, Commemoration, and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1991), 8-15.

[50] See Doss, *Memorial Mania*, 38; David Waldstreicher, *In the Midst of Perpetual Fetes: The Making of American Nationalism, 1776-1820* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1997); Vanessa B. Beasley, *You, the People: American National Identity in Presidential Rhetoric* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2004).

Methodologies: Rhetoric and Performance

My dissertation utilizes the theoretical and methodological frameworks of rhetoric, performance, and memory studies. Each aspect is crucial to understanding how monuments, from their inception to their continued presence in public space, have constituted American identity formation and enacted symbols to uphold dominant ideals. Combining archival research (historical newspapers, event programs, and manuscript correspondence) with site-based observational methods utilized in performance, rhetoric, and museum studies, my project investigates how public commemoration and memorialization uphold existing power structures and how marginalized groups use monuments to challenge those structures. I also examine how the uses of monuments as sites of performance for these purposes have been ongoing since their creation. Understanding how sites were created, how visitors moved and interacted in these spaces, who these spaces were for, and how these spaces changed over time reveals how such sites facilitated performances of American identity formation from the wake of the Civil War to the present day. In this section, I outline how the methods and theories of rhetoric and performance studies shape my project, beginning with my uses of rhetorical methods, drawing specifically from notions of epideictic rhetoric and public commemoration.

Much of this project's utilization of rhetoric focuses on how epideictic rhetoric has been deployed across space and time. Epideictic rhetoric, according to Aristotle, is interested in the present moment and is focused on praise or blame.[51] The past and the future are tools for the epideictic speaker, who invokes the past in order to give instructions on future actions to the audience.[52] While one of the three ancient example of epideictic rhetoric is the Athenian funeral

[51] Aristotle, *On Rhetoric: A Theory of Civic Discourse*, trans. George A. Kennedy, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 48-49.
[52] Aristotle, *On Rhetoric*, 84.

oration, classical and rhetorical scholars have examined instances of epideictic rhetoric in artifacts such as plays and monuments.[53]

Studies of texts from ancient Greece and Rome illustrate how epideictic rhetoric constructs and crafts national identity. As classicist Nicole Loraux argues, the Athenian funeral orations of 5th century BCE Greece created linkages between the individual Athenians and the idea of the strong city-state. While much of Loraux's discussion centers on the orations, she also makes mention of the public funerary monuments that democratized the dead of Athens in public space.[54] Jeffrey Walker further expands the use of epideictic rhetoric in classical study to include dramas, while Kathleen Lamp explicitly argues that Augustan Rome used objects of commemoration to assert the power of the Roman Empire's power in the city space.[55] Rhetorician Laurent Pernot even notes how bringing together understandings of ritual and speech acts with the classical understanding of epideictic rhetoric is a new avenue for the field of rhetoric to explore.[56]

The study of epideictic rhetoric is not limited to ancient objects. It is also useful for understanding American public address and how individuals are converted into symbols for public use. Examples of this range from the Boston Massacre orations and their ability to define and shape a community to Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address and its legacies on public

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[53] Edward Schiappa with David M. Timmerman, "Aristotle's Disciplining of Epideictic," in *The Beginnings of Rhetorical Theory in Classical Greece,* by Edward Schiappa (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999), 185-206. The other two examples Schiappa cites are festival orations and prose and poems of praise.
[54] Nicole Loraux, *The Invention of Athens: The Funeral Oration in the Classical City* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1986), 59.
[55] Jeffrey Walker, *Rhetoric and Poetics in Antiquity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); Kathleen Lamp, *A City of Marble: The Rhetoric of Ancient Rome* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2013).
[56] Laurent Pernot, *Epideictic Rhetoric: Questioning the Stakes of Ancient Praise* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2015), 102.

memory of the Civil War.[57] By understanding epideictic rhetoric as a mode of persuasion that allows for multiple types of commemoration, I employ rhetorical methods to study the monuments from their physical manifestations to their symbolic representations.[58] This allows for the dual examination of material objects and the discursive processes that undergird them.

Within the study of rhetoric, there is a growing subfield addressing public commemoration as an object of study. Carole Blair and her collaborators further developed the use of rhetoric to examine public commemoration in 1991.[59] In their first article on the subject, Blair, Marsha Jeppeson, and Enrico Pucci, Jr. state that "commemorative monuments 'instruct' their visitors about what is to be valued in the future as well as in the past."[60] Blair's argument about the temporal characteristic of the rhetoric of monuments makes it critical to contemplate the commemorative process as a performative one, given that performance is specifically tied to questions of narrative and time.

Blair and Neil Michel published an article in 2000 explicitly linking performance with their rhetorical analysis of the Civil Rights Memorial in Montgomery, Alabama. They argue that the memorial itself functions as a rhetorical performance in that it disrupts the dominant narrative of the Civil Rights Movement through deliberate design choices that reproduce Civil Rights era tactics.[61] For Blair and Michel, performance is not identified with the visitors to the memorial (in fact they argue that it is somewhat difficult to reach some parts of the memorial due to the

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[57] Celeste Michelle Condit, "The functions of epideictic: the Boston Massacre orations as exemplar," *Communication Quarterly*, Vol 33.4 (September 1985), pp.284-298; Bradford Vivian, *Public Forgetting: The Rhetoric and Politics of Beginning Again* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010) 141-149.
[58] Angela G. Ray, "Rhetoric and the Archive," *Review of Communication: Rhetorical Criticism's Multitudes*, January 2016, Vol.16 (1), pp. 43-59.
[59] Carole Blair, Marsha S. Jeppeson, and Enrico Pucci Jr., "Public Memorializing in Postmodernity: The Vietnam Veterans Memorial as Prototype," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 77.3 (1991): 263–88.
[60] Blair, Jeppeson, and Pucci Jr., "Public Memorializing in Postmodernity," 263.
[61] Carole Blair and Neil Michel, "Reproducing Civil Rights Tactics: The Rhetorical Performances of the Civil Rights Memorial," *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 30.2 (2000): 31–55.

security at the Southern Poverty Law Center where the memorial is housed) but with the memorial itself, which makes particular claims on the historical past through its architectural choices. The audience is the everyday visitor or passerby, and the memorial performs upon them in certain ways just as they perform certain actions when they visit. While Blair and her co-authors are most often interested in contemporary memorial work, I bring the methods they deploy to bear on historical commemoration, which has not been given the same treatment by rhetoricians as historical oratory.[62] I also further develop Blair's assertion of what monuments perform on visitors, arguing that they prompt particular actions through a social script crafted over time.

My use of rhetorical methods relies on both analysis of the visual and material evidence of the monuments as well as analysis of the discourse around the monuments. The possibilities of visual analysis in relation to commemoration are outlined in Robert Hariman and John Louis Lucaties' *The Public Image*. In that work, they analyze a photo of a monument commemorating the Wounded Knee Massacre, arguing that the image "suggests that history continues to be both forgotten and reinscribed in the present…the problems of invisibility and representation, and the challenge of finding a way forward through interpretation and reinterpretation."[63] In the photo, the early twentieth-century stone monument is surrounded by objects and artifacts that the contemporary public brought to the site in remembrance.[64] As they illustrate, the tension between past and present is ever present in commemorative projects. Visual analysis in tandem with

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[62] An example where both commemoration and oratory are examined in tandem is Cindy Koenig Richards, "Inventing Sacagawea: Public Women and the Transformative Potential of Epideictic Rhetoric," *Western Journal of Communication* 73.1 (2009): 1–22. Richards does not cite Blair but rather examines how the creation of a statue of Sacagawea in 1903 Oregon was a strategy wealthy white women in the Pacific Northwest used to stake a claim of the importance of women in the Westward expansion and colonization of the United States.
[63] Robert Hariman and John Louis Lucaites, *The Public Image: Photography and Civic Spectatorship* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2016), 82.
[64] Hariman and Lucaties, *The Public Image*, 81.

discursive analysis is one means of interrogating how commemoration as a form occupies a particular place in identity formation.[65]

I also make use of methods from the field of visual rhetoric in order to highlight theatrical understandings of scenography in my analysis of how these monuments came to look as they do and how they have been understood over time. As visual rhetoric scholar Cara Finnegan notes, "viewership and the visual form itself are always in communication with one another."[66] For each monument I attend to original concepts, the realized design, and any material changes in the intervening 150 years in order to trace what became the most enduring qualities of the monument. Each of these monuments illustrate the power of a visual symbol as a way of remembering and representing white American perceptions of freedom and liberty. The process of deciding how to visually portray the concepts is critical to understanding why they have endured. I particularly make use of images throughout this dissertation—such as illustrations in magazines *Harper's Weekly* and *Frank Leslie's Illustrated*, advertisements, mass-produced photographs on cartes de vistes and stereographs, and stills from television and film—to analyze what images of these monuments were being seen by a wider public.[67]

Ultimately, my understanding of rhetoric and its use in this project comes from Angela Ray. In an article about the discipline and the archive, she describes the process of analyzing rhetoric in individual texts as based on two major questions: "What is being done here? For

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[65] Stuart Hall, ed., *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, (London: Open University, 1997), 44.
[66] Caitlin Frances Bruce, and Cara A. Finnegan. "Visual Rhetoric in Flux: A Conversation." *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 24, no. 1 (2021): 89-108. muse.jhu.edu/article/803153.
[67] Judith Babbitts, "Stereographs and the Construction of a Visual Culture in the United States," in *Memory Bytes: History, Technology, and Digital Culture,* edited by Lauren Rabinovitz and Abraham Geil, Duke University Press, 2004); Nicole Berkin, "Cartomania and the Scriptive Album: Cartes-de-Visite as Objects of Social Practice," in *Performing Objects and Theatrical Things*, edited by Marlis Schweitzer and Joanne Zerdy (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014) 49-62.

whom and why does it matter?"[68] Ray argues that rhetoric as a method can inform readers how an object functioned in its time but that it is dependent on what questions one asks.[69] The questions I ask are ones of audience, intent, and impact of monuments over time. By using rhetorical methods in conjunction with performance methods, I articulate what monuments do and why they mattered in the wake of the Civil War.

The other major methodological facet of this project comes from theatre and performance studies. Using dramaturgical criteria allows me to clearly account for audience, time, space, and place over the life of a monument and to consider *why* monuments hold such sway. Individuals visit monuments for any number of reasons: a personal connection to the loss that the object captures; being brought there as a child to "learn your history"; or simply stumbling across them when going for a walk and taking a moment to read a plaque. These planned and accidental encounters with monuments create different layers of meaning. It can begin with what an individual brings into the space. Given that monuments are in public places, there is no way to have a truly "private" moment with a commemorative object; inherently, monuments are public sites of ritual. A memorial that perhaps captures this dynamic most succinctly is the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., where visitors touch the monument and bring objects to it, performing small acts of mourning while surrounded by others doing the same.[70] Performance allows us to analyze how people interact with monuments and how people can make meaning from their contemplation in a public space.

The interplay between past and present at monuments is investigated in Joseph Roach's *Cities of the Dead* and Rebecca Schneider's *Performing Remains*, two key works in the field of

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[68] Ray, "Rhetoric and the Archive," 47.
[69] Ray, "Rhetoric and the Archive," 51.
[70] For more on this phenomenon, see Kristin Ann Hass, *Carried to the Wall: American Memory and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

theatre and performance studies. Both scholars use Michel de Certeau's method of spatial practices in "Walking in the City" from *The Practice of Everyday Life* to consider monuments and how individuals encounter them.[71] In a single paragraph, Roach examines how eighteenth-century actors' monuments and internments act as surrogates for actors who have passed, creating a chain of memorial actions that ultimately led to a consolidation of memory around the symbol of the monument. Monuments "constituted a place or a site of memory…where the symbolic burial of one surrogated body in a special place with special obsequies authorized the general disposal of others in newly rationalized and segregated spaces of death."[72] Roach's approach to these actors' monuments examines the act of memory creation through mourners and their interactions with the site of public mourning. I use his theoretical premise as a jumping off point to consider how these American monuments operated as commemorative objects, consolidating into white supremacist symbols of liberty and freedom through performative processes.

In attending to time, space, performance, and public memory, I build upon the theoretical work of scholars such as Rebecca Schneider, who examines objects like monuments and events like Civil War reenactments as a way of delving into the relationship between object, spectator, and a moment in time through performance.[73] In Schneider's *Performing Remains*, she focuses on a sentence from Michel de Certeau's *The Practice of Everyday Life*, "The passing faces on the street seem [. . .] to multiply the indecipherable and nearby secret of the monument," to consider how stillness circulates through time via performance.[74] Schneider's analysis of this quote is

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[71] Michel de Certeau and Steven F. Rendall, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 93.
[72] Roach, *Cities of the Dead,* 105. I have abbreviated Roach's use of Pierre Nora here but will return to Nora in chapter 4.
[73] Rebecca Schneider, *Performing Remains: Art and War in Times of Theatrical Reenactment* (London and New York: Routledge, 2011), 146.
[74] Schneider, *Performing Remains,* 146 and de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, 15.

compelling, using the idea of the monument as a means of explicating how stillness in both statue and photography can capture an archive of performance through "inter(in)animation."[75] In Schneider's understanding of the slippages and ruptures of time through performance, a memorial can only become "inter(in)animated" when an individual passes by or pauses at the object, creating a moment of encounter between the memorial and the individual.[76] For both Roach and Schneider, the authors write from a mixture of personal experience and performance analysis to articulate how memorials can make meaning through performative practices and how we as scholars can articulate that understanding.

By linking performance to commemoration, as Roach and Schneider do, we can more fully grapple with how memorial objects create affective responses from viewers in public places. Paul Connerton's *How Societies Remember* argues that social memory is found in commemorative ceremonies, which themselves are performative acts.[77] Through ritualized remembering (which, I argue, is a type of recurrent performative process), individuals create meaning out of the past for their present use. Articulating commemoration as a performative process creates potential for understanding how and why individuals choose to create monuments in the first place, why some monuments have staying power in the public imagination, and why some monuments are unable to fully capture their intended audience's attention after a period of time. It can also help articulate how monuments attract new attention, as public memory around an individual, ideal, or event shifts over time. My approach is both retroactive to understand the conception and building of monuments and retrospective across

[75] Schneider, 146-150.
[76] Schneider, *Performing Remains,* 145.
[77] Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

time, accounting for the intermittentness of recurrent performative prompts of the cases in this study.

I also utilize the methodological approaches of scholars who examine sites of slavery tourism as performative spaces. Both historian Saidiya Hartman and performance scholar Sandra Richards use the tourist memorials of the slave-dungeons in Ghana for their analyses of memory practices. Both authors use their own experiences within these sites to ground their analysis of what sites connected to the histories of slavery have to offer. In *Lose Your Mother*, Hartman grapples with how the commemorative practice of slavery is inherently a failed project, as memorializing the loss can never fill the yawning gap of the violence and brutality of slavery.[78] She uses the Freedmen's Memorial Monument as an example of this inability to commemorate emancipation.[79] In "What Is To Be Remembered?," Richards faces a similar problem, as tourists to the memorial site cannot fully surrogate (in the Roachian sense of the word) for those lost who are being remembered, and in fact this serves as a reminder that "memory serves a presentist agenda," understanding that any meaning made at a memorial is about the connection between past and present often with an eye to the future.[80] I utilize the work of Hartman and Richards to highlight the ever-present tension in the act of commemoration, which relies on remembrance of the past and engagement in the present.

Finally, I engage with the work of performance scholar Robin Bernstein, whose concept of scriptive things underpins much of my understanding of public commemoration as a site of social performance. A scriptive thing, according to Bernstein, is "an item of material culture that

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[78] Saidiya V. Hartman, *Lose Your Mother: A Journey along the Atlantic Slave Route*. (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007), 102.
[79] Hartman, *Lose Your Mother*, 168-9. See also Toni Morrison, "The Site of Memory," in *The Source of Self-Regard: Selected Essays, Speeches, and Meditations* (New York: Knopf, 2019), 243-245 for more on the question of memory and the Black American experience.
[80] Sandra L. Richards, "What Is to Be Remembered?: Tourism to Ghana's Slave Castle-Dungeons." *Theatre Journal* 57.4 (2005), 617.

prompts meaningful bodily behaviors."[81] While Bernstein's work focuses on objects associated with childhood and racialization in the United States, theatre scholar Elizabeth Son's work utilizes Bernstein's concept of scriptive things to examine memorials to the survivors of Japanese sexual slavery in both South Korea and the United States. Son argues that the memorials prompt performances of care, such as wrapping a scarf around the neck of a statue of a young woman, to commemorate and honor the survivors.[82] My work is similarly attentive to how memorials prompt or suggest particular kinds of engagement. In addition, I focus on how an individual's encounter can change or shift the meaning of a monument.[83]

Attending to the performance conditions of a commemorative space, such as the mise-en-scène specific to the location, the objects surrounding the monument, the types of visitors it attracts, and the events hosted there allows us to understand how meaning can be made and known to others. Dramaturgical analysis provides the tools to explain how audiences make meaning, and how audience members have different understandings of any given production. Understanding commemoration as performance allows us to contend with how monuments are complexly constructed and why different groups react to and interact with a memorial in distinct ways.

By engaging with methods and theories from performance and rhetoric, I study how a monument is created, how it makes particular arguments, how it prompts performances, how those performances change, and how to track those changes. This mixed-methods approach helps me examine commemoration not as a one-time event but as a recurrent and changeable act. In this dissertation, I use performance and rhetoric to understand how ideals of freedom and liberty

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[81] Bernstein, *Racial Innocence,* 71.
[82] Son, *Embodied Reckonings,* 218. There is a permanent version of the statue outside the Japanese embassy in Seoul as well as other copies that travel around the world.
[83] Schechner, *Performance Theory,* 324.

were disseminated through commemoration in the United States. By doing so, I call attention to how white male structures and systems continued to dominate commemorative practice despite the best efforts of marginalized groups to shift the discourse to include their conceptions of liberty and freedom.

In theorist Christina Sharpe's *Ordinary Notes*, Note 23 states: "The architecture of the memorial stages encounter. Spectacle is not repair."[84] This note neatly summarizes much of my theoretical and methodological understanding of commemoration and performance in this project. Monuments are spaces that prompt visitors to an encounter with an object meant to commemorate the past. The implication within Sharpe's note is that monuments, memorials, and sites of public commemoration are places where performance can alter how people experience and remember the past. In this dissertation, I consider how monuments and the spaces they inhabit function in the scenography of American public memory. Analyzing commemoration in this way offers an opportunity to understand what monuments in public space can represent for the purposes of remembrance of the past for future use.

Scope and Chapter Breakdown

There are many ways to approach the issue of commemoration as a recurrent performative process in the history of the United States, as the foregoing literature review illustrates. In making a larger theoretical claim about the nature of commemoration in the United States, I have limited myself to three monuments as case studies for understanding commemoration as a recurrent, performative process. I follow the Freedmen's Memorial Monument to Abraham Lincoln, the Stephen Douglas Tomb, and the Statue of Liberty through

[84] Sharpe, *Ordinary Notes*, 36.

the recurrent performative process of commemoration from their inception in the nineteenth century to the contemporary moment. Though each monument provides a different perspective on commemoration as a recurrent performative process, all three demonstrate how the act of commemoration follows a similar pattern over time.

I divide the commemorative process into three phases: rising, reification and revision, and reckoning, with every chapter covering a phase of this process across time. I have marked the phases of the commemorative process as such to provide a sense of temporal structure to the chapters: each covers between 20 to 40 years, beginning in 1861 and ending in 2023. The terms I use attempt to convey the dynamics at play in this study, and they could theoretically be extended to all monuments. Monuments rise, they are reified and revised, and they are reckoned with. In the case of the monuments at the center of this study, all three phases of the recurrent performative process of commemoration happened roughly during the same period, making it logical to cover all three monuments together in each chapter rather than using a case study approach.

The three time periods under consideration in each chapter—1861 to 1886 (rising), 1941 to 1986 (reification and revision), and 2001 to 2023 (reckoning)—align with particular moments in the long struggle for freedom for Black Americans in the United States. These moments—the Civil War, Reconstruction and the violent backlash against it (1861-1890s), the long Civil Rights era and the ascent of Reagan-era conservative politics (1930s-1989), and the rise of the Movement for Black Lives in the Obama and Trump administrations (2008-2021)—are by no means the only critical moments for the Black freedom movement or for the monuments under study in this dissertation. These periods, however, were critical as contentious turning points in both the histories of these monuments and the movement for justice for Black Americans.

I chose this periodization for the study of these monuments in order to highlight how sites of public commemoration through time have been important spaces for identity and public memory formation in the United States, how marginalized groups are frequently excluded from such spaces, and how public memory can be used to advance or deter calls for Black freedom.[85] Each of the three monuments in this dissertation was used discursively within these struggles, from the decades-long argument over what the Freedmen's Memorial Monument's visuals meant for Black Americans to the Statue of Liberty's deployment as a symbol of freedom when it was denied to so many citizens of the United States. In following these monuments through these particular periods in American history as explicitly connected to the long struggle for Black freedom, I illustrate how the commemorative practices of the Civil War period reverberate into the contemporary moment.

I am particularly interested in monuments erected in the wake of the Civil War, and especially monuments built in the North that explicitly use the tropes and visuals of freedom and liberty. There are countless examples of the invocation of freedom during the Civil War. Perhaps most strikingly among them is Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, in which he states the United States was "conceived in liberty" and pronounces winning the war as a "new birth of freedom" for the nation in November 1863.[86] The commemoration of the period, and particularly the case studies within this dissertation, reflect Lincoln's rhetorical impulse. They are examples of ideas of liberty and freedom as core American values cast into bronze, copper, and stone. The

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[85] Perhaps the most famous example of the use of a monument for these purposes is the Lincoln Memorial, which I mention briefly in this dissertation but do not comment on at length. See Kirk Savage, *Monument Wars: Washington, D.C., the National Mall, and the Transformation of the Memorial Landscape* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), Nina Silber, *This War Ain't Over: Fighting the Civil War in New Deal America* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2018).

[86] Abraham Lincoln, "The Gettysburg Address," Cornell University, accessed October 6, 2020, https://rmc.library.cornell.edu/gettysburg/good_cause/transcript.htm. See also Derrick R. Spires, *The Practice of Citizenship: Black Politics and Print Culture in the Early United States* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019).

tensions between these commemorations codifying a hegemonic white male vision of the nation and the reality of the fight for freedom for the new Black (male) citizens are reflected in these monuments. These monuments continue to reflect this dissonance in the contemporary moment.

I chose the three monuments under study in this dissertation because they were built in the aftermath of the Civil War and utilized the concepts of freedom and liberty within their design. All three demonstrate the recurrent performative process of commemoration from their rising in the 1870s and 1880s, reification and revision in the mid- and late-twentieth century, and reckoning in the contemporary moment. Moreover, each monument highlights how liberty and freedom were often codified in legal documentation, or "national acts," such as the Emancipation Proclamation (the Freedmen's Memorial Monument to Abraham Lincoln), the Constitution (the Stephen Douglas Tomb), and the Declaration of Independence (the Statue of Liberty).[87] Such documents are often where Americans of all kinds locate their understandings of liberty and freedom, and their use in commemoration underlines that connection.[88] Each of these monuments holds a different meaning as a symbol of American public memory in terms of size and impact within commemorative discourses. These variations in scale highlight how the recurrent performative process of commemoration is not wholly dependent on scope but rather on what the monument can rhetorically and performatively offer.

The Freedmen's Memorial Monument to Abraham Lincoln, the first of the three cases to be dedicated, was paid for by Black donors but designed and implemented by white men. The

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[87] Frederick Douglass, "The Freedmen's Monument to Abraham Lincoln: An Address Delivered in Washington, D.C., on 14 April 1876." In *The Frederick Douglass Papers, Series One: Speeches, Debates, and Interviews, vol. 4, 1867–80*, edited by John W. Blassingame and John R. McKivigan, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1991), 428.

[88] See Mitchell A. Kachun, *Festivals of Freedom: Memory and Meaning in African American Emancipation Celebrations, 1808-1915* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2003); Rogers M. Smith, *Civic Ideals: Conflicting Visions of Citizenship in U.S. History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997); and Susan-Mary Grant, *North over South: Northern Nationalism and American Identity in the Antebellum Era* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2000), among others.

April 1865 death of Abraham Lincoln prompted Charlotte Scott, a Black woman in Ohio, to donate money for a monument to Lincoln on behalf of the newly freed people of the United States. I analyze the Black people who made it possible, the queer white woman who almost won the chance to design it, and the dedication ceremony where Frederick Douglass spoke in nuanced terms about Lincoln and the monument. I continue to follow the commemorative afterlife of the monument, damned by Douglass and other Black critics, altered by the presence of a new memorial across the park to Black educator Mary McLeod Bethune, and targeted for protests over its existence in 2020.[89] While art historian Kirk Savage covers the building of the Freedmen's Memorial Monument extensively in *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves,* I expand on his work by following the monument after its famous dedication. By looking at the extended life of the monument, I account for how the questions raised in 1876 about the monument's existence started to be answered in 2020.

My second case is the Stephen Douglas Tomb, which was prompted by the 1861 death of Illinois Senator Stephen Douglas. Douglas' position as a slave owner and his political stance on the retention of slavery in the Union contributed to the 1860 election of Abraham Lincoln as President. The finished monument mixes mourning and American exceptionalism in its statuary and bas-reliefs. After dedication, the population of the Chicago neighborhood where the monument sits became increasingly Blacker, raising questions of how this performance of mourning has shifted as the city's demographics changed. This tomb has not been awarded a significant academic study, but it provides an excellent case for my research, as it reveals what

[89] See Peterson, *Lincoln in American Memory* and Barry Schwartz, *Abraham Lincoln and the Forge of National Memory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000).

happens to monuments when the ideals they stand for become mismatched with the space they inhabit over time.[90]

In both size and scope, the largest monument I examine is the Statue of Liberty, a now iconic New York City landmark. From its germination in 1865 as a gift from France to represent the abolition of slavery, through its protracted twenty-year journey of redesign and construction, the Statue has become one of the most iconic images of the United States. While the building of the monument has been studied widely in multiple disciplines, I analyze the monument in both past and present, examining how the commemoration shifts and performs across time and space in New York Harbor.[91] Though there has been much research into the Statue generally, there has only been one study of the centennial celebration of the Statue of Liberty in 1986, a major spectacle that reified the monument as a preeminent symbol of the United States.[92] By following the Statue of Liberty over a longer period than conventional histories, I demonstrate how the monument's symbolism has changed due to the actions of many individuals over time.

In each case, these monuments reflect how changing conditions over a brief span of time can radically alter the meanings and interactions monuments elicit. The meaning and implications of each of the monuments, first posited between 1861 and 1865, changed from their impetus to completion. In following these monuments over time, I demonstrate both the stable understandings of American identity as a white, male, Christian nation and the clear challenges to that understanding. The monuments studied here perform the white supremacist function of

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[90] Leonard W. Volk, *History of Douglas Monument in Chicago* (Chicago: The Chicago Legal News Company, 1880) is the only book on the subject and is written by the sculptor.
[91] Edward Berenson, *The Statue of Liberty: A Transatlantic Story* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012); Francesca Viano, *Sentinel: The Unlikely Origins of the Statue of Liberty* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2018).
[92] David E. Procter, *Enacting Political Culture: Rhetorical Transformations of Liberty Weekend, 1986* (New York: Praeger, 1991).

American identity formation while providing moments, both fleeting and constant, for subversion of these ideals.

In short, this dissertation looks at three specific cases of commemoration cast in bronze, copper, and stone, which, through performance and rhetoric, used the ideas of liberty and freedom to mediate national identity formation.[93] Rather than focus on the many monuments that directly commemorate the Civil War's dead, I focus on commemorative moments in the North that engaged with individuals and ideas that were integral to the conflict.[94] In tracking these three monuments over 160 years, I contend that these monuments prompted performances of American public memory, at times reinforcing hegemonic power structures, and at other points challenging and subverting them. Monuments both instruct visitors and provide them with directives in how to engage with the stone and bronze object: to touch, to read, to pose for a picture, and hopefully to remember something about the past.

The first chapter, Rising, covers the time period of 1861-1886: roughly the Civil War, Reconstruction, and the start of the Gilded Age. I investigate the construction of each of the monuments, examining how each monument was built by individuals, organizations, and local, state, and federal governments in the aftermath of the Civil War. I follow how various stakeholders for each monument raised money and gathered support, ending with the building

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[93] See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (New York: Verso, 2006), John E. Bodnar, *Remaking America: Public Memory, Commemoration, and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1991), and David Waldstreicher, *In the Midst of Perpetual Fetes: The Making of American Nationalism, 1776-1820* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1997) for examples of commemoration or parades and the making of American national identity.

[94] There has been significant study of the Confederate memorials that arose after Reconstruction and the Union military monuments. See Thomas J. Brown, *Civil War Monuments and the Militarization of America* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2019); Karen L. Cox, *Dixie's Daughters: The United Daughters of the Confederacy and the Preservation of Confederate Culture* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2003), and Caroline E. Janney, *Remembering the Civil War: Reunion and the Limits of Reconciliation* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2013), among others.

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and dedication of the three monuments by 1886. In this chapter I consider how individuals, organizations, and governments attempted to reconfigure American identity through the placement of monuments and use these commemorative encounters to reinforce hegemonic ideals.

The second chapter, Reification and Revision, examines 1941-1986, a period encapsulating World War II, the Civil Rights Movement, and the rise of President Ronald Reagan's vision of a conservative America. During this period, each of the three monuments underwent a transformation that revised and imbued the monuments with new meaning. From arguments over the Stephen Douglas Tomb's presence in a rapidly changing neighborhood to the solidification of the Statue of Liberty as a symbol of freedom for newly arrived immigrants, reification and revision prompted performances that built on the social scripts that helped create these monuments' original meanings.

The final chapter, Reckoning, assesses what happened to these monuments from 2001 to the contemporary moment of 2023. As many Americans grappled with the long-deferred promise of justice for Black Americans, the meaning of these monuments and the actions they prompted shifted again. From a new museum on Liberty Island that attempted to include the abolitionist origins of the Statue of Liberty to protests calling for removal of the Freedmen's Memorial Monument from Washington, D.C., reckoning is a stage of the recurrent performative process of commemoration that allows for the possibility of change and transformation. The performances prompted by the monuments attempted to make these commemorations more closely adhere to the ideals of freedom and liberty they represented, even if that meant their possible removal.

In combination, these chapters analyze how performance, memory, and rhetoric related to the Civil War came together in commemorative efforts in the United States. These three cases

provide a starting point for fully understanding monuments and memorials as places of performance, and as ripe areas of study for performance scholars. It is the relationship between object and person that allows a monument to have meaning. Performance helps explain that relationship.

As of 2023, there is active public discourse around Confederate monuments, statues of Christopher Columbus, and the names given to buildings and streets. As the successful removal of some monuments attests, a public audience can be critical in bringing down the symbol of a racist system. By examining three monuments built in the wake of the Civil War to honor different facets of the fight over abolition, I shed light on how symbolic acts of commemoration, even when they are seemingly designed by and for marginalized communities, perform white male ideals of American identity from inception to continued existence in the civic landscape. I do this with the aspiration that as we continue to commemorate, we recognize this impulse and work to honor and valorize those who deserve a memorial statue or marker in a more intersectional and honest manner.

I began this introduction in *Our Town.* In the play, the Civil War is mentioned explicitly by the Stage Manager in Act III. The act of remembering the Civil War, however, is a topic of conversation between two mothers shelling peas in Act I, as one of their husbands insists on taking his family to Civil War battlefields every two years and "stopping at every bush and pacing it all out."[95] The play prompts audiences to imagine the action of visiting a historic battlefield and poking around it to get a sense of what happened in those spaces. In the pages that follow, I hope to shed light on how monuments built in the Civil War's aftermath struck a balance of prompting remembrance of the past and invoking its injustices, prodding visitors to

[95] Thornton Wilder, *Our Town*, 21.

understand the past in particular ways through these commemorative spaces. Understanding commemoration as a site of performance helps us understand how these monuments invited affective experiences and actions which changed substantially over time.

Chapter 2: Rising (1861-1886)

"First things are always interesting, and this is one of our first things."[1] Early in the afternoon of April 14, 1876, Frederick Douglass uttered this sentence in front of the first major monument paid for by Black Americans in the United States.[2] Speaking to a crowd of hundreds of people in Washington, D.C., Douglass highlighted the critical importance of building this monument, this "first thing," as an act that brought Black Americans into the commemorative work of "civilized" nation-building of monuments to great men.[3] The Freedmen's Memorial Monument to Abraham Lincoln, eleven years in the making, was a grand achievement, given that the Washington Monument, a few blocks away on the National Mall, had sat uncompleted for over two decades.[4]

This monument to Lincoln was complicated for Douglass. The statue was by no means representative of what the Black American donors wanted for their monument to Lincoln. As I will discuss in this chapter, the creation of this monument was messy; born from a newly freed-woman's desire to commemorate a murdered president and passed from white male organizing committees to Black American organizations and back again, the design changed dramatically over the decade since Lincoln's assassination. This complicated history led Douglass to

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[1] Frederick Douglass, "The Freedmen's Monument to Abraham Lincoln: An Address Delivered in Washington, D.C., on 14 April 1876." In *The Frederick Douglass Papers, Series One: Speeches, Debates, and Interviews, vol. 4, 1867–80*, edited by John W. Blassingame and John R. McKivigan, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1991), 427–40; 431n.

[2] David Blight, *Frederick Douglass: Prophet of Freedom* (New York: Harper Collins, 2018), 7.

[3] Douglass, "The Freedmen's Monument to Abraham Lincoln: An Address Delivered in Washington, D.C., on 14 April 1876." See also Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 2006); Marcus Wood, *The Horrible Gift of Freedom: Atlantic Slavery and the Representation of Emancipation* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2010) and Elizabeth Jelin, trans. Judy Rein, and Marcial.Godoy-Anativia, *State Repression and the Labors of Memory* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003) for information on uses of monuments as tools of power.

[4] Savage, *Monument Wars*, 105.

prevaricate on the success of the monument, calling it a "highly interesting object," and spending most of his address focused instead on his complex view of Lincoln as president.[5]

Five days later, on April 19, Douglass clarified his comments in the local press. In the *National Republican,* he wrote a suggestion to the editor, William J. Murtagh, who had printed a description of the dedication ceremony and Douglass's full address. Arguing that there should be more statues in Lincoln Park, Douglass remarked that "perhaps no one monument could be made to tell the whole truth of any subject which it might be designed to illustrate."[6] In articulating this nuanced point about commemoration, Douglass reinforced why his own speech made such an impact. In his estimation, the act of commemoration and its originators were important, but not always the statue itself. There would always be space to add more monuments, and there would always be individuals to comment on such commemorations.

Monuments aim to capture the fullness of something (generally a person or ideal) in stone or bronze.[7] Statuary and commemoration attempt to make collective memory material; to tell a presumed historical "truth" about the past. As art historian Kirk Savage notes, "to commemorate is to seek historical closure, to draw together the various strands of meaning in a historical event or personage and condense its significance for the present in a speech or a monument."[8] However, as Frederick Douglass noted, monuments are rarely successful in realizing their creators' visions.[9] The audience watching the unveiling of the Freedmen's Memorial Monument

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[5] Douglass, "The Freedmen's Monument to Abraham Lincoln: An Address Delivered in Washington, D.C., on 14 April 1876."
[6] Frederick Douglass, "A Suggestion," *The National Republican*, April 19, 1876, 4, accessed July 1, 2020 via newspapers.com.
[7] For a more in-depth discussion of what memorials can mean, see Erika Doss, *Memorial Mania: Public Feeling in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010) and the recent Monument Lab report, *National Monument Audit,* https://monumentlab.com/monumentlab-nationalmonumentaudit.pdf.
[8] Kirk Savage, *Standing Soldier, Kneeling Slaves: Race, War, and Monument in Nineteenth-Century America* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2018 edition), 4.
[9] Frederick Douglass, "A Suggestion," *The National Republican*, April 19, 1876, 4, accessed July 1, 2020 via newspapers.com.

each had their own interpretation of the statue, one which likely shifted as Douglass addressed the spectators. Performance, or the understanding that the relationship between commemorative object and spectator comes from an action that makes meaning, allows us to examine why monuments are built, why they may come down, and why a monument does not make meaning without a spectator.[10] I argue that commemoration is a performative process that stretches across time, making new meaning with each successive encounter.

In this chapter, I am interested in the beginnings of the commemorative process, or the "rising" of monuments into public space. To place a monument takes time, money, and personal investment on the part of individuals and governments. The Freedmen's Memorial Monument in Washington, D.C., the Stephen Douglas Tomb in Chicago, IL, and the Statue of Liberty in New York City were each conceived, funded, and erected between 1861 and 1886. This tumultuous period of United States history saw the Union torn apart and brought back together again, the assassination of a president, the rise and fall of Reconstruction, the failed promise of racial equity, the beginning of the Gilded Age, and Jim Crow terror. For Black Americans, the period was marked by ostensibly gaining, as historian Kidada E. Williams notes, "a more liberated future" while contending with white backlash in the form of racial violence and suppression of the very rights they had worked to obtain.[11] The monuments in this study are the products of this incredibly bloody period, where it became critical to begin shaping the public memory of the Civil War. These three monuments also highlight how the performative act of commemoration is

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[10] My understanding and use of performance in this context draws from Robin Bernstein, *Racial Innocence: Performing American Childhood from Slavery to Civil Rights* (New York: New York University Press, 2011); Joseph Roach, *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996); Rebecca Schneider, *Performing Remains: Art and War in Times of Theatrical Reenactment* (London and New York: Routledge, 2011); and Elizabeth W. Son, *Embodied Reckonings: "Comfort Women," Performance, and Transpacific Redress* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2018), among others.

[11] Kidada E. Williams, *I Saw Death Coming: A History of Terror and Survival in the War Against Reconstruction* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2023), xvi.

dependent on the determination of stakeholders finishing the project and their investment in what a monument can offer as an object of remembrance.

Each of these monuments sought to capture an aspect of how white Americans conceived of the ideals of freedom and liberty. In the case of the Freedmen's Memorial Monument, it was a commemorative performance as a gift to the memory of a man who some in the Black American community saw as the harbinger of freedom, though the reality was infinitely more complicated. The death of Illinois Senator Stephen Douglas in 1861 led to a protracted campaign to build a monument and tomb to a man who in life owned slaves and championed the expansion of chattel slavery in the United States. His tomb became a political tool for illustrating what freedom and justice could symbolize and who deserved to be publicly commemorated. The Statue of Liberty, the largest of the three monuments and donated by the French state, demonstrates how the symbol of liberty can shift from one of abolition to one of respect for law and justice in deference to white American sensibilities. It also shows the fickle nature of the American public(s) in receiving such a gift as the struggle to fundraise for the statue's pedestal delayed the monument's unveiling from the planned centennial of the United States in 1876 until 1886. While details differ, they all demonstrate how the process of commemoration began as a performative act of remembrance which relied on interested audiences to maintain relevance.

I examine the monuments themselves alongside historical planning documents, newspaper articles, advertisements, and letters to understand how these monuments were created and how they functioned as spaces for performance. While this project is historical in scope, the analytical tools I use come from an interdisciplinary approach, grounded in performance frameworks and the methods of rhetoric and museum studies. This approach allows for a fuller examination of the social and political contexts surrounding the monuments, their surroundings,

and their audiences. In formulating commemoration as a recurrent performative process, I contend that the meaning of a monument is contingent upon the audience(s) that view it and the social and political contexts it exists in: time changes both. Much as social anthropologist Paul Connerton argues that memory becomes sedimented in the body through action, I argue that monuments, as objects of memory formation, are also places of memory sedimentation, and that through performance we can understand this process.[12]

A brief section of performance theorist Joseph Roach's *Cities of the Dead* acts as a key theoretical passage for this chapter. For Roach, the monuments of performers in eighteenth-century London surrogate mourning for those actors. He links the sites to Tombs of the Unknown Soldier, in that both substitute a memorial for an individual whose remains cannot be identified that creates a chain of surrogation over time.[13] I follow Roach's invocation to consider how the Freedmen's Memorial Monument, the Stephen Douglas Tomb, and the Statue of Liberty stood in for American ideals through their presence in public space. I also take into account performance historian Robin Bernstein's concept of objects as scriptive things and performance scholar Elizabeth Son's use of Bernstein's concept as applied to monuments for performances of care.[14] The act of commemoration prompts visitors to action, and it begins with the idea to build a monument in the first place.

Theories and methods from museum studies also inform my understanding of the creation of monuments. As art historian Erika Doss, African American studies scholar Salamishah Tillet, and philosopher Edward Casey note, the placement and physical space of a monument or

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[12] Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989) 72-3.
[13] Roach, *Cities of the Dead,* 105.
[14] Robin Bernstein, *Racial Innocence: Performing American Childhood from Slavery to Civil Rights* (New York: New York University Press, 2011), 72; Elizabeth W. Son, *Embodied Reckonings: "Comfort Women," Performance, and Transpacific Redress* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2018), 215.

historical site is critical to the meaning of the site.[15] For the purposes of my project, the relationship between the creation of monuments, often prompted by individuals, and the spaces they inhabit, controlled by groups and governments, is critical. *Where* a monument is placed is just as critical as what is commemorated.[16] As becomes clear with these monuments, placement of a monument dictates its power in a space and ability to be a site of performance.[17]

I also make substantial use of rhetorical analysis to understand how these monuments were created and how different publics understood them. For the oratorical texts I analyze, I make use of deixis, meaning pointing words like "your" or "we," that serve a particular rhetorical function in epideictic address. Allison M. Prasch argues that "a rhetorical theory of deixis reveals the dynamic interplay between text and context by examining how speakers use language to activate the people, places, and times embedded within the concrete speech situation as a means of persuasion."[18] In Prasch's article, this becomes a useful means of allowing the critic to understand how "the act of displaying, exhibiting, showing forth through speech" is used in epideictic rhetoric as a tool.[19] For my purposes, Prasch's understanding of audience pairs well with theatrical understandings of reception, while allowing me to use the speeches that have been preserved as the basis to develop understanding of who the speaker was trying to include or exclude.

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[15] Erika Doss, *Memorial Mania: Public Feeling in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010); Salamishah Tillet, *Sites of Slavery: Citizenship and Racial Democracy in the Post-Civil Rights Imagination* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2012); Edward S. Casey, "Public Memory in Place and Time," in *Framing Public Memory*, edited by Kendall R. Phillips (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2004), 17-44.
[16] John E. Bodnar, *Remaking America: Public Memory, Commemoration, and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1991), 14.
[17] See Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2015) and Rebecca Schneider, *Performing Remains*.
[18] Allison M. Prasch, "Toward a Rhetorical Theory of Deixis," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 102, no. 2 (2016), 174.
[19] Prasch, "Towards and Rhetorical Theory of Deixis," 167.

In the case of these three monuments, as this chapter details, the social scripts that each monument prompted visitors to enact were complex, deriving from their funding, design, symbolism, and the performances that ushered their appearance in public space. The chapter begins with the Freedmen's Memorial Monument to Abraham Lincoln; the last to be conceived (1865) but the first to be erected (1876). Paid for by Black American donors, the monument was designed by the white men of the Western Sanitary Commission, and this inherent tension between who the monument was meant to represent and who was responsible for it comes across in both its tumultuous design and fundraising process and the dedication day address by Frederick Douglass. I analyze Douglass's words along with letters, newspaper articles, and the monument itself to examine how the monument facilitated performances of American public memory creation by upholding the idea of Lincoln as the Great Emancipator of the enslaved populations of the United States.

I then turn to the Stephen Douglas Tomb, the planning for which began after the Senator's death in 1861 yet was not completed until 1882. The struggle of the Douglas Monument Association to fund the project, as well as the fading public memory of Douglas as one of the most important politicians in the antebellum period, demonstrates how the building of monuments can be used to create a narrative that centers a white man such as Douglas as the emblem of American law and justice. Of the three monuments in this study, the monument and tomb to Douglas on the South Side of Chicago is the least represented in secondary literature about commemoration. I examine the writings of the Douglas Monument Association, and in particular its secretary and sculptor of the statues on the tomb, Leonard Volk. Volk wrote *A History of the Douglas Monument,* which I analyze in depth and rely upon to tell the story of building of the monument. In doing so, I illustrate how a monument to a Senator created

performances of a whitewashed vision of American liberty and justice as a way of uplifting Douglas's standing in the public imagination.

Finally, I turn to the most famous of all my case studies, the Statue of Liberty. Much has already been written in recent years about the statue's origins, including books by Yasmin Khan, Edward Berenson, and Francesca Viano.[20] Rather than attempt to repeat this work, I analyze the designs of the sculptor Frederic August Bartholdi, promotional materials, newspaper articles, illustrations, and advertisements depicting the Statue of Liberty. I argue that while the Statue was proclaimed to be "Liberty Enlightening the World," much of the Statue's discourse showed a vision of American liberty steeped in racism and consumerism in order to appeal to white Americans donors for the statue's pedestal. The performances engendered by the Statue of Liberty relied on middle- and upper-class white male American sensibilities, and while some challenged this dominant narrative, the process to build the Statue set the tone for the use of the monument as an icon for centuries after.

By examining these monuments from their initial conception to their dedication days, I seek to understand these statues as sites of performances of freedom, liberty, white supremacy, and American public memory creation. As each monument demonstrates, the building of a monument is costly on many fronts, and the commitment to do so by various stakeholders requires a lot of political, social, and financial will. In Frederick Douglass's address, he referred to the building of a monument as a "national act." The following pages will illustrate just how much of a national versus a personal will was needed to remember individuals and ideas in the

[20] Yasmin Sabina Khan, *Enlightening the World: The Creation of the Statue of Liberty* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2010); Edward Berenson, *The Statue of Liberty: A Transatlantic Story* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012); Francesca Viano, *Sentinel: The Unlikely Origins of the Statue of Liberty* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2018).

aftermath of the Civil War. If, as I argue, monuments are spaces of performance that create meaning over time, then it is critical to look at how monuments get their start.

The Freedmen's Memorial Monument to Abraham Lincoln

The Freedmen's Memorial Monument to Abraham Lincoln, like many monuments and memorials, was instigated by tragedy. On April 14th, 1865, five days after the surrender of the Confederate army at Appomattox, Virginia, the 16th President of the United States Abraham Lincoln was assassinated by John Wilkes Booth, an actor and Confederate sympathizer, at Ford's Theatre in Washington, D.C. Lincoln died the next morning in a boarding house across the street from the theatre, and the nation went into mourning.[21] Lincoln's assassination in the wake of the surrender of the Confederacy, historian Merrill Peterson notes, "came with dramatic, indeed theatrical, suddenness—a bolt in the clear sky—at the hour of victory, [and] its force was multiplied a hundred times."[22] The murder of Abraham Lincoln dramatically changed the direction of politics and society in the United States, particularly with regard to the treatment and assimilation of the 400,000 newly freed individuals. Over time Lincoln became one of the most commemorated figures in the country, and one of the first efforts to build a monument to Lincoln came from some of these newly freed individuals.[23] The process to build the Freedmen's Memorial Monument at once demonstrates the importance of commemoration as a performance of freedom for the Black American individuals who worked to build the monument, and the complications of creating a monument to a white man in a white, male dominant society.

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[21] Merrill D. Peterson, *Lincoln in American Memory* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 3-8.
[22] Peterson, *Lincoln in American Memory,* 8.
[23] Monument Lab, *National Monument Audit* (Philadelphia: Monument Lab, 2021), https://monumentlab.com/audit.

The original concept for the Freedmen's Memorial Monument came from Charlotte Scott, a Black American woman from Marietta, Ohio, who, upon hearing of Lincoln's assassination, gave $5.00 to Reverend Battelle in Marietta to erect a monument to Lincoln on behalf of the newly emancipated slaves.[24] This originating moment was captured in letters from the Reverend Battelle as well as described in a letter from Union Brigadier General T.C.H. Smith, published in the *Missouri Democrat* on May 2, 1865:

> 'Wednesday Morning, April 26, 1865
> MY DEAR SIR, – A poor negro woman of Marietta, Ohio, (Charlotte Scott,) one of those made free by President Lincoln's Proclamation, proposes that a monument to their dead friend be erected by the colored people of the United States. She has handed to a person in Marietta five dollars, as her contribution for the purpose. Such a monument would have a history more grand and touching than any of which we have account. Would it not be well to take up this suggestion, and make it known to the freedmen?
> Yours, truly, T.C.H. Smith

In this letter, Smith notes that Scott was "made free" by the Emancipation Proclamation, rhetorically marking the significance of her contribution as the act of a free woman. In other letters about the monument's origins, Smith, the Reverend Battelle, and Scott's former enslaver Dr. William Rucker each noted that Scott's contribution was meant to be for a statue explicitly from freedpeople but, to use the words of Rucker, "should be emphatically national."[25] The commemorative performance honoring Lincoln's action of emancipation engendered by the monument's creation was meant to be from Black Americans while reflecting the national sentiment of mourning and honor.

The affective power of this possible statue is evident from Smith's letter, where he notes that "such a monument would have a history more grand and touching than any of which we

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[24] Jacob Forman, *The Western Sanitary Commission'; a sketch of its origin, history, labors for the sick and wounded of the western armies, and aid given to freedmen and Union refugees, with incidents of hospital life* (St. Louis, 1864?), 130-134; Frederick Douglass, "The Freedmen's Monument to Abraham Lincoln," 431.
[25] Jacob Forman, *The Western Sanitary Commission*, 103.

have account."[26] Who the "we" in Smith's estimate is hard to qualify, but he proposed that the Freedmen's Memorial Monument would be a different type of endeavor in the history of commemoration due to who was behind the endeavor. By articulating the stakes of this monument and "making it known to the freedmen," Smith's letter illustrates the beginning of the complicated process of building the Freedmen's Memorial Monument.

Smith's letter was addressed to James Yeatman, the head of the Western Sanitary Commission, a wartime relief agency based in St. Louis, Missouri. The Commission, run by white men, began to circulate the idea among other freed Black Americans, mostly Civil War veterans, who raised over $16,000 to fund the monument.[27] Ads were placed in Northern newspapers to support the effort, though attempts to solicit funds from Southern freedmen were thwarted due to the actions of President Andrew Johnson, who refused to support the work of the Freedmen's Bureau and other charitable efforts.[28] They also began to work with John Langston, who at the time was founding Howard University's law school, to reach a larger audience of Black American individuals.[29] The Freedmen's National Memorial Monument Association, chaired in name by Frederick Douglass, was founded in 1867 for the purpose of fundraising. It was made up of almost exclusively well-off Black Americans, mostly from Boston, such as Robert Morris, a prominent lawyer.[30]

From Morris's papers, now housed at the Boston Athenaeum, it becomes clear that the creation of the Freedmen's National Memorial Monument Association led to friction over how

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[26] "Freedmen's Memorial Monument to Abraham Lincoln" pamphlet, St. Louis, Missouri, 1866, from the collections of the American Antiquarian Society.
[27] Jacob Forman, *The Western Sanitary Commission*, 104. See also Deborah Fountain, "The Civil War and Natchez U.S. Colored Troops," *Black Perspectives*, December 12, 2022, https://www.aaihs.org/the-civil-war-and-natchez-u-s-colored-troops/.
[28] Savage, *Standing Soldiers*, 95.
[29] Forman, *The Western Sanitary Commission*, 104.
[30] Letter from Charles Lenox Remond to Robert Morris, Robert Morris Papers, Boston Athenaeum. Northern cities like Boston had thriving communities of African Americans due to the early abolition of slavery in those states.

best to represent the will of the freedpeople who donated to create the monument. In a letter to Morris, Charles Lenox Remond, another prominent Black abolitionist, discussed the Association's creation. One line in particular stands out in Remond's letter; on the second page, Remond stated: "Don't forget, we put our plea for the meeting upon the ground that it alone can insure early action and prosperity to the grand undertaking by securing the interest of our people at large and making it the cause of all instead of the few into whose hands the charge was confided." Much like the letters from Charlotte Scott's former enslaver and Brigadier General Smith, there was an understanding that the monument's intended audience could not solely be the purview of the men who were placed in charge. Letters such as Remond's highlight how the monument was discussed as a critical piece of action for Black Americans by some of the most powerful members of the northern Black community, making the statue a performance of abolitionism as much as a remembrance of Abraham Lincoln.

By the time the Freedmen's National Memorial Monument Association was created, however, the Western Sanitary Commission had already chosen a design. Harriet Hosmer, a queer Boston-area sculptor working in Rome amongst other queer female sculptors like Edmonia Lewis and Emma Stebbins, was friendly with James Yeatman, the head of the Commission, and had her design chosen in 1866.[31] Hosmer's design was extravagant, with multiple levels of sculpture. Four bas-reliefs depicting various aspects of Lincoln's life adorned its sides, surrounding a representation of Lincoln lying in a coffin at the top. Crucially, the monument in Hosmer's model would feature a genealogy of Black Americans in the United States in sculpture

[31] Harriet Hosmer, *Letters and Memories*, edited by Cornelia Carr (New York: Moffat, Yard and Company, 1912) 227, from American Antiquarian Society collections. See also Maria Popova, *Figuring* (New York: Penguin Random House, 2019), 230. Hosmer's life was fascinating; she often was awarded commissions for monuments (such as the Central Park Shakespeare statue) and then someone else, usually a white man, ended up completing the commission.

on the base, from enslaved to freedman and Union soldier. Hosmer's design intended to provide viewers with two ideas from Lincoln's life: "the Emancipation of the Slave, and the Preservation of the American Union."[32] As articulated by Hosmer, the commemoration of Lincoln on behalf of the freedmen gave a clear and obvious presence to those who were funding the monument. By placing them within the scenography of the monument, Hosmer's design asked the audience viewing it to not only consider Lincoln but also the individuals who were fundraising on its behalf.

(Figure 2.1: A stereograph of Hosmer's model for the statue, ca. 1867, from the collections of the American Antiquarian Society)

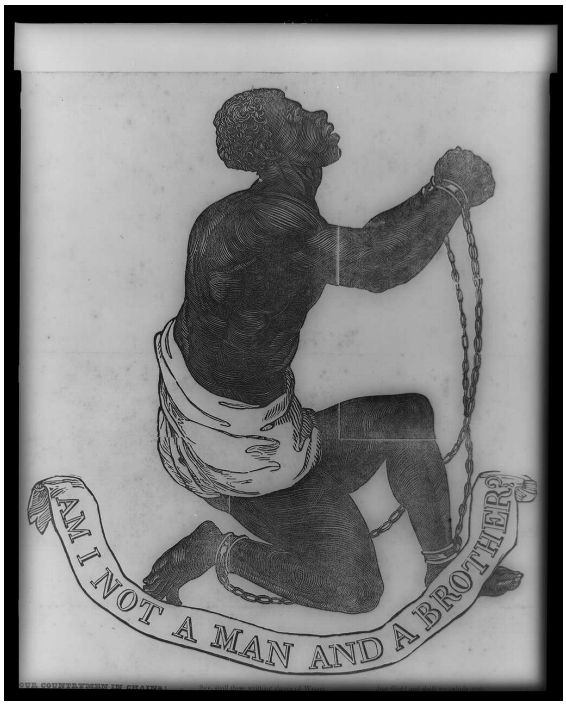
[32] "Freedmen's Memorial Monument to Abraham Lincoln" pamphlet, St. Louis, Missouri, 1866, American Antiquarian Society.

Hosmer's design was cast in plaster in Italy and sent to the United States to help raise funds around the country.[33] It was also captured via stereographs, an early photographic mass media form that created 3-D-like still images for viewers (Figure 2.1).[34] The efforts to fundraise, however, did not match the scale of Hosmer's vision for the Freedmen's Memorial. By the early 1870s, Hosmer's design was discarded as too expensive.[35] The Western Sanitary Commission instead chose a design from Boston born sculptor Thomas Ball after a member of the Commission, William Eliot, visited Ball's studio in Italy and liked Ball's version of Lincoln as the Great Emancipator.

(Figure 2.2: Thomas Ball, *Emancipation Group*, 1866, bronze maquette, University of Michigan Museum of Art, https://clements.umich.edu/exhibit/proclaiming-emancipation/material-culture-illustrations-monuments/)

[33] "Freedmen's Memorial Monument to Abraham Lincoln" pamphlet, St. Louis, Missouri, 1866, American Antiquarian Society.
[34] Stereograph of Harriet Hosmer model of the Freedmen's Memorial Monument to Abraham Lincoln, uncatalogued collections of the American Antiquarian Society.
[35] Savage, *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves*, 105.

Ball's vision of emancipation (Figure 2.2) depicted a standing Abraham Lincoln holding a shield on top of a stack of books. He is depicted as a benevolent figure who, with a single gesture, freed those in bondage, represented by the crouching figure at his feet. The kneeling man, while seemingly free, is still looked down upon by the statue of Lincoln. This man is still seemingly in the same visual discourse as Josiah Wedgewood's infamous image of an enslaved man on his knees asking for his freedom (Figure 2.3) or Randolph Rogers' use of an enslaved woman in his original model of a monument to Lincoln in Philadelphia (Figure 2.4).[36] Though there are broken chains at the bottom of the pedestal, Ball's figure is not rising to his feet in freedom.



(Figure 2.3: "Am I not a man and a brother?," Library of Congress Rare Book and Special Collections Division, woodcut on wove paper ; 26.7 x 22.8 cm., Broadside Collection, portfolio 118, no. 32a c-Rare Bk Coll)

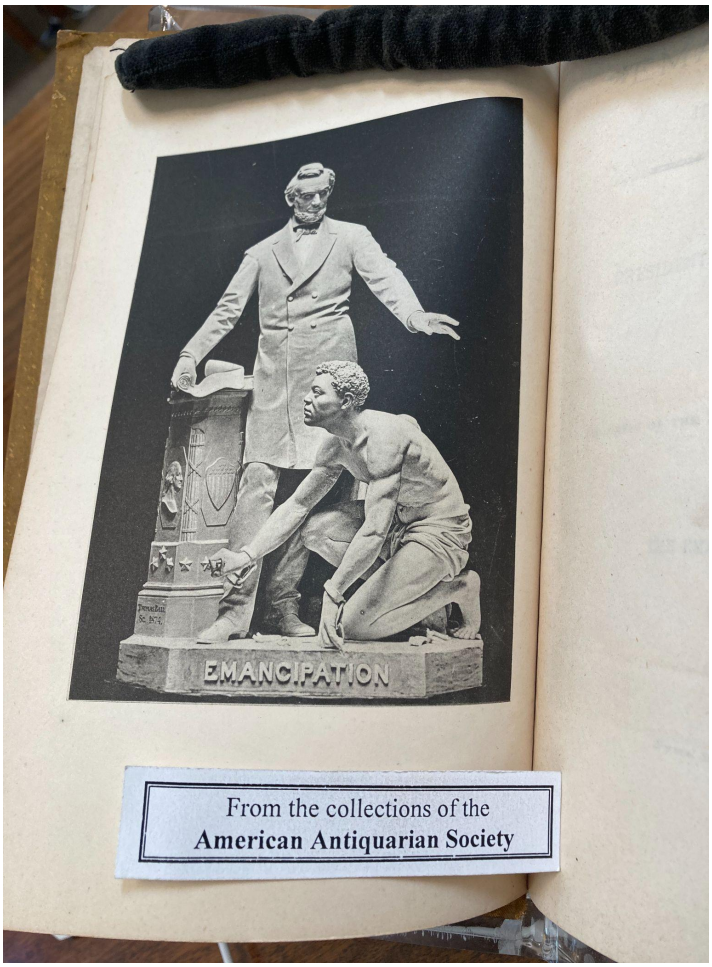
[36] For more on Wedgewood's illustration and its uses in nineteenth-century visual culture, see Marcus Wood, *Blind Memory: Visual Representations of Slavery in England and America, 1780-1865* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), Saidiya Hartman, *Lose Your Mother*, and Teresa A. Goddu, *Selling Antislavery*.

(Figure 2.4: Randolph Rogers, *Lincoln and the Emancipated Slave*, ca. 1866, painted plaster model, University of Michigan Museum of Art, https://clements.umich.edu/exhibit/proclaiming-emancipation/material-culture-illustrations-monuments/)

After choosing a new design, the Commission collaborated with President Ulysses S. Grant and Congress to secure funding for the statue's pedestal so that it could be installed outdoors while Ball worked to create an updated version of *Emancipation*.[37] In deference to critiques that would be given about the pose of the kneeling Black American man, Ball modified this figure in an attempt to make it less passive.[38] He modeled the man's face on an image of Archer Alexander, the last slave captured under the Fugitive Slave Act, who then worked for William Eliot of the Western Sanitary Commission. Ball changed the face of the kneeling Black American man, now posed with Lincoln holding the Emancipation Proclamation with a cameo profile of George Washington on the plinth. He did nothing to change the relative position of the figures, leaving the freedman on a lower visual plane than the looming figure of Lincoln (Figure

[37] Savage, *Standing Soldiers,* 106 and Ana Lucia Araujo, *Shadows of the Slave Past: Memory, Heritage, and Slavery* (New York: Routledge, 2014), 155-8.
[38] Savage, *Standing Soldiers,* 105 and Erin Thompson, *Smashing Statues: The Rise and Fall of America's Public Monuments* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2022), 123.

2.5). If Hosmer's design was meant to elicit reverence for Lincoln and respect for the Black Americans who were emancipated in her grand design, Ball's version reinforced the white supremacy that had and continues to dominate in the United States.



(Figure 2.5: Image of Ball's marble cast of the Emancipation Group monument, in Joseph T. Wilson's *Emancipation*; from the collections of the American Antiquarian Society)

The newly redesigned monument was cast in bronze, paid for by Black American donors, and set to be unveiled eleven years after Lincoln's assassination on April 14, 1876, a day Congress declared a holiday in Washington, D.C.[39] A parade wound through the streets of Washington, with Senators, Congressmen, and members of Black organizations marching along

[39] Peterson, *Lincoln in American Memory*, 58.

a route that ended in Lincoln Park to the east of the Capitol.[40] Church bells tolled along the route, and when the procession arrived at the park the Marine Band played "Hail, Columbia" to open the ceremony.[41]

Professor John Langston, the head of the National Committee for the monument, led the speaking roster, followed by a former Louisiana state congressman who read the Emancipation Proclamation and oversaw the playing of "the Marseillaise hymn," the French national anthem.[42] James Yeatman, the president of the Western Sanitary Commission, gave remarks on behalf of the organization, telling the assembled crowd the story of Charlotte Scott and reading the letter he received from a Union general retelling the tale that kickstarted the fundraising efforts from the white fundraising board.[43] Thus, the monument was understood to be the result of a Black woman's commemorative impulse to honor one man's action of the emancipation of enslaved people in the United States.

Yeatman went further to detail the choice of sculptor and the use of Archer Alexander as a model, noting that Alexander was "represented as exerting his own strength with strained muscles in breaking the chain which had bound him. A far greater degree of dignity and vigor, as well as of historical accuracy, is thus imparted."[44] By giving specific attributes to the figure of the kneeling Black man, Yeatman attempted to reinterpret the composition of the statue that was yet to be unveiled fully for the audience. This narrative was widely circulated about the statue, running counter to what the statue itself visually articulated.[45]

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[40] *Inaugural Ceremonies of the Freedmen's Memorial Monument to Abraham Lincoln, Washington City April 14th, 1876*, (St. Louis: Levison and Blythe, 1876; HathiTrust digital edition), 4-5.
[41] *Inaugural Ceremonies of the Freedmen's Memorial Monument to Abraham Lincoln,* 5.
[42] *Inaugural Ceremonies of the Freedmen's Memorial Monument to Abraham Lincoln,* 6.
[43] *Inaugural Ceremonies of the Freedmen's Memorial Monument to Abraham Lincoln,* 6.
[44] *Inaugural Ceremonies of the Freedmen's Memorial Monument to Abraham Lincoln,* 9.
[45] Multiple Black newspapers, including *New Orleans Tribune*, *Peoples Advocate*, and *Savannah Tribune*, discuss this tension in the monument, all found in the collections of the American Antiquarian Society.

After Yeatman's lengthy historical retelling, Professor Langston, the head of the monument committee, accepted the gift of the monument from the Western Sanitary Commission, proclaiming that "we accept and dedicate through the ages in memory and honor of him who is to be forever known in the records of the world's history as the emancipator of the enslaved of our country."[46] President Ulysses S. Grant unveiled the monument, and then Frederick Douglass, arguably the most famous Black man in America, rose to give his dedication day oration.[47] The speech, performed before a large audience of Black and white citizens, was the highlight of the day.

Douglass's address noted striking differences between the statue and the memory of Lincoln it was meant to encapsulate. He opened his speech with praise, marking the monument as "a national act, an act which is to go into history" as the first monument, by Black Americans or anyone else, to honor the fallen President in the nation's capital.[48] In rhetorically proclaiming the importance of the monument, Douglass performed what the monument meant for the Black community in the achievement of making this statue to Lincoln. The "national act" was one to be celebrated, regardless of what the monument looked like.

However, after praising the creation of such a monument, Douglass then turned to critically examine the legacy of Lincoln, performing in his oration a nuance otherwise not seen in the commemoration itself. Douglass stated: "It must be admitted, truth compels me to admit even here in the *presence* of the monument we have erected to his memory, Abraham Lincoln was not, in the fullest sense of the word, either our man or our model"[49] (emphasis added). By noting that the monument creates a presence that made it difficult to question the lionization of Lincoln,

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[46] *Inaugural Ceremonies of the Freedmen's Memorial Monument to Abraham Lincoln,* 11.
[47] Savage, *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves*, 176.
[48] Douglass, "The Freedmen's Memorial Monument to Abraham Lincoln," 428.
[49] Douglass, "The Freedmen's Memorial Monument to Abraham Lincoln," 431.

Douglass performed what would become an often-repeated reaction to the monument. The image of Lincoln standing over a kneeling Black man, seemingly gifting him his freedom, began the surrogation chain of Lincoln as Great Emancipator. The rhetoric of the image was a powerful one, reproduced in miniatures of the statue that were widely distributed. Soon, the official narrative surrounding Lincoln coalesced around this image.[50]

Additionally, in this moment and throughout the address, Douglass used specific pronouns to address particular members of the audience. As in the quote above, he used "we" and "our" to denote the Black audience members, while at other points using "you" to address the white audience. The most famous example of this within the speech appeared after Douglass began to address the memory of Lincoln, ending with the summation: "You [white Americans] are the children of Abraham Lincoln. We [Black Americans] are at best only his step-children; children by adoption, children by forces of circumstances and necessity."[51] As rhetorician Allison Prasch suggests, this delineation prompted action on the part of different members of the audience.[52] In this case, it was a recognition that Lincoln's actions and his place in public memory meant very different things to the white and Black members of the assembled audience.

The difficulty of contextualizing Lincoln in the face of this powerful visual scenography did not stop Douglass. In the oration, he outlined Lincoln's multiple failures to live up to the bronze representation Douglass stood next to, noting the limitations of the man as President, from promoting efforts for colonization to blaming Black people for the Civil War.[53] While

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[50] *People's Advocate*, July 15, 1876, Alexandria, VA, accessed April 15, 2020, *African American Newspapers*; Peterson, *Lincoln in American Memory*, 35-40; Roach, *Cities of the Dead*, 2.
[51] Douglass, "The Freedmen's Memorial Monument to Abraham Lincoln," 432.
[52] Allison M. Prasch, "Toward a Rhetorical Theory of Deixis," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 102, no. 2 (2016), 174.
[53] Douglass, "The Freedmen's Memorial Monument to Abraham Lincoln," 433.

Douglass was determined to provide nuance to Lincoln, he also spoke to how connecting Lincoln to the Black cause could ensure the continued rights of Black people in the United States.

After describing Lincoln's faults, Douglass remarked: "Though he loved Caesar less than Rome, though the Union was more to him than our freedom or our future, under his wise and beneficent rule we saw ourselves gradually lifted from the depths of slavery to the heights of liberty and manhood."[54] In both the allusion to *Julius Caesar* and description of Lincoln that follows, Douglass demonstrated how Lincoln was a necessary person for the Black community to commemorate *because* of the narrative relationship the monument creates between Lincoln and Black people, granting their cause legitimacy. For Douglass, the "heights of liberty" were more important than the statue that showed Lincoln leading that process. The performance by Douglass both highlighted the tension of that legitimacy and underlined the importance of the monument, creating a contested commemoration that required nuance beyond the statue's physical form.

By the end of his oration Douglass landed at this important, if tension filled, stance about the memory of Abraham Lincoln. The monument as an object of public memory is both condemnable for its praise of Lincoln (Douglass was purported to say that the monument "showed the Negro on his knees when a more manly attitude would have been indicative of freedom") and essential because of how it connects Lincoln to the Black community.[55] He summarized this performative action of commemoration and citizenship by the Black community, stating: "In doing honor to the memory of our friend and liberator we have been

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[54] Douglass, "The Freedmen's Memorial Monument to Abraham Lincoln," 434.
[55] Blassingame and McKivigan introduction, "The Freedmen's Memorial Monument to Abraham Lincoln," 428. This was also noted in Freeman Murray Morris, *Emancipation and the freed in American sculpture* (Washington, D.C., 1916), where the author attributes the knowledge of this quotation to the historian John Cromwell, who attended the dedication.

doing highest honor to ourselves and those who come after us. We have been fastening ourselves to a name and fame imperishable and immortal."[56] Despite his misgivings and his demands to nuance the memory of Abraham Lincoln, Douglass still chose to highlight the possibilities embodied by the monument, emphasizing how critical it was to tie the Black cause with the visual symbol of Lincoln as Emancipator.

Douglass's oration highlighted multiple tensions that surrounded the monument and complicated what that day's audience saw in it, leading to a broader discussion of what emancipation should look like in statuary form. In a note in *The People's Advocate* (Alexandria, Virginia), editor J.W. Cromwell referred to Douglass's own reservations about the manly nature of Ball's monument when reporting about a different vision of emancipation on display at the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia:

> The bronze figure in the Austrian Department in Memorial Hall with one hand bearing aloft the closing words of Lincoln's proclamation, and the other outstretched in token of freedom, come up to F. Douglass' idea of manhood, and which is not found in the new monument in Lincoln Park in Washington. Is there public spirit enough to retain this in our country, and have it placed in one of our public parks?[57]

Cromwell refers to the Italian sculptor Francesco Pezzicar's statue *The Freed Slave*, which depicts a standing man with broken manacles hanging from his right wrist and holding the Emancipation Proclamation in his left hand. It was on display for the duration of the Centennial Exposition, illustrated in the popular *Frank Leslie's Historical Register of the Centennial Exposition*, and seen in stereographs from the Exposition (Figure 2.6). The suggestion from *The*

[56] Douglass, "The Freedmen's Memorial Monument to Abraham Lincoln," 440.
[57] *The People's Advocate*, July 15, 1876, 1, accessed December 10, 2021, American Antiquarian Society.

People's Advocate to place Pezzicar's statue in a public park in the United States never came to fruition. It currently is on display at the Curatorio del Museo Revoltella in Trieste, Italy.[58]

(Figure 2.6: Stereograph of *The Freed Slave*, *International Exhibition 1876,* Centennial Photographic Co., Philadelphia, from the collections of the American Antiquarian Society)

The raising of the Freedmen's Memorial Monument to Abraham Lincoln demonstrates how the process of building a monument relies on both the funding of the monument and the investment of people in the performative process of commemoration. In the case of the Freedmen's Memorial Monument, the commemorative impulse from Charlotte Scott the day after Abraham Lincoln died shifted from the idea of one woman to a decade-long effort that continually centered the role of white Lincoln and marginalized the role of Black Americans in their own freedom and emancipation. In its dedication, the Freedmen's Memorial Monument

[58] "The Material Culture of Abolition," Clements Library, University of Michigan, accessed January 20, 2022, https://clements.umich.edu/exhibit/proclaiming-emancipation/material-culture-illustrations-monuments/.

became a site of performance in which the statue's representation of freedom sat in tension with the alternative visions of freedom it might have shown. It became a place where public memory-making could transform the conditions of the present moment, if only briefly.[59]

The Stephen Douglas Tomb

"Tell my children to obey the laws and defend the Constitution."[60] These were the purported last words of Stephen Douglas, United States Senator from Illinois (1813-1861). Like the Freedmen's Memorial Monument, death marked the instigation of the Stephen Douglas Tomb. However, the monument to Douglas was directly linked to his bodily remains rather than solely a monument to his memory. The Tomb was championed over its twenty-year building process primarily by a distant relative, Leonard Volk, who was the chief sculptor and architect of the Tomb. The case of the Stephen Douglas Tomb demonstrates how this early stage in the process of memorialization is contingent on the investment of stakeholders, from donors to state government officials, who work to perform the act of commemoration. Much like the Freedmen's Memorial Monument, the Stephen Douglas Tomb's design and associated discourse highlight how white supremacy, liberty, and freedom were entwined in several post-Civil War monuments.[61] The performances offered by the site's creation evoked an idealized, white-washed vision of the United States, engendered by design choices in the monument's bas-relief

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[59] Saidiya Hartman, *Lose Your Mother*: *A Journey Along the Atlantic Slave Route* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007), 237.

[60] Leonard Volk, *History of the Douglas Monument at Chicago* (Chicago: The Chicago Legal News Co., 1880), *Internet Archive,* digitized by University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, https://archive.org/details/historyofdouglas00volk, 20.

[61] For more on monuments and American identity see Doss, *Memorial Mania;* Thompson, *Smashing Statues*; Karen L. Cox, *No Common Ground: Confederate Monuments and the Ongoing Fight for Racial Justice* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2021); Vivien Green Fryd, *Art & Empire: the Politics of Ethnicity in the United States Capitol, 1815-1860* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992); Kirk Savage, *Monument Wars: Washington, D.C., the National Mall, and the Transformation of the Memorial Landscape* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009.

panels that glorified Westward expansion and Douglas's own position as an important figure, though being quickly forgotten. If the Freedmen's Memorial Monument's erection prompted a site of performance where liberty and freedom were negotiated despite the symbolism of the statue, then the Stephen Douglas Tomb prompted performances that reaffirmed the white supremacist, American vision of the monument.

Senator Stephen Douglas of Illinois died on June 3, 1861, most likely of typhoid fever.[62] The "Little Giant," as he was nicknamed in the antebellum press for his five-foot-four stature yet powerful political presence, had been the state of Illinois's most famous politician until Abraham Lincoln rose to national prominence in 1858 in his campaign to take Douglas's Senate seat.[63] Born in Vermont in 1813, Douglas moved to Illinois in 1833 to open a law practice and quickly rose through the ranks of Illinois politics as a member of the Illinois House of Representatives, the Illinois Supreme Court, and the federal House of Representatives before being elected to the United States Senate in 1847.[64] Douglas was a major player in the Senate, where his position on the issue of slavery in the United States was based in the legal principle of popular sovereignty, in which the white male residents of any given territory would decide if their newly formed state would allow slavery.[65] The practical application of this doctrine meant the expansion of slavery in newly admitted states in order to preserve the Union, leading to major legislation such as the Compromise of 1850 (which led to the Fugitive Slave Act and admitted California as a free state)

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[62] Michael E. Woods, *Arguing Until Doomsday: Stephen Douglas, Jefferson Davis, and the Struggle for American Democracy* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2020), 13. The definitive biography of Stephen Douglas is Robert W. Johannsen, *Stephen A. Douglas* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973).
[63] David Zarefsky, *Lincoln, Douglas, and Slavery in the Crucible of Public Debate* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990).
[64] Woods, *Arguing Until Doomsday*, 58.
[65] Graham A. Peck, *Making an Anti-Slavery Nation: Lincoln, Douglas, and the Battle over Freedom* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2017), 7-8. See also Martin H. Quitt, *Stephen Douglas and Antebellum Democracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

and the Kansas-Nebraska Act (which repealed the Missouri Compromise of 1820, allowing expansion of slavery into Kansas) in 1854.[66]

These two acts of legislation only raised tensions between slave-holding states and free states, leading Republican Abraham Lincoln to challenge the Democratic Douglas for his Senate seat in 1858. The nine Lincoln-Douglas debates, in which Lincoln and Douglas traversed the state of Illinois campaigning for the United States Senate seat, were some of the most highly covered political events of the antebellum period due to the high stakes of the contest.[67] Though Douglas kept his position in the Senate, the battle over chattel slavery in the United States escalated. This rise in tension led to the contentious 1860 election, in which there four major candidates for the presidency: Abraham Lincoln for the Republican Party, John Bell of the Constitutional Union Party, and two Democratic Party candidates with Stephen Douglas representing the Northern faction and John C. Breckenridge representing the South. The split in the Democratic Party's vote and the presence of Bell as the candidate avoiding slavery as an issue were some of the many factors leading to the election of Lincoln as President of the United States.[68] Lincoln's ascendency led to the secession of Southern states starting with South Carolina in December 1860, precipitating the Civil War. Stephen Douglas, in his capacity as the senator from Illinois, stood by the Union, first attempting to stop the secession through compromises, but then fully supporting the Union's cause.[69] When Douglas died in June 1861, he was in Chicago to rally Midwestern support for the Union.

After his death, Douglas was buried on land he had purchased for his estate in Chicago. There were seemingly immediate calls to commemorate Douglas. I say *seemingly* because much

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[66] Peck, *Making an Antislavery Nation*, 120-122.
[67] Zarefsky, *Lincoln, Douglas…*, 148.
[68] Robert W. Johannsen, *Stephen A. Douglas* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), 802-807.
[69] Johannsen, *Stephen A. Douglas*, 871-872.

of the primary source material I have found about Stephen Douglas's final resting place comes from *History of the Douglas Monument,* a book written by Douglas's cousin by marriage and the architect of his tomb, Leonard Volk. Volk, a sculptor known for the only face mask of Lincoln taken while he was alive, became the steward of the Stephen Douglas Tomb; he persisted until the project was completed almost two decades after Douglas's death in 1881. It would be difficult to examine the commemorative process of the public memory of Stephen Douglas without Volk's contributions, as he compiled newspaper clippings, letters, and legislative testimonies about the monument. If part of the performative process of commemoration relies on individuals being interested in remembering, then the Stephen Douglas Tomb's existence relies on Volk, who made it his mission in life to have the Senator's tomb be as grand as he thought it should be.

As Volk highlights through the materials he compiled in *History of the Douglas Monument*, many were interested in hailing Stephen Douglas as an individual who deserved commemoration due to his contributions to the state of Illinois and the Union. In his history, Volk printed full articles from the *Chicago Tribune*, two quotes from which are instructive for understanding how Douglas was considered in public discourse at the time. First, an obituary remarked that the newspaper, a Republican bastion, was usually against Douglas and his beliefs, but: "The imminent peril of the present had put all old things out of sight; and side by side with him we stood for the defense, the honor and the perpetuity of the great Republic; and now uncovered and reverently looking into his grave, we can say that a Patriot reposes therein."[70] The rhetorical action of commemoration in this sentence is intriguing; the "peril" of the Civil War outweighed any animosity that the newspaper editors had against Douglas, who was now a

[70] *Chicago Tribune*, June 4, 1861, in Volk, *History of the Douglas Monument*, 6.

"Patriot." What mattered most in this moment, four months after the Civil War began, was that someone who supported the Union cause was sufficiently remembered as doing so.

In an additional *Chicago Tribune* article, the performative act of commemoration was already being enacted to rhetorically shape Douglas as an American hero. A July 24, 1861 article titled "The Resting Place of Douglas" described how visitors to Stephen Douglas's grave inscribed their names on the wooden boards of the fence surrounding the burial site (Figure 2.7) as a demonstration of their loyalty "to the Constitution."[71] The authors of the *Tribune* article disparaged this practice, calling it a "lamentable American weakness," and that "for [them]selves we desire to see the last resting place of the illustrious dead at Cottage Grove marked appropriately, as it will be, by a tribute worthy the fame of the sleeper that rests beneath."[72] As remarked upon by the *Chicago Tribune,* the dichotomy between these two commemorative impulses highlights how the act of remembering through a grave or a monument creates a type of social script that prompts individuals and groups to take some sort of action. For visitors to mark their names on the boards around the grave was attestation, perhaps, that they too supported the Union effort. [73] To the *Tribune* writers, this script was unacceptable—vandalism and sentimentality—leading to their call for a grander monument to Douglas that would be less susceptible to the "American weakness" of adding to a monument's meaning through vandalism.[74] Much like the Freedmen's Memorial Monument, the rhetorical flourishes made by those interested in building a monument were needed to generate interest in creating the monument itself.

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[71] *Chicago Tribune* in Volk, *History of the Douglas Monument*, 9.
[72] *Chicago Tribune* in Volk, *History of the Douglas Monument*, 10.
[73] The fence in question was replaced, according to Volk on the same day when the city of Chicago learned of the defeat at the Battle of Bull Run.
[74] *Chicago Tribune* in Volk, *History of the Douglas Monument*, 10.

(Figure 2.7: A carte de viste of Douglas's Grave, *Wikimedia*, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Grave_of_Stephen_A._Douglas_-_Circa_1861_(29404604508).jpg)

Several prominent white, male Chicagoans came together in the autumn of 1861 to form the Douglas Monument Association to honor Douglas "properly."[75] They were brought together by Leonard Volk, who had been placed in charge of Douglas's final resting place by Douglas's widow.[76] During the first meetings, the Association discussed naming buildings on the University of Chicago's campus after Douglas, a plan to rally over 100 of Chicago's prominent white men to raise money for a "suitable monument" to Douglas, and the bylaws and constitution for their organization.[77] In order to promote the work of the Association, the agreed upon constitution and bylaws were published for the wider public to read, along with an appeal to the public to support the cause of the Douglas Monument Association.

[75] Volk, *History of the Douglas Monument*, 11.
[76] Volk, *History of the Douglas Monument*, 11.
[77] *Organization, Constitution, and By-Laws of the Douglas Monument Association*, collection of the Boston Athenaeum.

In *Organization, Constitution, and By-Laws of the Douglas Monument Association*, published in 1862, the Douglas Monument Association attempted to promote their cause of building a monument to Douglas and solicit donations. Two passages from the appeal are instructive in considering how this monument to Stephen Douglas was being positioned by this group of Chicagoans as a cause worthy of funding. The first, from the beginning of the appeal, argued for the gravity of what it means to honor Stephen Douglas:

> In the tranquil rest of the grave the departed can be reached indeed by no honors a grateful country can rear over his remains. But not less to ourselves and to our country, and to the generations yet unborn who are to enter upon the sacred heritage and responsibilities of freemen, than to him is it due, that his grave should not be unmarked by some enduring tribute of national honors and gratitude.[78]

Much like Frederick Douglass's address in front of the Freedmen's Memorial Monument where his use of "I" and "we" and "you" were critical to denoting who in the audience Douglass was referring to, the use of "our" in this section is striking. The appeal implicates the reader as an American citizen with a duty to honor the dead senator and not leave his grave "unmarked."[79] The use of the terms "future generations" and "national honors" lend a sense that the building of a monument to Douglas was critical to the project of national memory making.[80] A senator who had died as the Civil War was beginning was being fashioned as a hero of his time, whom "freemen" should honor by donating funds for a monument in his honor.[81] The performances that would be prompted by the monument to Douglas on top of his final resting place could, in the view of the Douglas Monument Association, act as a space for "national honors and gratitude."[82]

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[78] *Organization*…, 18.
[79] *Organization*…, 18.
[80] *Organization*…, 18.
[81] *Organization*…, 18.
[82] *Organization*…, 18. Pulling here from Joseph Roach, *Cities of the Dead*.

The question of timeliness is critical to the last two paragraphs of the Appeal to the Public. After giving a brief sketch of the life of Douglas and making the requisite asks for funds and support, the Association ended the appeal by noting the tumultuous times in which they lived:

> The appeal which this board makes to the fellow countrymen and friends of the late Mr. Douglas cannot be deemed untimely, even amidst the dark hour of the republic, and the privations and distress of an unnatural war. None more than that patriotic statesman sought to avert, by just and constitutional aims, legitimate complaint; none more than he, when treason menaced the foundations of our national existence, and glory proclaimed in truer and more inspiring tones, his steadfast loyalty and everlasting fidelity to the Union and Constitution, bequeathing to his country in his dying words unquestioned tokens of the allegiance which had inspired his whole life, and which, breathing from his silent grave, may yet reanimate and restore the divided glory of our common country.[83]

If the fourth paragraph relied on recognition by the reader of the importance of reifying Douglas as an honored individual in the United States, the final paragraphs make rhetorical claims of why honoring Douglas at this precise moment in time was critical despite the ongoing war. The "unnatural war," as the authors termed it, had been raging for almost a year by the time this pamphlet was published with no clear end in sight. Despite this, the authors argue in their final lines that this monument could bring the Union and the Confederacy back together through the act of commemoration, even though Douglas in his final days had rallied support for the Union cause against the Confederacy. Any dissenters who may have called the monument "untimely" are presented with the rhetorical move that the monument could bring the country back together as Douglas would have wanted.

Despite this attempt at appealing to the (white) public's sense of national honor and gratitude towards Stephen Douglas, fundraising efforts for the Douglas Monument were slow going. As Volk put it in his *History of the Douglas Monument*: "the Great Rebellion absorbed all

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[83] *Organization*…, 19.

interests."[84] The Civil War fundamentally changed how society functioned in the United States, so it is unsurprising that a monument to Stephen Douglas was deemed unimportant to fund given the other wartime relief efforts. Volk describes at length the difficulties of being caretaker of Douglas's final resting place during the war, where it "was infested with all manner of trespassers and desecrators," most of whom he describes as being camp followers from Camp Douglas, a prisoner of war camp on the land next to where Douglas was buried.[85]

Even as the Civil War raged on, the Douglas Monument Association continued to do administrative work to build the monument. They advertised the association's doings in local and national papers, announcing that they had chosen a design by Volk for the monument. An October 1, 1864 *Harper's Weekly* illustration (Figure 2.8) and attendant caption describe the planned monument. In Volk's original design, the monument was "one hundred feet high, wrought in marble on a granite base."[86] At its center was Douglas's sarcophagus concealed by a bronze gate and "an eagle with drooped wings…a sublime emblem of mourning for a dead statesman."[87] On each corner of the base, Volk proposed individual allegorical statues of Illinois, America, History, and Fame, each holding a symbolic object.[88] Decorating the base would be four bas-relief scenes, depicting a "panorama of progress of American civilization" that focused on the Western states in the United States, including the "life of the untamed Indian," the forced settlement of the Western states by white settlers, and scientific and educational progress.[89] A forty-two-foot column rose above, topped with a statue of Stephen Douglas holding fasces (a bundle of sticks surrounding an ax meant to represent the Union through an allusion to Roman

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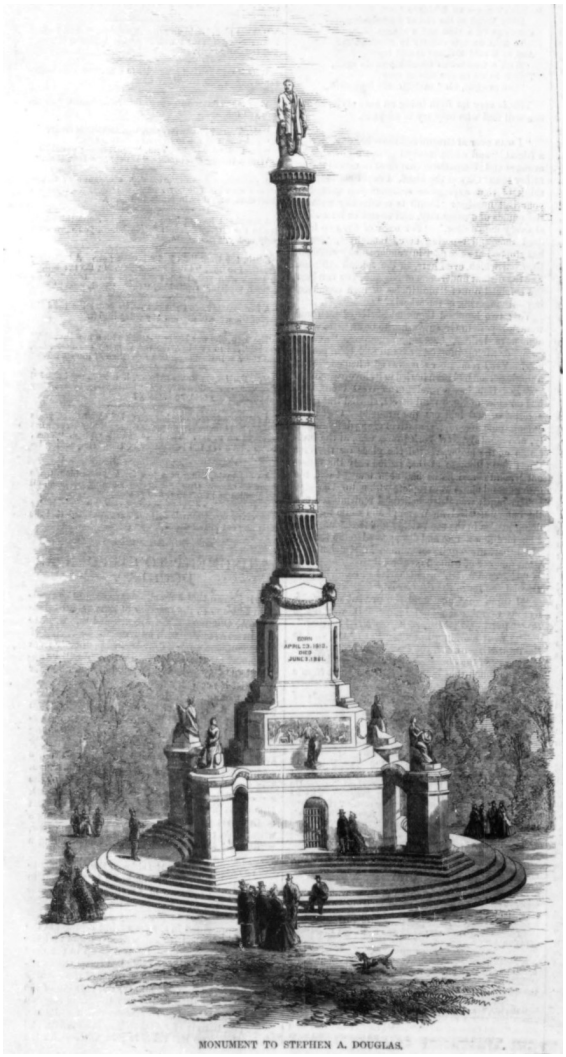
[84] Volk, *History of the Douglas Monument*, 22.
[85] Volk, *History of the Douglas Monument*, 23.
[86] *Harper's Weekly*, October 1, 1864, Volume 8: Issue 405, *Internet Archive,* https://archive.org/details/sim_harpers-weekly_1864-10-01_8_405*,* 635.
[87] *Harper's Weekly*, October 1, 1864, 635.
[88] *Harper's Weekly*, October 1, 1864, 635.
[89] *Harper's Weekly*, October 1, 1864, 635-6.

classicism, though in the present day more known as the root word for fascism) and a copy of the Constitution.[90]



(Figure 2.8: "Monument to Stephen A. Douglas," *Harper's Weekly,* October 1, 1864, Volume 8: Issue 405, *Internet Archive,* https://archive.org/details/sim_harpers-weekly_1864-10-01_8_405, 635.)

In the drawing of the proposed commemorative site published in *Harper's Weekly* as well as a drawing of the proposed monument in the *Chicago Illustrated* booklet (Figure 2.9), groups of spectators mill about the base of the statue. In *Harper's Weekly*, one person seems to be looking at one of the bas-reliefs described, and a couple appears to look through the gate into

[90] Sarah E. Bond, "Fasces, Fascism, and How the Alt-Right Continues to Appropriate Ancient Roman Symbols," *Hyperallergic*, September 13, 2018, accessed December 2022, https://hyperallergic.com/459504/fasces-fascism-and-how-the-alt-right-continues-to-appropriate-ancient-roman-symbols/.

Douglas's sarcophagus. The overall statue, according to the author in *Harper's Weekly*, "will be seen pricking the blue of the skies," illustrated by the trees in the lower third of the drawing overlooked by the giant column topped with the statue of Stephen Douglas.[91] As described and pictured in *Harper's Weekly*, the monument was meant to serve as both a celebration of Douglas and the ideals he was purported to strive for: the progress and education of the United States.

(Figure 2.9: Illustration of Stephen Douglas Tomb, in James W. Sheahan, *Chicago Illustrated* [Chicago: Jevne & Almini, 1866], https://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.69015000002622.)

As expressed both in *Harper's Weekly* and in Volk's own description, the bas-reliefs were meant to be "creditable to American art."[92] What constitutes American, of course, is not the Indigenous peoples who were living on what is now the state of Illinois, but the white people who colonized the land. The inclusion of a scene depicting "the life of the untamed Indian, with a woman and papoose, and a hunter dragging a deer up to the door of a wigwam" as the start of "the progress of American civilization—more especially in the Western States" is demonstrative

[91] *Harper's Weekly*, October 1, 1864, 636.
[92] Volk, *History of the Douglas Monument*, 58.

of this nineteenth-century white settler perspective of progress.[93] The utilization of Indigenous people in monumental form to forward a narrative of Manifest Destiny and American exceptionalism has a long history in the United States.[94] The bas-relief on the side of Stephen Douglas's final resting place is no exception. In creating a scene of "untamed" Indigenous life that needed to be overpowered by white settlers sculpted in the other bas-reliefs planned for the tomb, Volk utilized a discourse of white male superiority and United States exceptionalism. The imagined white viewers, as drawn in the *Harper's Weekly* illustration, could visit the tomb and be affirmed in their beliefs of American exceptionalism as displayed by the monument.

Additionally, the proposed statues on the tomb support a vision of Douglas as an important figure in American civic life and public memory. The four proposed allegorical statues on the corners of the tomb, meant to symbolize Illinois (holding a portrait of Douglas), America (with a bundle of wheat), History (holding writing implements), and Fame (with a wreath and trumpet), together worked to create a vision of Douglas as a figure that embodied these allegorical ideals.[95] These proposed allegorical figures would support the idea of Stephen Douglas as a critical figure for the state of Illinois and the United States, and make him famous in history. The bundle of fasces and the copy of the Constitution would not be immediately visible for nineteenth-century viewers but would rather be a reminder of the two precepts that Douglas was said to hold above all others: the Union and the Constitution.

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[93] *Harper's Weekly*, October 1, 1864, 635.
[94] Cindy Koenig Richards, "Inventing Sacagawea: Public Women and the Transformative Potential of Epideictic Rhetoric," *Western Journal of Communication* 73.1 (2009): 1–22; Lisa Blee and Jean M. O'Brien, *Monumental Mobility: The Memory Work of Massasoit* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2019).
[95] *Harper's Weekly*, October 1, 1864, 635 and Volk, *History of the Douglas Monument*, 58.

As proposed, the monument would tie Douglas to the ideal of an America that was white, united, and put the law above all else, making it a beacon of the ideals Douglas stood for in life. Its height and grandeur, according to Volk, matched the needs of the flat Chicago landscape:

> On low, level lands like our Western prairies, those who have earned the right to be deemed masters of all who come after them, were accustomed to erect lofty structures, that could not be easily obscured, but would tower aloft as landmarks, attracting from afar the traveler's attention to famous and consecrated localities.[96]

Douglas's final resting place, per Volk's own words and those in the *Harper's Weekly* description, was meant to evoke architecture of the ancient Greek and Roman empires in its design. His tomb, both in design and in its location (or scenography), was meant to cement Douglas as a famous American meant to be revered and to create a monument that would be attractive to visitors from all over. During the bloody Civil War, such an imagined monument envisioned a future where a man such as Douglas would be lauded.

The marketing campaign to convince the public that the tomb of Stephen Douglas warranted a high art design was not the only work of the Douglas Monument Association. They also spent much of the early 1860s appealing to the Illinois State Legislature to buy the land under which Douglas was buried to preserve it for future generations.[97] In February 1865, during the final months of the war, the state legislature agreed to pay $25,000 for the land to Douglas's widow, Adele Cutts Douglas, though this engendered debate. In the report of the proceedings, the finance committee called the tomb a "minor object," but argued that "the state…ought to own this sacred soil."[98] The report also noted that Adele Douglas had wanted her deceased husband to be buried in Washington, D.C. "where all could claim the privilege of bowing at the tomb of America's noble son, and all do honor, regardless of the claims of Illinois, who gave him to the

[96] Volk, *History of the Douglas Monument*, 60.
[97] Volk, *History of the Douglas Monument*, 26.
[98] Volk, *History of the Douglas Monument*, 28.

world."[99] In this framing by the legislative committee, the act of visiting the tomb, either in Washington or in his actual burial site in Chicago, could become a type of performance of American identity, where bowing at the tomb becomes an action that would have Douglas "enshrined in the hearts of the people."[100]

The purchase of the land on which Stephen Douglas was buried by the state of Illinois was critical for the Douglas Monument Association for two key reasons. The first was practical; it meant that the senator's remains would be protected by the state. In his April 5, 1865, letter to Douglas's widow, the Governor of Illinois Richard Oglesby wrote: "Always jealous of his immortal fame, the people of Illinois would not be satisfied to suffer the soil of his last home on earth to fall a heritage to any other than their own descendants."[101] Oglesby's sentiment also captures the other critical reason the state needed to own the tomb, as it was essential for claiming Douglas as an important figure from Illinois at a moment when many communities were clamoring to have a piece of national glory.[102]

After securing the deed from Douglas's widow, the Douglas Monument Association began to plan the tomb's construction during the winter of 1866. They first had Leonard Volk choose the site for the monument on the newly acquired land, the site of Douglas's former cottage.[103] The Monument Association also began planning a cornerstone-laying ceremony for the Tomb, inviting Secretary of State William Seward to speak at the dedication.[104] Seward, who had survived the same assassination attempt that killed Abraham Lincoln, equivocated on the

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[99] Volk, *History of the Douglas Monument*, 28.
[100] Volk, *History of the Douglas Monument*, 28.
[101] Volk, *History of the Douglas Monument*, 29.
[102] The irony, of course, is that ten days after Oglesby sent this letter to Adele Douglas, the state of Illinois would be home to an even more famous martyr of the Civil War, Abraham Lincoln. The "immortal fame" of Douglas, already delayed due to the war, would be forever overshadowed by the presence of Lincoln in public memory (even in this chapter, where the statue of Lincoln came first).
[103] Volk, *History of the Douglas Monument*, 33.
[104] Volk, *History of the Douglas Monument*, 34.

offer in a letter where he noted that his health since the assassination attempt was not "distinctly established."[105] The Association then turned to the Governor of Illinois, Richard Oglesby, to deliver the oration. The Democratic Party newspapers of Chicago cried foul at this suggestion, with the *Chicago Times* extorting Oglesby as one of Douglas's "bitterest enemies," and "a leader in that party [Republican] which pursued Douglas with bitterest hatred from the time it came into being until he died, and that mobbed him in this city and within sight of the ground where his bones lie and where the monument is to be built."[106] In response to this political uproar, Oglesby withdrew from giving an oration, and Leonard Volk, as the secretary of the Douglas Monument Association, wrote a letter to the editors of the *Chicago Evening Journal* explaining that while Oglesby was "a friend of the object" due to his work to get the site for the monument for the state of Illinois, he had other engagements on the planned day of dedication.[107] Instead, a citizen's committee was formed by the Douglas Monument Association to decide who deserved to give this important oration. This subcommittee invited President Andrew Johnson and his cabinet to be present, and chose John Dix, a Union general and Democratic politician, to give the dedication day address for the cornerstone-laying ceremony.

I linger on this debate over who should have given the oration at the cornerstone laying for the Stephen Douglas Tomb for two interconnected reasons. The first is that the choice of who gives an oration for a dedication ceremony of a monument is an inherently theatrical one—much like which character is chosen to speak the prologue of a play, it is in some ways an argument for what the playwright values for themself and their audience. An association choosing an orator for their monument's dedication prefers that orator to align in some way with their stated goals.

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[105] Volk, *History of the Douglas Monument*, 35.
[106] Volk, *History of the Douglas Monument*, 37.
[107] Volk, *History of the Douglas Monument*, 40-41.

For the Freedmen's Memorial Monument, the choice of Frederick Douglass as orator was natural, given his status as figurehead for the monument's fundraising campaign and his stature as one of the most famous Black Americans who knew Lincoln. For the Stephen Douglas Tomb, however, the shift in politics after the end of the Civil War made such an easy choice for orator impossible. In the early days of Reconstruction, the political vision that Stephen Douglas espoused in his life was not viable, given that the question of slavery was settled. Yet, as the angry editorial from the *Chicago Times* highlights, political battles of the antebellum period were not easily forgotten. This made it difficult to choose an orator who would both do justice to the memory of Douglas (as the Douglas Monument Association wanted) and would also fit the vision that Douglas's supporters in the press had of who should be allowed to speak for the dead senator.

The second reason why this debate matters is connected to what the *Chicago Times* editorial alluded to regarding Oglesby's attitude toward Douglas in life. If commemoration is a performative process that relies on time, object, and audience to make meaning, it follows that whoever is chosen to dedicate a monument would need to align with the stakeholder's beliefs about the commemorated individual or idea to demonstrate that the stakeholders in question had a legitimate claim to stewardship of the commemorative legacy. However, as both the Freedmen's Memorial Monument and the Stephen Douglas Tomb suggest, this is not necessarily the case; rather, the politics at the moment of dedication are more critical to the choice of speaker.[108] In the case of the Stephen Douglas Tomb, each side in this discourse attempted to claim the legitimacy of being the custodian of Douglas's public memory; the Douglas Monument

[108] For a more contemporary version of this phenomenon regarding the WWII Memorial as stand in for the War on Terror in the mid-2000s, see V. William, Balthrop, Carole Blair, and Neil Michel, "The Presence of the Present: Hijacking 'The Good War'?," *Western Journal of Communication* 74, no. 2 (2010): 170–207.

Association as the "official" caretakers and the Democratic press as the political and "vernacular" caretakers.[109]

As rhetoric scholar Sara VanderHaagen notes in an article on the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial (2014) in Washington, D.C., commemorative stewardship is a complicated process that relies on "public responsibility, sacred value, accountability, and futurity."[110] In the controversy over who would speak at the cornerstone-laying ceremony for Douglas's memorial, the discursive implications over who was the more valid interpreter of Douglas's legacy sparked conflict. One set of stakeholders, the Douglas Monument Association, saw the choice of Richard Oglesby as fitting because of his actions to honor Douglas in their current moment, whereas newspapers such as the *Chicago Times* and the *Chicago Evening Journal* saw that choice as a partisan action, involving a former political enemy. The argument by the Douglas Monument Association did not sufficiently consider accountability, in VanderHaagen's parlance, of what a Republican governor speaking at a Democratic senator's monument site would mean to Democratic partisans. The debate over who should speak when highlights how the act of public commemoration is constantly reflective of the contemporary moment's politics – a notion that holds true to the present day.

As Leonard Volk described it in *History of the Douglas Monument*, the September 6, 1866, cornerstone-laying ceremony was a grand affair befitting the legacy of Douglas. Prior to the start of the day of celebration, the Douglas Monument Association placed items into the cornerstone as a sort of time capsule of their efforts, including the association's constitution and by-laws, the issue of *Harper's Weekly* with the monument illustration, and smaller

[109] Bodnar, *Remaking America*, 14.
[110] Sara C. VanderHaagen, "(Mis)quoting King: commemorative stewardship and ethos in the controversy over the Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial," *Argumentation and Advocacy* 55:2 (2019), 99.

commemorative objects such as medallions and busts of Lincoln and Douglas sculpted by Volk.[111] The program of the day's festivities was expansive, including a concert the evening before, a parade that went from what is now the center of Chicago's Loop down to the site of the monument at what is now 35th Street and Cottage Grove, and the dedication ceremony of the cornerstone itself. Parts of the city shut down as the parade wound its way through Chicago. The parade had multiple sections, from the opening procession of President Andrew Johnson and members of his administration, including General Ulysses S. Grant and Secretary of State William Seward, to the Father Matthew Temperance Society.[112]

Parades, as historian David Waldstreicher notes, are fertile places for crafting performances of nationalism. Through ritual, parades can create the idea of consensus through multiple groups coming together to perform political action.[113] In the case of this parade, there was a moment that broke this planned celebratory consensus. As reported by the *New York Herald*, a widow along the parade route covered her home with "a string of black petticoats" and posted a sign saying, "No Welcome To Traitors."[114] The "traitors" in this instance were the Union army and the Johnson administration, as the woman's deceased husband was reported to have been in the Confederate army. The description of the moment in the *New York Herald* mentions how William Seward, in his carriage, "placed his hand grimly on the scars received by the assassins' knife," and his fellow riders General Ulysses S. Grant and Admiral David Farragut "looked about them as though the mysterious handwriting on the wall was meant as a kindly warning that a Confederate army with banners was just around the corner ready to pounce upon

[111] Volk, *History of the Douglas Monument*, 46.
[112] Volk, *History of the Douglas Monument*, 50.
[113] David Waldstreicher, *In the Midst of Perpetual Fetes: The Making of American Nationalism, 1776-1820* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 14.
[114] Volk, *History of the Douglas Monument*, 57.

and annihilate them."[115] This dramatic retelling of a moment during a parade in honor of Stephen Douglas's tomb highlights the complications of using the building of monuments as an act of unity, and the use of parades as political tools.

While the *New York Herald*'s coverage mocks the woman and her protest, it also demonstrates that the unity purported to be brought about by the end of the Civil War was fractious and tenuous. Not even the celebration of a monument designed to seemingly bring about unity could make people forget the conflict. Douglas' commemoration, one year after the war's end and Lincoln's assassination, reflected the political realities of the time far more than the idealized vision of the United States that the monument planned to capture.

Once the parade made its way to the planned site of the tomb for the dedication ceremony, the assembled crowd gathered to watch the Grand Master of the Knights Templar place the cornerstone of the monument. In what is a wildly dramatic moment, according to the report from the *New York Herald*, rain began falling as the stone was laid, "gentle tears of rain upon the sod underneath which lay Illinois' favorite son and statesman."[116] After the cornerstone was placed and a prayer was spoken by Episcopal minister William Milburn, Major General John A. Dix rose to deliver his address.

In his remarks, Dix focused on Douglas as orator and politician, marking the man as both influential on his own merits and in his relationship to the other famous Illinois politician, Abraham Lincoln. He delivered a biographical sketch of Douglas and focused specifically on Douglas's political machinations during the Compromise of 1850, the set of laws that admitted California into the Union as a free state while also strengthening the Fugitive Slave Act. Dix

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[115] Volk, *History of the Douglas Monument*, 57.
[116] Volk, *History of the Douglas Monument*, 64. It seems to stretch plausibility that Douglas was the state's favorite son and statesman, but that is not the object of analysis here.

referred to this politicking as "the patriotic but vain attempt to calm the prevailing excitement and close up for ever the source of the dissensions which had so long distracted the country."[117] Much like Frederick Douglass in his address in front of the Freedmen's Memorial Monument, Dix performed both praise and condemnation of the commemorated subject in the light of history. By noting Douglas's failures, Dix argued that "no man that ever lived could have confronted such a demonstration of popular disapproval, if he had not felt that he had done right."[118] Dix attributes Douglas's misguided policies as the acts of a principled man, whose words and deeds were all in service of the cause of the Union, to be known and emulated.[119]

Dix's remarks turned the cornerstone laying of Douglas's tomb for the purposes of remembering Douglas into an act that was as integral to the memory of America as any commemoration of Lincoln. His comparison between Lincoln and Douglas was particularly striking when discussing their deaths:

> Mr. Douglas died of a disease contracted in his herculean efforts in canvassing the North and West in support of the war. Mr. Lincoln died by a flagitious act of cowardice and crime…Happily, the one was spared till he saw the people of the Free States inspired with his own enthusiasm in the country's cause; the other till he had made his name immortal by striking from the limbs of three million human beings the manacles of slavery, and seen the last hostile force surrendered to the armies of the Union.[120]

Stephen Douglas has become inexorably linked to Abraham Lincoln in the public imagination. From Dix's address, the work of commemorating Douglas necessarily tied him to Lincoln, whose assassination shocked the country. Even in Dix's portrayal, this parallel description of Lincoln's and Douglas's deaths and greatest achievements seems unbalanced. Douglas's

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[117] John Dix, *Address at the laying of the corner-stone of the Douglas monument at Chicago, September 6, 1866* (New York: Edward F. Crowen), 14, from the collections of the American Antiquarian Society.
[118] Dix, *Address*, 17.
[119] Dix, *Address*, 33.
[120] Dix, *Address*, 21-22.

enthusiasm for saving the Union did not "make his name immortal" in the same way that the act of legally freeing three million enslaved people did for Lincoln.[121] But his support for the Union's cause, as argued by Dix throughout his oration, made Douglas a figure to be celebrated with a grand monument, as his final thoughts were "only of his country."[122] Dix's narrative of Douglas made him a figure honored on the same level as Lincoln.

After Dix finished his oration, President Andrew Johnson and Secretary of State William Seward also gave brief remarks, both esteeming Douglas to the heights of memory for his service to the Union cause. Seward's remarks highlighted the connection between Douglas and Lincoln, and how this connection justified Douglas' monument. After remarking how Douglas gave up political infighting to support the cause of the Union, he proclaimed: "I think that Stephen A. Douglas, with Abraham Lincoln, will live in the memory and homage of mankind equally with the Washingtons and Hamiltons of the revolutionary age."[123] If Douglas was to "live in memory" like Washington or Hamilton, then a massive monument to him needed to be built. Douglas's commitment to the Union made him a subject, in this moment in 1866, worthy of a monument to his memory.

There are many levels of irony in comparing how George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, and Stephen Douglas have been remembered. Monuments to Washington were built into the city plan of Washington, D.C., though the Washington Monument was unfinished for decades.[124] Monuments to Abraham Lincoln were erected quickly after his death in 1865. In the wake of this ceremony in 1866 for Stephen Douglas's tomb, there were few funds to actually construct Volk's proposed monument. The Douglas Monument Association attempted to convince the Illinois

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[121] Dix, *Address*, 22.
[122] Dix, *Address*, 35.
[123] Seward, in Volk, *History of the Douglas Monument*, 84.
[124] Savage, *Monument Wars*, 115.

State Legislature to provide $50,000 for the tomb in 1869 after Douglas's body had been placed in a Vermont marble sarcophagus on the monument site, but the amount was slashed to $25,000 and then ignored by the Illinois State Senate.[125] After this attempt at state funding failed and Volk announced that he was departing for Europe, the Association then proposed to move the monument and Douglas's remains to the campus of the University of Chicago.[126] The Association, with the support of Douglas' widow and sons, worked tirelessly through the early 1870s to achieve this new goal by trying to pass a bill through the legislature.[127] Despite attempts to expedite the process by moving Douglas's remains off state property, there was little traction to get the monument completed or moved. Monuments require audiences and funding, and in the case of completing Stephen Douglas's tomb, there was a precipitous lack of either.

But by 1877, eleven years after the cornerstone-laying ceremony, the Illinois State Legislature finally appropriated funds for the completion of Douglas's tomb on the site at 35th and Cottage Grove. Joseph E. Smith, a representative from Chicago, pushed forward the proposal, arguing in front of his colleagues that Douglas had wanted to be buried at Cottage Grove, the title to the land required it, and to build the monument would not cost more "than what Douglas contributed to the coffers of the state."[128] Smith's proposal succeeded with a vote of 81-40, and the Douglas Tomb finally had the funding to be completed per Volk's vision.

As described by the *Chicago Times,* the back and forth between the Illinois State legislators illustrates the capacity for commemoration to serve as a lightning rod for political and societal tension. Various legislators in the 1877 session used their time when discussing the bill to fund Douglas's tomb to debate how and whom societies should remember. Mr. J.J. Herron

[125] Volk, *History of the Douglas Monument*, 86-87.
[126] Volk, *History of the Douglas Monument*, 92.
[127] Volk, *History of the Douglas Monument*, 93-94.
[128] Volk, *History of the Douglas Monument*, 95.

used Biblical allegory of the tribes of Israel to support funding the monument; Mr. Thomas Merritt opposed the monument, saying that Douglas's "reputation was a part of history, more enduring than stone."[129] Perhaps most tellingly, Mr. Patrick Dunne of Cook County argued that the state had appropriated funds for the building of Lincoln's tomb and "splendid obelisk" in Springfield, Illinois, but that Douglas "lies buried beneath an [u]ncompleted and crumbling tomb on the beautiful spot selected by himself on the shores of Lake Michigan, his coffin exposed to the vicissitudes of the weather, reminding the visitor forcibly and sadly of the old-time saying that republics are ungrateful."[130] This rhetorical maneuver by Dunne (and by Smith before him) perhaps demonstrates the fundamental issue of Douglas's tomb by the late 1870s: many people had moved on to other commemorative projects. With Abraham Lincoln's death and the massive numbers lost during the Civil War, the idea of paying for a tomb to a long-dead senator was unappealing. Dunne's strategy of linking Douglas and Lincoln proved useful, as it made a monument to Douglas seem as critical to the continuation of the Union as Lincoln's tomb. It also foreshadowed how critical Lincoln would become to understanding Douglas's place in American public memory.

After the Illinois State Legislature appropriated the funds, they created a commission and contacted Leonard Volk to finish the monument.[131] Volk, whose original 1864 designs had burned in the Great Chicago Fire of 1871, tweaked his designs to the new committee's specifications, removing some ornamentation and changing his planned allegorical bronze figures of America, Illinois, History, and Fame to ones of History, Illinois, Justice, and

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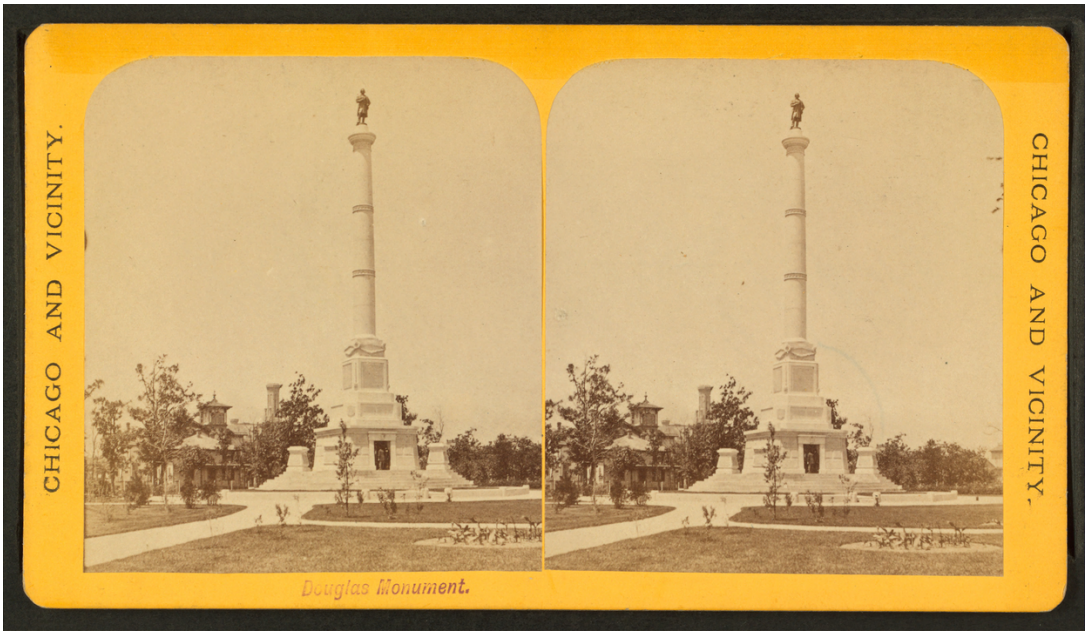
[129] Volk, *History of the Douglas Monument*, 96.
[130] Volk, *History of the Douglas Monument*, 97. The first names were not given in Volk's book, but I found them in *Illinois Legislative Roster*, Illinois Secretary of State, accessed May 8, 2023, https://www.ilsos.gov/publications/illinois_bluebook/legroster.pdf.
[131] Volk, *History of the Douglas Monument*, 110.

Eloquence.[132] He also simplified the statue of Douglas to have no objects in his hands.[133] The commission paid to refurbish the tomb, which had experienced some damage, and by 1879 the monument was being constructed as Volk had envisioned.[134] By May 1881, after all designs were approved by the committee and cast in bronze, the Stephen Douglas Tomb was completed (Figure 2.10).[135] Visitors were now able to visit the senator's final resting place and to read his final words, "Tell my children to obey the laws and uphold the Constitution," etched on his Vermont marble sarcophagus, instructing the visitor to do so as well.[136]



(Figure 2.10: "Douglas monument" stereograph, The Miriam and Ira D. Wallach Division of Art, Prints and Photographs: Photography Collection, The New York Public Library. New York Public Library Digital Collections. Accessed December 20, 2022. https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47e0-5c4c-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99)

[132] Volk, *History of the Douglas Monument*, 111-114.
[133] Volk, *History of the Douglas Monument*, 114.
[134] Volk, *History of the Douglas Monument*, 118. This commission was headed by Robert Lincoln, the son of Abraham Lincoln. The secretary of this commission, Melville Fuller, is another point of interest here. Fuller was from Maine and received the commission to buy granite from Maine for the tomb. He was subject to his own monument controversy in 2021 after a monument to him was removed from the county courthouse in Augusta, Maine due to his championing of "separate, but equal" in *Plessy v, Ferguson* in his time as Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court.
[135] Volk, *History of the Douglas Monument*, 120.
[136] Volk, *History of the Douglas Monument*, 121.

The slight changes in the Stephen Douglas Tomb from its original conception in 1864 to its completion in 1881 highlight how commemoration changes based on who leads the project and what is driving them. Volk's original grand design that connected the memory of Douglas to the memory of the United States was discarded, and instead the allegorical figures focused on the attributes Douglas represented in life. The bas-reliefs designed on the sides of the Tomb were executed with the same white supremacist principles, but the objects proposed to accompany Douglas's statue atop the Tomb, which reinforced those beliefs, were not. Douglas's final words, which I used to open this section, are emblazoned on his sarcophagus, to ensure that anyone who visits his tomb remembers that he was loyal to the laws and the Constitution until his death. Of course, in his final words from 1861, Douglas continued to articulate a legal position that tacitly endorsed slavery: the 13th Amendment, which abolished slavery in the United States, would not be ratified until 1865. The tomb of Stephen Douglas is a site of commemoration that requires that the object of memorialization have only one idea consistently attached to him. In this instance, that he was loyal to the United States via the laws and the Constitution, even as those laws changed to ostensibly allow for Black emancipation and freedom. From the original calls to commemorate to the controversy of who should speak at the cornerstone-laying ceremony to the final push to finish his tomb, Douglas' monument was built to reinforce the idea of his loyalty to the Union.

If the Freedmen's Memorial Monument to Abraham Lincoln showcased the nuances, possibilities, and limitations on representations of freedom in statuary form, then the Stephen Douglas Tomb highlights how commemorating someone like Stephen Douglas necessitated a vision of the United States that was exclusionary and white, aligning with the racial backlash that followed Reconstruction. During the period when the Stephen Douglas Tomb was built, the

fundraising efforts for Lincoln's final resting place in Springfield, Illinois, as well as multiple monuments to the Union dead were active, making the Tomb one among many commemorative projects of the post-Civil War period. The monument only came into existence because Leonard Volk and a series of Illinois lawmakers relied on rhetoric of Douglas as an orator and true American. His premature death during the early days of the Civil War allowed him to be recast in a light that was focused squarely on his support of the Union's cause and the Constitution rather than his many flaws as a politician in the antebellum era. The performances that the Stephen Douglas Tomb offered were scripts where the opinions and values of white men were fully centered.

The Statue of Liberty

While the Freedmen's Memorial Monument was being discussed in Missouri newspapers and the Douglas Monument Association struggled to find donors, Edouard de Laboulaye hosted a dinner party outside of Paris to discuss the end of the American Civil War. Laboulaye, a preeminent French scholar of American constitutional law, was celebrating the win of the Union Army over the Confederate States of America and mourning the death of Abraham Lincoln. At this dinner in the summer of 1865, he discussed with his guests the idea of building a monument to the idea of liberty as a gift to the United States and a gesture of friendship between the United States and France.[137] Among Laboulaye's guests was Frederic Auguste Bartholdi, who would soon be the sculptor of Laboulaye's vision for liberty personified. Giving a gift like this, Laboulaye, Bartholdi, and their fellow dinner guests reasoned, would show that the French were

[137] Benjamin Levine and Isabelle F. Story, *Statue of Liberty, National Monument, Liberty Island, New York* (Washington: National Park Service historical handbook series, no. 11, 1957), 2, from the collections of the Boston Athenaeum.

invested in the project of liberty and freedom, even as their country was ruled by Emperor Napoleon III. It would be a performance of a particular type of liberal notion of liberty, signaling to the world the political values of both countries.

Unlike the two other monuments at the center of this study, the Statue of Liberty has become a key symbol of the United States, matched only by the country's flag.[138] While the Stephen Douglas Tomb and the Freedmen's Memorial Monument were widely known in their time, the Statue of Liberty was and is arguably the most famous monument of the nineteenth century erected in the United States. The journey to raise the statue, however, was not wildly dissimilar to the processes that built the Freedmen's Memorial Monument or the Stephen Douglas Tomb in terms of financial support, political pressure, and societal will. Dreamt up and executed by a group of liberally minded Frenchmen, the Statue of Liberty was originally intended (though emphases in accounts vary) to celebrate the abolition of slavery in the United States, to mourn the death of Abraham Lincoln, and to solidify the relationship between France and the United States. It took over two decades—from 1865 to 1886—to realize the plan. During the intervening years, the effort to build the Statue and its pedestal was an international effort, cheered on by some in France and met with confusion by many in the United States. By the time the monument was complete, the performances it elicited hewed to white male understandings of liberty, undermining its universalist claims. The process to build the Statue of Liberty demonstrates the importance of impetus and belief in building a monument. When those actions become muddled, the resulting monument came to stand for everything and nothing about the United States of America.

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[138] "Popular and Commercial Culture," *National Park Service,* accessed August 2022, https://www.nps.gov/stli/learn/historyculture/statue-adn-popular-culture.htm; see also Marita Sturken, *Tourists of History: Memory, Kitsch, and Consumerism from Oklahoma City to Ground Zero* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007).

As historian Tyler Stovall argues persuasively in his book *White Freedom: The Racial History of an Idea*, from its beginning the Statue of Liberty has been a "symbol of white freedom."[139] Stovall digs into the myth that the statue was based on the image of a Black woman and examines how the statue has embodied the idea of liberty and freedom as a bastion of white supremacy. Considering how the building of the monument created performances of white supremacy under the guise of liberty, I complement Stovall's argument by highlighting the audiences the monument catered to in its construction, and how, using understandings of social performance, the monument became a prop for white supremacist action in the United States. As some of the images and discourse around the statue show, it was clear to some in the United States that the Statue of Liberty was meant to be a beacon for white Americans almost exclusively. If a monument can stand in for an idea in the chain of surrogation, as Joseph Roach suggests, then the Statue of Liberty's creation facilitated performances of a particular white male freedom as normative in the United States.[140]

From Laboulaye's original concept at the dinner in 1865, the idea of the statue from France celebrating liberty blossomed. Beginning in 1870, Frederic Auguste Bartholdi started sketching ideas for the statue, going through multiple different designs to fully capture the concept. Edward Berenson's and Yasmin Kahn's monographs about the statue both discuss how this design process was fluid; Bartholdi knew he wanted the statue to be massive, like the ancient Colossus of Rhodes, but was unsure about what exactly should be represented in his vision of liberty.[141]

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[139] Tyler E. Stovall, *White Freedom: The Racial History of an Idea* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2021), 61.
[140] Roach, *Cities of the Dead*, 105.
[141] Berenson, *The Statue of Liberty,* 25 and Khan, *Enlightening the World*, 15.

Bartholdi recognized the importance of colossal statuary and what its potential could be. In a pamphlet Bartholdi wrote in 1884 to help raise funds for the Statue of Liberty's pedestal, he wrote: "Colossal statuary does not consist simply in making an enormous statue. It ought to produce an emotion in the breast of the spectator, not because of its volume, but because its size is in keeping with the idea that it interprets, and with the place which it ought to occupy."[142] Bartholdi's invocations about emotion and interpretation within a spectator are inherently performative in nature. A theatrical work seeks to prompt emotion from its audience, and Bartholdi's vision for a massive statue works in the same way. The monument was meant to prompt specific feelings within the spectator, acting as a scriptive object.[143] A statue's form, site, and connotations for spectators are all critical facets of public memory creation and performance. Bartholdi considered all three when devising the Statue of Liberty and its location.

The statue's form and its inspiration have been up for debate since its debut. In some drawings from Bartholdi, the statue had a Phrygian cap, the traditional French symbol of liberty. In others, a torch was in the statue's right hand and broken chains in the left hand, symbolizing the abolition of slavery in the United States.[144] Bartholdi took pains in his writing to emphasize that the statue was a wholly new creation that celebrated liberty.[145] The final design, however, was of a woman personifying liberty wearing a ray-adorned crown with an illuminated torch in her right hand and a tablet with the date "July IV, MDCCLXXVI" (or July 4, 1776) in her left arm. At the bottom of the statue's feet sat broken chains (Figure 2.11). The monument's full title was, and is, "Liberty Enlightening the World."

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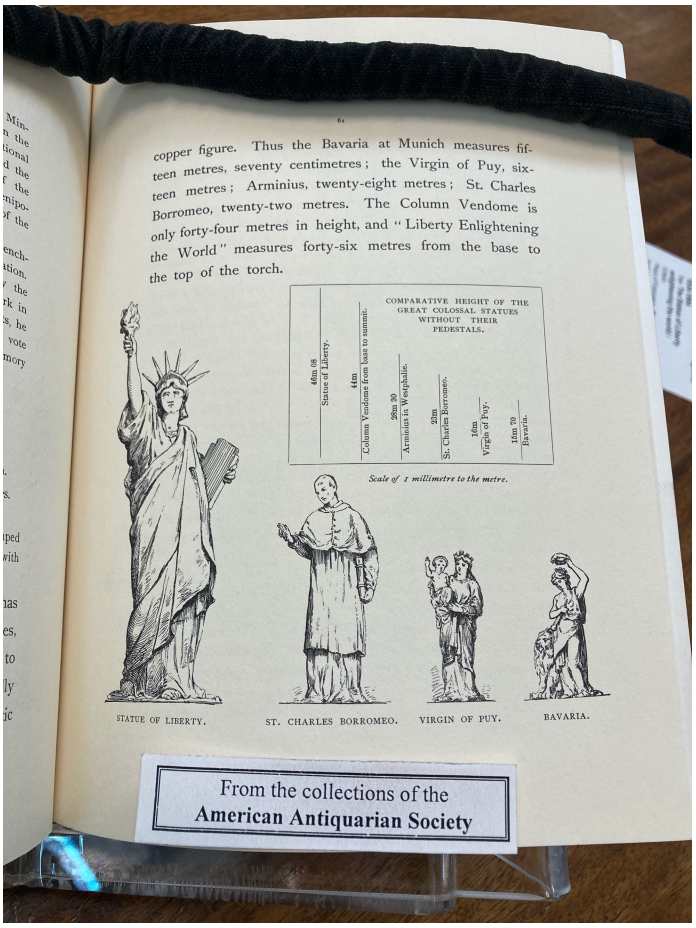
[142] Frédéric Auguste Bartholdi, *The Statue of Liberty Enlightening the World* (New York: New York Bound, 1984 edition), 33, from AAS collections.
[143] Bernstein, *Racial Innocence*, 72.
[144] Berenson, *The Statue of Liberty,* 50.
[145] Khan, *Enlightening the World*, 73. Bartholdi had proposed a colossal monument for the opening of the Suez Canal in Egypt in 1869, but was rebuffed; some of his writing in support of the Statue of Liberty emphasizes how it was a new idea and not recycled from his previous failed attempt.



(Figure 2.11: scale drawings of colossal statues, with the Statue of Liberty as the largest, in Frederic Auguste Bartholdi, *The Statue of Liberty enlightening the world* / New York: New York Bound, 1984, courtesy of the American Antiquarian Society)

With the statue's design underway, in 1871 Bartholdi sailed to the United States to find a suitable location for it to rest. On his tour, he met with US senators, governors, and President Ulysses S. Grant.[146] Bartholdi desired to have a site for the monument that matched the grandeur of the statue. In the 1884 fundraising pamphlet, Bartholdi describes entering New York Harbor as the impetus of inspiring "Liberty Enlightening the World":

> It is thrilling. It is, indeed, the New World, which appears in its majestic expanse, with the ardor of its glowing life. Was it not wholly natural that the artist was inspired by this spectacle? Yes, in this very place shall be raised the Statue of Liberty, grand as the idea which it embodies, radiant upon the two worlds.[147]

[146] Frederic Auguste Bartholdi diary, translation by Richard Gilder, Manuscript and Archives Division, New York Public Library.
[147] Bartholdi, *Liberty Enlightening the World*, 19.

In selecting this particular site, Bartholdi was seemingly interested in how his massive monument would interact within the scenography of New York Harbor, choosing a location that could "radiate" across the ocean.[148] Bartholdi chose Bedloe's Island, in the middle of New York Harbor, as the site of the monument. In 1871 it was home to Fort Wood, a military barracks. This choice would mean that no ship entering New York Harbor could miss the massive monument to liberty. The spectacle of the Statue of Liberty would be unmatched, especially as Bartholdi planned for the statue to be unveiled for the United States' 1876 centennial.

However, the process of obtaining Bedloe's Island and building the statue required Bartholdi and his collaborators to constantly reconfigure and reassert the monument's meaning. In an diary entry from July 18, 1871, Bartholdi, on a visit to Bedloe's Island, bemoaned the lack of excitement about the statue from the commander at Fort Wood: "The place is decidedly what I think *is needed*, but how much pain and exasperation must be endured to realize a thing that, if it succeeds, will make the same people enthusiastic!"[149] The lack of enthusiasm noted by Bartholdi was not unique to the commander of Fort Wood. Throughout his travels and the process of building the Statue of Liberty, there was a noted apathy about the statue in the United States.[150] As was true of the other two monuments in this study (as well as any act of public commemoration), audiences are needed for monuments to be built. If monuments are scriptive objects that prompt visitors, they require that audiences be interested in building them.[151] In the

[148] Frederic Auguste Bartholdi diary, translation by Richard Gilder, Manuscript and Archives Division, New York Public Library.
[149] Frederic Auguste Bartholdi diary, translation by Richard Gilder, Manuscript and Archives Division, New York Public Library.
[150] Frederic Auguste Bartholdi diary, translation by Richard Gilder, Manuscript and Archives Division, New York Public Library.
[151] Bernstein, *Racial Innocence,* 72. Joseph Roach also alluded to this in his lecture at the 2022 CHAViC seminar at AAS, and I felt a little vindicated in my thought processes.

case of the Statue of Liberty, building an audience that would be interested in a colossal monument in one of the busiest harbors in the country was a decade-long effort.

While Bartholdi began to design the statue, collaborators on both sides of the Atlantic began fundraising for its construction. It was decided that France would gift the statue to the United States, and the United States would pay for the statue's pedestal. In France, Laboulaye and his council sold medals and held a lottery amongst France's citizens to raise the money.[152] After a decade, they successfully raised the funding.[153] At the same time, Bartholdi and his team, including engineer Gustave Eiffel, began constructing the statue, beginning with the right arm and torch. This first part of the statue was sent to the 1876 Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia and was exhibited alongside the other technological and artistic marvels, under the leadership of the American Committee of the Statue of Liberty.[154]

Visitors to the arm could marvel at its size and climb up to the torch, as a stereograph shows (Figure 2.12). The stereograph, which names the piece of *Liberty Enlightening the World* as "Colossal Hand and Torch 'Liberty'," shows people on the torch. This image (from collections of the American Antiquarian Society) illustrates how imagery of the statue circulated among middle- and upper-class white households in the United States. These were also the most likely households to donate towards a pedestal for *Liberty*. Much like the images of the Freedmen's Memorial Monument (in both its proposed form and its final design) and the Stephen Douglas Tomb were heavily circulated to fund their erection, the Statue of Liberty's image, even in this in-process form, was used to advertise the Centennial Exposition and the

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[152] Viano, *Sentinel,* 365-370.
[153] Viano, *Sentinel,* 382-390.
[154] Astrid Böger, *Envisioning the Nation: The Early American World's Fairs and the Formation of Culture* (New York: Campus, 2010).

cause of building the statue in New York Harbor. Those who viewed the stereograph could view the nascent Statue of Liberty as a part of the technological and artistic progress of the United States as designed, crafted, and publicized by white Americans.[155]

(Figure 2.12: Stereograph of "Colossal hand and torch 'Liberty'," from the collections of the American Antiquarian Society)

Despite the high-profile presence of the Statue of Liberty's arm and torch at the Centennial Exposition, fundraising efforts for the pedestal were slow. While France boasted that its financial donors to the Statue came from all social classes, the American committee first focused on donations from the rising upper class, then governments on the city, state, and federal levels.[156] To continue to generate excitement for the monument, the arm and torch moved from Philadelphia to New York City's Madison Square Park in 1877. This did not have the intended result, as newspapers such as the *New York Times* mocked the statue for not being completed. The *New York Times* envisioned a scenario where parts of the statue would be littered all over

[155] Böger, *Envisioning the Nation;* Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics* (New York: Routledge, 1995); James Clifford, "Museums as Contact Zones," in *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997).
[156] Viano, *Sentinel*, 419-422.

the city: “since New-York has delayed to furnish money enough for the completion of the entire statue, it has been decided that a piece of the statue is better than no statue whatsoever.”[157] The satirical tone of the article proved to be somewhat true, at least in the short term. The arm and torch, onto which visitors could climb via ladder for fifty cents, would stay in Madison Square for five years while the American committee worked to raise funding for the pedestal.

Leaving the arm and torch in the United States, Bartholdi, Eiffel, and their workers continued to fabricate “Liberty Enlightening the World” into the early 1880s in Paris. Their funding secured, the architect and his workforce built the statue using an iron armature and copper plating to raise the monument off the ground. By 1884, the Statue of Liberty, from the top of its crown to the bottom of its gown, towered over both Bartholdi’s workshop and Parisians going about their business (Figure 2.13). It was almost ready to be sent to the United States.[158]

[157]"Serial Statues," *New York Times,* Feb. 26, 1877, 4, accessed November 30, 2022, https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1877/02/26/80638971.html?pageNumber=4.
[158] Viano, *Sentinel*, 472.

(Figure 2.13: Illustration of the Statue of Liberty being constructed in France, courtesy of Statue of Liberty National Monument)

On July 4, 1884, the statue was accepted by the United States in a formal ceremony in France, where the statue's Civil War origins reemerged. The French President of the Council of Ministers, Henri Brisson, alluded to the American Civil War in his remarks on the occasion, stating, "the only tragedy that your history has experienced during a hundred years past demonstrated, moreover, what a solid teacher was Liberty in all matters."[159] Here Brisson references the Civil War obliquely, with no mention of the war's cause and ultimate goal by the Union: the end of chattel slavery in the United States. If, as historian Tyler Stovall argues, the Statue of Liberty was from its beginnings a monument to white conceptions of freedom, then Brisson's speech highlights how even in foreign countries the idea of liberty for the United

[159] "The American Gift to France, The Inauguration of the 'Statue of Liberty' in Paris," Folder 134, Box 8, Part 2 of Statue of Liberty series, Statue of Liberty National Monument.

States was a white concept.[160] The Statue, which had begun as a celebration of abolition, had come to a narrower, whitewashed version of the concept it represented. The scripts offered by the monument no longer held to the possible original intentions of Bartholdi.

Brisson's remarks illustrate this shift in what the monument's meaning had become. He said that "peace, liberty, justice, friendship between nations is the work that we should, hand in hand, endeavour to accomplish. Such is the future symbolized by this admirable statue."[161] The statue, whose meaning had shifted over the almost two decades since its inception in 1865, was not symbolic of the past like the Freedmen's Memorial Monument or the Stephen Douglas Tomb, but a monument to the future. If, as art historian Kirk Savage argues, monuments reflect both the past and the present, the Statue of Liberty's look toward the future performed a different function than the other monuments examined in this chapter.[162] The social script of the monument, as Brisson articulated it and as was circulated by the newspapers of the time, was not liberty in the form of the abolition of slavery but liberty in the name of peace and "friendship between nations," as by 1884 France had become a republic again.[163] To visit the Statue of Liberty would be to rehearse these ideals rather than the more difficult task of delivering the promises of liberty to all Americans and foreigners alike.[164]

As the statue was being assembled, dedicated in France, and taken apart to be sent for its final installation in New York, the American Committee of the Statue of Liberty tried several different avenues to fund the statue's pedestal with varying degrees of success. Beyond

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[160] Stovall, *White Freedom,* 68. Liberty was also a white concept for Europeans by this point, but that is not the purview of this study.
[161] "The American Gift to France, The Inauguration of the 'Statue of Liberty' in Paris," Folder 134, Box 8, part 2 of Statue of Liberty series, Statue of Liberty National Monument.
[162] Savage, *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves*, 8.
[163] "The American Gift to France, The Inauguration of the 'Statue of Liberty' in Paris," Folder 134, Box 8, part 2 of Statue of Liberty series, Statue of Liberty National Monument.
[164] Viano, *Sentinel,* 448-450.

attempting to raise government funds, they held an auction in 1882 of art, furniture, textiles, and literature. It is from the "Bartholdi Art Fund Auction" that the poem that would become most associated with the monument came into being. Amongst poets and authors such as Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Walt Whitman, and Mark Twain, Emma Lazarus, a possibly queer, Jewish poet was asked to provide a poem for donation. She penned a sonnet, "The New Colossus," which was featured in the exhibition's catalog and whose lines "Give me your tired, your poor/Your huddled masses, yearning to breathe free" would become irrevocably intertwined with the Statue of Liberty.[165] At this moment in 1882, however, the monument's completion was still in doubt. This was in part because the funding for the pedestal was still insufficient, but primarily because New York City did not seem interested in receiving the statue.

The possibility of not placing *Liberty Enlightening the World* on Bedloe's Island had been mentioned in the press prior to the 1880s. In the aftermath of the Centennial Exposition, the city of Philadelphia offered to host the monument instead. Calls to possibly move the statue continued to grow after the funding for the pedestal stalled, with cities such as Boston and St. Louis also offering space for the colossal monument. Though the *New York Times* mocked the statue's arm a few years prior, it was the *Times* that now defended the statue's placement in New York City, stating:

> This statue is dear to us, though we never looked upon it, and no third-rate town is going to step in and take it from us. Philadelphia tried that in 1876, and failed. Let Boston be warned in time that she can't have our Liberty. We have more than a million people in this City who are resolved that that great light-house statue shall be smashed into minute fragments before it shall be stuck up in Boston Harbor.[166]

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[165] *Catalogue of the Pedestal Fund art loan exhibition at the National Academy of Design* (New York: The Academy, 1883), *HathiTrust*, https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc2.ark:/13960/t0pr83096, 9.
[166] "The Statue of Liberty," *New York Times*, October 3, 1882, 4, https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1882/10/03/102791004.html?pageNumber=4.

This excerpt highlights the grand appeal of the statue amongst some despite the lack of funding. Multiple cities with claims to be the birthplace of liberty and freedom in the United States (Boston and Philadelphia) and cities that symbolized the westward expansion of the United States (St. Louis) wanted to have what was quickly becoming the new symbol for American values. For the *New York Times* to claim that the citizens of New York City would rather have the monument "be smashed into minute fragments" than go to Boston suggests that the rhetorical power of the Statue of Liberty was already well understood as a tourist attraction and a symbol for a particular type of freedom.[167]

Other fundraising efforts included the sale of miniature statuettes of the soon to be completed statue, as seen in an advertisement from 1885 (Figure 2.14). In the ad, the possible buyer can get a "miniature statuette six inches in height—the statue bronzed, pedestal nickel-silvered" for the price of five dollars "to raise funds" for completing the work on the pedestal.[168] The drawing of the statuette includes all of the details of the statue, except one: from the drawing in the ad, there is no inclusion of the chains at the statue's feet, meant to symbolize freedom from slavery. The chains are generally not visible in any of the 20 drawings that I have seen in archives, including other images featured in this chapter (Figures 2.12-2.18). While at one point Bartholdi had designed the chains to be in the statue's left hand, their absence from any drawings demonstrates how abolition had been decoupled from the monument's meaning. In a similar way to how the Freedmen's Memorial Monument's original design was discarded for a cheaper, narrower vision of freedom, the version of the Statue of Liberty sold to pay for the pedestal (and by extension the Statue's broader visual discourse) embodied a whiter version of liberty.

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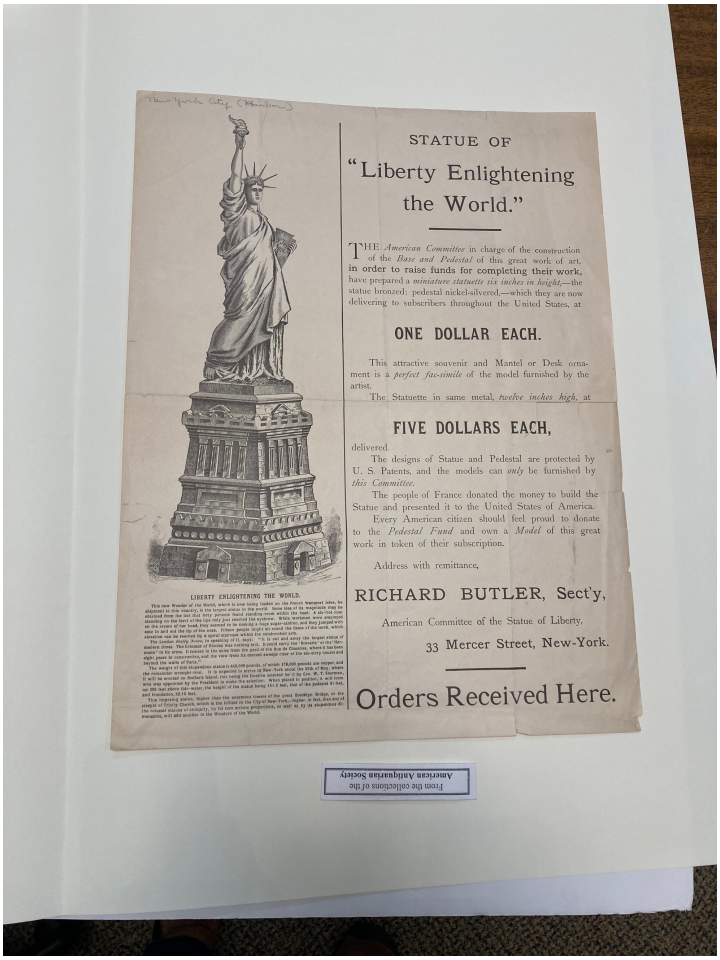
[167] "The Statue of Liberty," *New York Times*, October 3, 1882.
[168] Advertisement for statuettes of *Liberty Enlightening the World*, 1885, from American Antiquarian Society collections



(Figure 2.14: Advertisement for statuettes of *Liberty Enlightening the World*, 1885, from American Antiquarian Society collections)

In the end, the bulk of the funding for the Statue's pedestal did not come from the sale of statuettes or a high-end auction or from the government. Instead, Joseph Pulitzer, owner of the *New York World*, made the offer to his readers: if they donated money to the pedestal fund, they could get their names on the front page of his newspaper.[169] Small donations of as little as five cents began flooding in, and Pulitzer was praised for convincing the largely white American public to fund the pedestal through seemingly simple means.[170] The performative act that Pulitzer prompted was one that made the monument's audience more fully implicated in the

[169] Viano, *Sentinel*, 480-1.
[170] Viano, *Sentinel,* 481. See also Statue of Liberty Series 2, Box 9, folder 155-162, Statue of Liberty National Monument.

process of commemoration: they could have their name in a large newspaper and contribute to a larger, nationwide effort to ensure the Statue of Liberty was completed.[171] Every person who donated, in some way, could be a part of the colossal statue, even if they never got to visit it in person.[172] To donate to the Statue was a performative act in the Austinian sense, whereby the monument was brought into being and meaning was made through individual action.[173]

While Pulitzer's gambit was successful, the work of selling the American public on the Statue of Liberty was not his alone. In addition to owning the monument in the form of a statuette, potential donors to the pedestal were inundated with the iconography of the Statue: it was in advertisements completely unrelated to the Statue, in cartoons, and in souvenir programs.[174] None of these attempts to raise money for the monument's pedestal were inevitably fully successful, but each of these uses demonstrates how the meaning of the Statue of Liberty had changed dramatically from its inception in 1865 to the 1880s by prompting scriptive action based on the monument's presence.[175] For example, an ad from Eagle Pencil Company (Figure 2.15-2.16) is both interactive and scriptive. A customer can pull on the copper-colored eagle at the center of the card to literally unveil the Statue of Liberty – or at least what looks at first glance to be the Statue. Rather than holding a torch, this depiction of the Statue is lifting four pencils, and instead of a tablet with July 4th inscribed, in its left hand the monument holds a scroll reading "Use the Best Eagle Round and Hexagon Pencils in Seven Degrees of Hardness."

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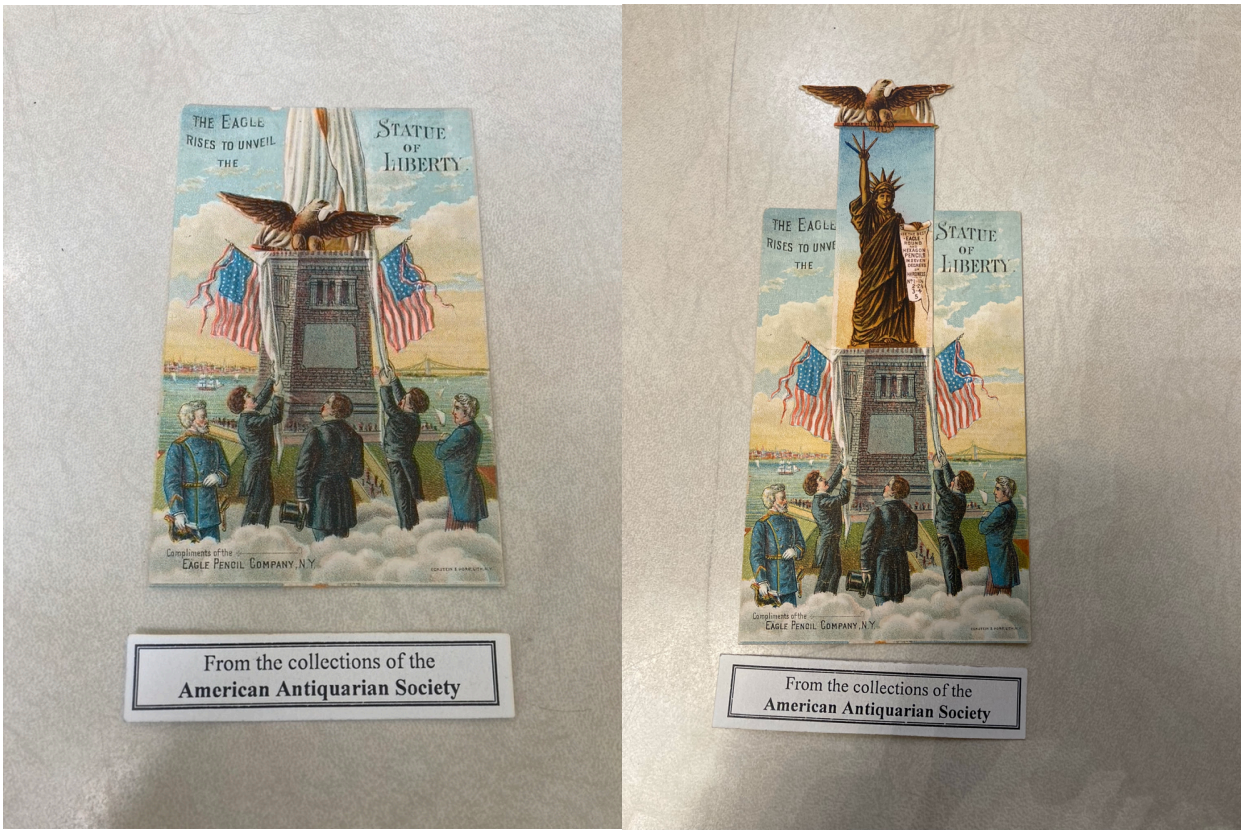
[171] Berenson, *The Statue of Liberty*, 153.
[172] For more on performative implications of souvenirs, see Harvey Young, "The Black Body as Souvenir in American Lynching," *Theatre Journal* 57. 4 (2005): 639-57.
[173] J.L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words,* 2nd Edition, edited J. O. Urmson and Marina Sbisà (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975), 6-10.
[174] The collections at the Statue of Liberty National Monument and the American Antiquarian Society have numerous examples of advertisements and cartoons featuring the Statue. One of the few times I have seen the chains at the feet of the Statue represented is a parody photo of Miss Piggy of the Muppets, where the chains became pearls at her feet.
[175] Bernstein, *Racial Innocence,* 74.

Unsurprisingly, this advertisement also does not feature the chains at the statue's feet, erasing the statue's connection to abolition. This use of the Statue of Liberty in advertising, where a person can literally unveil the monument, makes anyone who comes across the ad a part of the construction of the Statue of Liberty as they "unveil" the monument. Their actions can be a part of the commemorative process, even through advertising for writing implements.



(Figures 2.15 and 2.16: Eagle Pencil Company, "The eagle rises to unveil the Statue of Liberty," 1886, from AAS collections)

The Eagle Pencil Company ad also highlights the uses of the statue in media discourses at the time. The monument was also used to sell dried goods, sewing machines, and lawn mowers, as a few examples.[176] The Statue of Liberty was represented in media throughout the United States despite its New York location, making it seem as if the monument's erection in New York Harbor was inevitable. It was becoming easily transferable for multiple purposes, not unlike the

[176] Doret in-process gifted collection, American Antiquarian Society.

use of the kneeling slave figure in the abolition movement decades prior.[177] Political cartoonists also used the Statue of Liberty in their illustrations (Figures 2.17-2.18) before the Statue's final reveal in 1886; Thomas Nast, the famed *Harper's Weekly* cartoonist, drew the statue as the entrance of the gates of Hell in 1881.[178] In a more sinister drawing in 1884, Thomas Worth of the art firm of Currier and Ives included a racist caricature of the Statue of Liberty as part of the firm's "Darktown" series, illustrations meant to mock Black Americans to an audience of white middle class customers.[179]

This version of the cartoon, entitled "Brer Thudy's Statue Liberty Frightenin De World" (Figure 2.17) is a parody of the firm's earlier 1883 drawing of the Statue of Liberty (Figure 1.18). It depicts the monument as a Black woman holding a bundle of burning sticks as a torch in her right hand and a book with the title "New York Port Charges" in her left. Her crown is a bonnet, and she wears the American flag as an apron. Rather than the elaborate pedestal depicted in other drawings of the Statue of Liberty to raise funds for said pedestal, this figure is standing on a plain wooden box next to a rooster.

[177] Teresa Goddu, *Selling Antislavery: Abolition and Mass Media in Antebellum America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2020).
[178] Viano, *Sentinel*, 445.
[179] Bryan F. LeBeau, *Currier & Ives: America Imagined* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001), 220-240.

(Figure 2.17 [left]: Thomas Worth, "Brer Thuldy's Statue of Liberty frightenin de world," Currier and Ives, 1884, from AAS collections; Figure 2.18 [right]: Currier & Ives, *The great Bartholdi statue, Liberty Enlightening the World--The gift of France to the American people*, New York: Published by Currier & Ives, ca. 1883, https://www.loc.gov/item/97502725/.)

This racist cartoon highlights the pervasiveness of the Statue of Liberty as a known symbol that could be parodied for racist ends and shows how a monument can be used as a scriptive object for malicious purposes. The "Darktown" series proved to be highly popular for Currier and Ives, with multiple prints from the series selling well. As art historian Michael Harris has noted, each showed racist visuals for white audiences.[180] This print, with its use of minstrel show diction in its title and blackfaced exaggerations of a Black woman's features, reinforces how the Statue of Liberty, at its creation, represented white ideals of liberty and freedom to white audiences.[181] Furthermore, as performance scholar Robin Bernstein argues, these types of racist

[180] Michael D. Harris, *Colored Pictures: Race and Visual Representation* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 83-90.
[181] Stovall, *White Freedom*, 68-89.

depictions reinforced social scripts that worked to perpetuate white supremacy.[182] In the case of "Brer Thudy's Statue" (reminiscent of Joel Chandler Harris's stories of Brer Rabbit and Uncle Remus), all original intent for the monument as a symbol of freedom and abolition for all has been erased, and the viewer is left with the argument that liberty for the Black woman would be "frightenin" the world.[183] The Statue of Liberty had, before it was even fully constructed in the United States, become symbolic enough to be able to hold the tension of representing a vision of liberty that was deliberately exclusionary.[184]

As the visual representations of the Statue of Liberty saturated American print media, the monument itself slowly made its way to the United States. All the parts of the Statue of Liberty sailed into New York Harbor on the barge *Isere* in May 1885, including the right arm and torch, which had made their way back to Paris in 1883.[185] Bartholdi and his team set to work rebuilding the monument on the base designed by Richard Hunt (and paid for by the American people) after August 1885, when Joseph Pulitzer announced that $100,000 had been raised to finish the pedestal through the campaign in his newspapers.[186] By October 1886, the monument was reconstructed and ready for its formal dedication. After two decades of being discussed, everywhere from a French constitutional scholar's home to the newspapers of the United States, *Liberty Enlightening the World* made its official debut in New York Harbor as a complete monument. American viewers had been prepared for this moment by the monument's substantial presence in visual media, but the Statue's physical placement would shift the scenography of

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[182] Bernstein, *Racial Innocence*, 78.
[183] Thomas Worth, "Brer Thuldy's Statue of Liberty frightenin de world," Currier and Ives, 1884, from AAS collections. For more on Joel Chandler Harris, see Amanda Brickell Bellows, *American Slavery and Russian Serfdom in the Post-Emancipation Imagination* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2020).
[184] See George Frederic Keller, "A Statue for Our Harbor," *The Wasp*, November 11, 1881, The Billy Ireland Cartoon Library & Museum at Ohio State University, https://hti.osu.edu/opper/lesson-plans/immigration/images/a-statue-for-our-harbor.
[185] Khan, *Enlightening the World*, 230.
[186] Viano, *Sentinel,* 485.

New York Harbor by making it the tallest structure in the city. The installation would solidify Bedloe's Island and the monument that held it as a site of performance of a particular vision of American liberty.

On October 28, 1886, the Statue of Liberty was unveiled and dedicated in an elaborate ceremony. A large parade was planned in Manhattan down through to the Battery, but given the lack of space on Bedloe's Island, only a limited number of people were allowed to attend the dedication ceremony. Others watched from boats in New York Harbor.[187] President Grover Cleveland, the head of the Franco-American Union, and assorted dignitaries made their way to the island through fog and rain, where the face of the monument was covered, waiting to be unveiled.[188] As boats circled the harbor attempting to hear the speeches and see the unveiling, the monument incited its first protest. A boat full of suffragist women protested the lack of female representation in the statue's construction and the absence of women from its dedication ceremony.[189] Their act of protest was the first in what would become a sustained tradition of using the Statue as a dramaturgical tool for political activism.

On Bedloe's Island itself, after an opening prayer and speeches by Count Ferdinand de Lesseps of France and New York Senator William Evarts in front of the veiled monument, the Statue of Liberty was accidentally revealed in New York Harbor. The monument's sculptor, Bartholdi, misheard the cue to release the French flag covering the statue's face after William Evarts's speech got sustained applause. [190] The unveiling of the statue then overshadowed the playing of the Marseillaise (the French National Anthem) and the start of President Grover

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[187] *Inauguration of the Statue of Liberty enlightening the world* (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1887, Google Books scan), 14.
[188] *Inauguration of the Statue of Liberty*, 21.
[189] "They Enter A Protest – Women Suffragists Think The Ceremonies an Empty Farce," *New York Times*, October 29, 1886, 8, accessed December 10, 2022, https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1886/10/29/103989868.html?pageNumber=8.
[190] Folders 179-183, Box 12, part 2 of Statue of Liberty series, Statue of Liberty National Monument.

Cleveland's speech. The result was a delay of fifteen minutes to allow for the crowd both on the island and in the boats surrounding the monument to quiet themselves for the President's address.[191] In his brief remarks, Grover Cleveland made no mention of the original intentions of the statue, focusing instead on the relationship between France and the United States. He stated: "We will not forget that Liberty has here made her home nor shall her chosen altar be neglected."[192] The spectacle ended with a speech by Chauncey Depew, a New York politician, and a pitiful attempt at fireworks, which were delayed by inclement weather.[193]

However, not all were excited by the dedication of a large monument in the middle of New York City's harbor. In the *Cleveland Gazette*, a Black American newspaper, an editorial ran one month after the Statue of Liberty's dedication ceremony in October 1886. One line in particular stands out: "Shove the Bartholdi statue, torch and all, into the ocean until the 'liberty' of this country is such as to make it possible for an inoffensive and industrious colored man in the South to earn a respectable living for himself and family, without being ku-kluxed, perhaps murdered, his daughter and wife outraged, and his property destroyed."[194] This editorial highlights the inherent issue of proclaiming the Statue of Liberty as a scriptive object of liberty and freedom for all in the United States. The performances around the monument, from its French origins to its funding struggles to the exclusively white male dedication ceremony, were designed to appeal to those already guaranteed to see themselves as fully part of the American nation. The Black American writer at the *Cleveland Gazette* was not included in that vision, and understandably saw an object that could not stand in for his own sense of liberty, but rather for

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[191] *Inauguration of the Statue of Liberty*, 31.
[192] Ibid., 32.
[193] *The World*, October 29, 1886, Folder 180, Box 12, part 2 of Statue of Liberty series, Statue of Liberty National Monument.
[194] *Cleveland Gazette,* November 27, 1886, AAS Collections.

the violent version of freedom that white Americans used to terrorize Black Americans in the South through Jim Crow.

The Statue of Liberty has become one of the best-known monuments in the world, synonymous with the United States. Looking at its construction, it is clear how this symbolism came to be—through action by hundreds of people, from the designer, the architect, the funders, and those who visited the statue's arm in Philadelphia and New York City before the monument was raised. These people built the monument, saw it in advertisements, viewed it through their stereoscopes, and walked within it. Through their interactions, the Statue became a scriptive object prompting performances of white American freedom and liberty: it induced them to give five cents for the pedestal, to buy a commemorative pamphlet or statuette, and even to play with a pencil ad where one could unveil the Statue. While similar to the Freedmen's Memorial Monument in its attention to the subject of liberty and freedom, by its dedication the Statue of Liberty came to fully represent the type of American public memory that was on display at the Stephen Douglas Tomb: narrow in its vision for freedom as a white American endeavor.

Conclusion

The author of the critical *Cleveland Gazette* editorial opened his piece with one of the "failures" of the Statue of Liberty dedication: the Statue's torch was not functional. He wrote: "It is proper that the torch of the Bartholdi statue should *not* be lighted until this country becomes a free one in reality. 'Liberty enlightening the world,' indeed! the expression makes us sick. This Government is a howling farce. It can not or rather *does not* protect its citizens within its *own* borders."[195] This comment recognizes the fundamental paradox of creating commemorations to liberty, freedom, and emancipation in the United States in the aftermath of the Civil War.

[195] *Cleveland Gazette,* November 27, 1886, AAS Collections.

Despite proclaiming that Black Americans were emancipated and free through the actions of Congress, the Union Army, and most critically the formerly enslaved themselves, the promises of equal protection and rights were not acted upon, making the "Government a howling farce."[196] A monument (or any site of public commemoration) is a space where communities perform their values, but as is clear from the three monuments at the center of this project, *who* the monument speaks for is continuously up for debate.

As demonstrated in this chapter, the building of monuments is a political process in which stakeholders fight over what statues ought to look like and what they mean. This conflict is seemingly resolved at the monument's dedication, in which speeches prompt audiences to see the monument in a particular way. In the case of the Freedmen's Memorial Monument to Abraham Lincoln, the prompt to build a monument to Abraham Lincoln in the immediate aftermath of his assassination came from a formerly enslaved woman, whose appeal was then brought to national attention. The Stephen Douglas Tomb was arguably only completed because of the tenacity of its sculptor, Leonard Volk. The Statue of Liberty was dependent on an international coalition and the machinations of Joseph Pulitzer, who used his newspaper to ensure that the statue's pedestal was built. The creation of public commemoration, an action that works to inscribe an idea into public space, relies upon people being interested in the idea of the act and invested in its outcome.

These three monuments to the American values of freedom, liberty, and emancipation catered to white male understandings of these values. While I have demonstrated that each monument has its own unique contexts, taken together these three cases illustrate how monuments built to showcase the American ideals such as liberty and freedom inevitably

[196] *Cleveland Gazette,* November 27, 1886, AAS Collections.

recentered the dominant and hegemonic narratives of their day. Any radical political performances prompted by the monument were in opposition to the scripts crafted by the monument builders, investors, and the supportive audiences present on the day of dedication.

The raising of these monuments was a part of the work of reconciliation after the Civil War. While the failures of Reconstruction can be laid chiefly at the feet of the politicians who did not support the full enfranchisement of Black Americans after the end of slavery, the monuments studied here can be seen as performances of these failures. The performances which came from these monuments illustrate how white Americans perceived the ideals of freedom and liberty as exclusive to them. Erecting these monuments shows how the promises of Reconstruction were not only shattered by laws, but by public commemoration that sought to whitewash the very recent past.

In Major General John Dix's address at the cornerstone laying of the monument to Stephen Douglas, Dix made a somewhat unusual allusion to the ephemerality of monuments, noting, "families and communities and races…run their course."[197] But, he noted "great actions, great virtues, and great thoughts, emanations and attributes of the spiritual life, types of the immortality which is to come, shall live on when all the monuments that men contrive and fashion and build up to perpetuate remembrances of themselves, shall, like them, have crumbled into their primeval dust."[198] The building of a monument is one thing; the continued importance of it is another matter entirely. As I have argued in these three cases, monuments were built to honor something that someone at the time deemed valuable, be it a fallen President, a deceased Senator, or the ideal of liberty itself. What was critical in the creation of these monuments was that they enacted, for both those building them and those who saw them be dedicated, a sense

[197] John Dix, *Address at the laying of the corner-stone of the Douglas monument at Chicago* 34.
[198] Dix, *Address*…, 34.

that they were meant to be there to reflect the important values and the social dramaturgy of their space.

This chapter's aims were to examine how these three monuments were built, how the values the monuments represented were debated, and how the dedications of these monuments crafted performative moments. However, the raising and dedication of a monument is only the beginning of the recurrent performative process of commemoration. The monuments in question continued to stand, and what has happened since their erection is as important as their origins to understanding why they continue to stand in public space.

Chapter 3: Revision and Reification (1941-1986)

It is not often that a monument is mailed a letter addressed to the dead man buried on its site, but in August 1968, the Stephen Douglas Tomb received a letter in the mail from one Gary Clark. The caretaker of the Tomb, Herman Williams, noted that "the Little Giant of nineteenth century politics" did not usually receive mail, though a decade earlier the tomb had received a birthday card signed from Abraham Lincoln.[1] The letter invited the deceased Douglas to give the keynote address at the Democratic Party's National Convention, to be held in Chicago that month.[2] An Associated Press article that was picked up in newspapers across the country noted that Douglas was asked to give the keynote because "with so much strife at home and abroad" he was "the longest resident of Chicago with the ability to give the convention a spellbinder and it might enable the country to get back on solid ground."[3] The strife alluded to in the letter could have referred to the assassinations of Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King, Jr., the anti-Vietnam movement, and the continuing Civil Rights Movement and rise of the Black liberation movement. Stephen Douglas, known for fiery oratory defending slavery within the United States through the doctrine of popular sovereignty and his attempts to convince Western states to support the Union in the early days of the Civil War, was now being imagined as the perfect speaker to bring together a troubled Democratic party. Ironically, this gathering would go on to be one of the most contentious and violent political conventions of the twentieth century.[4]

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[1] Associated Press, "Delivered to His Tomb—Stephen Douglas Receives Invitation to Convention," in *The Bridgeport Post*, August 24, 1968, 11, accessed July 30, 2021, via newspapers.com.
[2] Associated Press, "Delivered to His Tomb—Stephen Douglas Receives Invitation to Convention," in *The Bridgeport Post*, August 24, 1968, 11, accessed July 30, 2021, via newspapers.com.
[3] Associated Press, "Delivered to His Tomb—Stephen Douglas Receives Invitation to Convention," in *The Bridgeport Post*, August 24, 1968, 11, accessed July 30, 2021, via newspapers.com.
[4] Mark Kurlansky, *1968: The Year That Rocked the World* (New York: Ballantine, 2004); Michael Eric Dyson, *April 4, 1968: Martin Luther King Jr.'s Death and Transformation of America* (New York: Basic Books, 2008); Frank Kusch, *Battleground Chicago: The Police and the 1968 Democratic National Convention* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008); Heather Hendershot, *When the News Broke: Chicago 1968 and the Polarizing of America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2023).

This Associated Press article highlights how the meaning of monuments and who they commemorate can change over time. Instead of discussing Douglas' accomplishments or the giant monument housing his remains, the article emphasized that Abraham Lincoln and Douglas were rivals "in a series of historic debates," without addressing the subject of those debates.[5] The irony of asking the deceased Stephen Douglas to give a convention address would have been a different affective experience for a reader in 1968 than it would have been to a reader in 1868, as the latter would have had firsthand knowledge of Douglas and his positions. Douglas only held relevance for a national audience in 1968 through his connection to Lincoln; forgotten were Douglas's inability to bring the Democratic party together in the lead-up to the Civil War, and all of the other parts of his life that made him important enough to warrant a monument.[6] Douglas as a meaningful figure could no longer stand on his own; instead, in this brief news article, the association with the deified symbol of Lincoln, one of the most commemorated men in the United States, was needed to understand why one would invite Douglas to give an address at the Democratic National Convention. The meaning of Douglas and the monument had been revised to act as a surrogate for political strife within Democratic politics, prompting a performative moment where one could imagine a dead Senator as a convention speaker.

If sites of public commemoration are spaces for performance, then the prompting of performance does not end once the statue is unveiled. In the process of commemoration, there is always an "after." After a monument goes up, it does not disappear like a theatrical performance, ephemeral by its nature, supposedly does as a time-bound experience. The commemorative object stays behind, a physical reminder of what is to be remembered and potentially prompting

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[5] Associated Press, "Delivered to His Tomb—Stephen Douglas Receives Invitation to Convention," in *The Bridgeport Post*, August 24, 1968, 11, accessed July 30, 2021, via newspapers.com.
[6] David Zarefsky, *Lincoln, Douglas, and Slavery: In the Crucible of Public Debate* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990).

performances.[7] The original meanings of the monument, created by stakeholders at the moments of inception and dedication, may linger, but the meaning of the monument can shift. During this phase of the commemorative process, which I dub reification and revision, the social scripts enacted by the monuments change based on who interacts with them. Performance offers a way to think about these monuments as they change. Each encounter between a person and a statue can alter the monument's meaning, particularly as time passes after a monument's dedication.

By considering the histories of monuments as performance histories, we can see that beyond symbolism, monuments are places of scriptive action.[8] As they age and the scenography around them changes, what they can offer any individual who looks upon them changes as well. Some monuments fade into the landscape, some are maintained for visitors, and some are put into new contexts by the addition of other monuments in their landscape.[9] To reify and revise a monument in the performative process of commemoration is to grapple with the intersections of time, space, and public memory.

Reification and revision are somewhat incomplete terms for this part of the ongoing process of commemoration, but I have found no alternatives that better explain what happens to monuments after they are erected. Reification as a concept implies that these monuments held some type of value for visitors, caretakers, and the government at various levels. The term also holds the possibility that these monuments can be *un*-reified: that they can be questioned and that their meanings can be revised. This moment of questioning results from a transformation in how

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[7] Sandra L. Richards, "What Is to Be Remembered?: Tourism to Ghana's Slave Castle-Dungeons." *Theatre Journal* 57.4 (2005): 617–37. The question of ephemerality and performance is a thorny one that is not the center of this dissertation. For more on this theme, see Peggy Phelan, *Mourning Sex: Performing Public Memories* (London: Routledge, 1997); Richard Schechner, *Performance Theory,* revised and expanded ed. (New York: Routledge, 2003); Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memories in the Americas* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003).

[8] Bernstein, *Racial Innocence*, 72.

[9] Sanford Levinson, *Written in Stone: Public Monuments in Changing Societies* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998).

the public understands a monument. The revised monument yields new social scripts for visitors. For these three monuments, revised social scripts at different points challenged, reaffirmed, and calcified the original intentions of their creators. These monuments demonstrate the possibilities and limitations of what commemoration after dedication can offer.

The performances prompted by monuments shift as the reasons to keep the monuments in public space change. A monument may fade into the landscape or take on new meaning as public understandings about a monument's subject changes over time. People can find different reasons to visit and interact with the monument or find reasons to ignore it completely. The relationship between monument and spectator is one that begets performance, but as the spectator is temporally further and further away from the origin of the monument, the stakes of performances change. What the monument represents can become untethered from the original intentions of the monument builders. Art historian Kirk Savage refers to the history of commemoration as "a history of change and transformation."[10] In using reification and revision as theoretical concepts to consider this history, I track how these changes occur and what these shifts in meaning can offer in understanding how monuments function in public space after they are embedded into the dramaturgy of public life.[11]

In addition to utilizing the work of performance scholars Rebecca Schneider, Joseph Roach, and Robin Bernstein in my analysis of changes in the meanings of monuments, I also rely on the work of memory scholars and rhetorical theorists. [12] In particular, I take heed of the words of memory scholar James Young, who in his 1993 book on Holocaust memorials wrote: "Instead

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[10] Savage, *Monument Wars*, 11.
[11] Susan Leigh Foster, "Choreographies of Protest," *Theatre Journal* 55: 3 (2003): 395–412. https://doi.org/10.1353/tj.2003.0111.
[12] Robin Bernstein, *Racial Innocence: Performing American Childhood from Slavery to Civil Rights* (New York: New York University Press, 2011); Joseph Roach, *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996).

of allowing the past to rigidify in its monumental forms, we would vivify memory through the memory-work itself—whereby events, their recollection, and the role monuments play in our lives remain animate, never completed."[13] For each of the monuments I examine in this dissertation, there is animation (as Young intimates); what Young considers vivification, I term reification and revision to more accurately describe the processes that occur after a monument is built and dedicated. By their very nature, monuments face towards the past. I contend that monuments prompt visitors to privilege certain types of remembrance based on the social script they perpetuate. To examine monuments after their building is to consider how individuals and their actions change the remembrances monuments evoke.

For each of the monuments at the center of this study, reification and revision allow for a new interpretation of what the monument means for its community. As the Civil War centennial celebrations reached a peak, it is unsurprising that monuments conceived and built in the bloody conflict's aftermath would be reexamined.[14] The Stephen Douglas Tomb and its namesake had fallen into obscurity. The Freedmen's Memorial Monument had been overshadowed by the 1922 addition of the Lincoln Memorial a mile away on the National Mall. The Statue of Liberty transferred into the control of the National Park Service in 1933 and became associated with the immigration station at nearby Ellis Island. The context for each monument shifted. Additionally, for all three monuments, the built environment around them changed in the years since their erection, shifting the scenography of the space.

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[13] James Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning*, 15.
[14] Jill Ogline Titus, *Gettysburg 1963: Civil Rights, Cold War Politics, and Historical Memory in America's Most Famous Small Town* (Durham: University of North Carolina Press, 2021); Robert J. Cook, *Troubled Commemoration: The American Civil War Centennial, 1961-1965* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2007).

The political and social shifts of the mid-twentieth century led to reinterpretations of what these commemorative sites could mean. During the time period I examine in this chapter—1941 to 1986—the promise of full citizenship for Black Americans was realized for the first time in the history of the United States.[15] While lengthier than other periods covered in this dissertation, this period spans what historians such as Jacqulyn Dowd Hall have termed the "long civil rights movement."[16] The long civil rights movement was instigated by grassroots and labor activism in the 1930s and 1940s, leading to sustained political activism in the 1950s and 1960s. This Black led activism transformed American society towards social and cultural equity into the 1970s, despite fierce white opposition at every stage that ultimately led to the conservative backlash in the 1980s.[17] The monuments at the center of this dissertation were each revised in the face of this political transformation. I begin this chapter in 1941, right before the United States entered World War II, to examine why some Chicagoans fought to move the Stephen Douglas Tomb due to the racial "decline" of the neighborhood surrounding the tomb, and I end this chapter on the weekend of July 4, 1986, when the centennial of the Statue of Liberty was marked by a lavish celebration spearheaded by President Ronald Reagan, articulating a vision of the United States that welcomed certain types of immigrants. This 45-year span encompasses a variety of ways that reification and revision occurred to these monuments, from holding on to old meanings to additions to the scenography of a commemorative space changing the meaning to the creation of new social scripts.

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[15] Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, "The Long Civil Rights Movement and the Political Uses of the Past," *The Journal of American History* 91, no. 4 (2005): 1233–63, https://doi.org/10.2307/3660172; Jeanne Theoharis, *A More Beautiful and Terrible History: The Uses and Misuses of Civil Rights History* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2018).
[16] Dowd Hall, "The Long Civil Rights Movement and the Political Uses of the Past," 1240.
[17] Theoharis, *A More Beautiful and Terrible History*.

The social scripts of monuments and the roles they play in public life are dependent on different groups of people being invested in their existence.[18] While I contend that monuments incite performance for any visitor at any time, it can be difficult to find such quotidian moments in archival records. As a result, I have often found these moments of performance at the centennial of the monument's erection, or when there is political movement around a monument through community action. To find these moments of reification in the archive, I delved into newspaper archives to examine the media discourses around each monument and looked at state and federal documents to explore how the relevance of these monuments continued to hinge on investment from particular individuals and groups.[19]

This chapter begins with the Stephen Douglas Tomb. In the aftermath of the monument's completion in 1882, the neighborhood where Douglas's remains reside changed dramatically. Rising Black populations in the two neighborhoods adjacent to the monument (Douglas and Bronzeville) made white Chicagoans in the 1940s, invested in the project of white supremacy projected by the Tomb, call in vain for Douglas's tomb and remains to be moved to a more "suitable" location. By the 1970s the Tomb was a destination for school groups learning local history yet was so poorly funded that its Black caretaker picketed outside of government offices in Springfield for more funding. Reification and revision in the case of the Tomb meant that the importance and upkeep of the monument were related to the public memory of Douglas himself, thus prompting diminished performances at the monument.

The meaning of the Freedmen's Memorial Monument to Abraham Lincoln changed almost entirely due to an addition to the scenography in Lincoln Park. The neighborhood

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[18] Roach, *Cities of the Dead,* 105; Bernstein, *Racial Innocence*, 82.
[19] John E. Bodnar, *Remaking America: Public Memory, Commemoration, and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1991), 14.

surrounding the monument began to gentrify, and its specific commemoration of Lincoln became overshadowed by much larger monuments to the sixteenth president built in the first half of the twentieth century. By the 1970s, the decision to add a monument to famous Civil Rights educator Mary McLeod Bethune fundamentally changed the meaning of the Freedmen's Memorial Monument, both physically and symbolically. The performance of reification was of the original ideals of the monument of "Lincoln and the slave" rather than the physical object itself. I analyze the records of the National Park Service and the National Council of Negro Women, as well as the dedication of the Mary McLeod Bethune Memorial in 1974, to follow how the decision was made to add the commemoration of Bethune to Lincoln Park, how the dedication ceremony reperformed certain moments from the 1876 dedication of the Freedmen's Memorial Monument, and how this major shift in scenography placed visitors in a peculiar position to receive multiple social scripts.[20]

The Statue of Liberty underwent perhaps the most profound shift in meaning of the performances it prompted. As discussed in the previous chapter, during the 1880s, the monument had become a symbol of white liberty and of the Franco-American alliance, its origins as a monument to abolition obfuscated. A century later, its meaning was almost exclusively linked to Ellis Island and the Emma Lazarus poem "The New Colossus," making the Statue a symbol of primarily European immigration to America. It also underwent a major restoration to continue to reify it as a symbol of America through a publicly and privately funded campaign, ending with a Liberty Weekend extravaganza in 1986, a century after the statue's dedication (though tellingly staged on the weekend of July 4th). I briefly discuss the addition of the poem to the pedestal in 1903 but focus primarily on the Statue during its restoration and the centennial. In my analysis, I

[20] Jenny Woodley, "'Ma Is in the Park': Memory, Identity, and the Bethune Memorial," *Journal of American Studies* 52, no. 2 (May 2018): 474–502, DOI:10.1017/S0021875817000536.

pay particular attention to the discourses produced by the media and the Reagan administration, which ignored the Statue's emancipatory meanings and emphasized American exceptionalism.

The social scripts prompted by the three monuments studied here changed over the twentieth century as new meanings were crafted. The meanings that the nineteenth-century builders of these monuments had intended were not fixed; rather, they were temporally specific performances prompted by the monuments and their contexts. As time and context shifted, new meanings were ascribed. As objects of public memory, these monuments at once reified ideals of America while simultaneously revising meanings of freedom, liberty, and emancipation. In their frequent exclusion of alternative meanings, the monuments also demonstrated the ironies and falsities of those same American ideals of freedom, liberty, and emancipation.

The Stephen Douglas Tomb

The Stephen Douglas Tomb experienced long stages of being forgotten, interrupted by brief moments of being remembered. The year 1968 was a moment of its fame. Before that year, the monument had decades-long neglect. In the reification process of commemoration, social scripts crafted between monument and spectator shift as people interact with the monument in question: in the case of the Stephen Douglas Tomb, the changes in the social script are limited and difficult to glimpse. Following its raising, the Stephen Douglas Tomb underwent a less radical revision than other monuments under discussion. As the racial demographics of the South Side shifted as more Black Americans moved into the area during the Great Migration, the Stephen Douglas Tomb became a nineteenth-century oddity in the neighborhood.[21] Fights over whether the monument belonged in the neighborhood were not about the importance of the

[21] Isabel Wilkerson, *The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration* (New York: Random House, 2010).

Stephen Douglas Tomb, but rather whether the neighborhood was befitting such a commemorative site. This phase in the history of the Stephen Douglas Tomb demonstrates how reification can be about what a monument does not mean as much as what it signifies.

I utilize newspaper records and Illinois state records almost exclusively to trace what happened to the Stephen Douglas Tomb after its dedication. While the Tomb may be the oldest built and maintained monument in the state of Illinois, the spotty glimpses of the monument in the materials I have located demonstrate the fate of many monuments in the United States: once they are built, they are often ignored and left to be overlooked in public space.[22] In looking at when the Stephen Douglas Tomb appears in public media, I illustrate how even obscure sites of public commemoration follow similar trajectories to the monuments that are well documented.

[22] Bradford Vivian, *Public Forgetting: The Rhetoric and Politics of Beginning Again* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010), .

(Figure 3.1: "Douglass Monument, Douglass Park, Chicago, I.L." postcard, 1907, Detroit Publishing Company, from the collections of the American Antiquarian Society)

After the installation of the tomb's final statue in 1883, press attention to Stephen Douglas's final resting place went quiet. It appeared as one civic object among the many that could represent Chicago in travel advertisements and postcards.[23] In one postcard from 1907 (Figure 3.1), the monument stands tall, with the statue of Douglas atop the tomb. Intriguingly, the name of the monument is misspelled at the bottom of the postcard, where the publisher added

[23] "Douglas Tomb is Artistic," *Chicago Tribune*, November 16, 1910, 25, https://www.newspapers.com/image/355221218; "Douglass Monument, Douglass Park, Chicago, I.L." postcard, 1907, Detroit Publishing Company, from the collections of the American Antiquarian Society.

an extra "s" to Stephen Douglas's name.[24] Most of the detail from sculptor and architect Leonard Volk is not fully captured; rather, the postcard gives an idyllic scene of the monument in the center of the picture, with visitors in the foreground. On the left sits a woman on a bench, in the center what appears to be three children staring at the photographer, and a man reading a newspaper on the right. All appear to be white. Framed by trees, the scene depicts the Stephen Douglas Tomb as a quiet place of contemplation and leisure, one of many landmarks one could visit in Chicago.

This idyllic scene stands in sharp contrast to twelve years later, in 1919, when a short article ran in the *Chicago Daily Tribune* lamenting that "Chicago ha[d] forgotten" Stephen Douglas.[25] The article describes how the statue appeared on a random afternoon:

> Two colored men of infinite leisure sat on the sunny side of the mausoleum yesterday afternoon and peeled oranges and yawned. They carelessly tossed the refuse at the foot of the tomb. Others had been before them. There were cigar ends, cigaret [sic] butts, odds and ends of lunches, a piece of an old broom, empty bags, etc. The floor of the tomb was littered with odds and ends. The once white tiles were covered in grime.[26]

The scene described here does not portray the monument as a forgotten place, despite the *Tribune's* rhetorical posturing. Two Black men ate a snack and relaxed against the monument, effectively visiting the Tomb and utilizing its space for their purposes. The issue, of course, is that their use does not match the intended purpose: a grand monument to the legacy of Douglas. These two men were not giving the monument and the memory of Douglas its proper due. The

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[24] The difference between Douglas and Douglass came up frequently in the nineteenth century due to the resemblance in name between Frederick Douglass and Stephen Douglas, including a political poem from the 1850s: "Let slavery now stop her mouth / And quiet be henceforth: / We've got Fred Douglass from the South - / She's got Steve from the North!" (in David Blight, *Frederick Douglass: Prophet of Freedom,* 260). There is also evidence that Stephen Douglas dropped an "s" from his last name, see Martin H. Quitt, *Stephen Douglas and Antebellum Democracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

[25] "Forgotten? Woman Suggests Practical Recognition of Stephen A. Douglas Anniversary," *Chicago Daily Tribune (1872-1922);* Apr 21, 1919; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: *Chicago Tribune*, pg. 17.

[26] "Forgotten? Woman Suggests Practical Recognition of Stephen A. Douglas Anniversary," *Chicago Daily Tribune (1872-1922);* Apr 21, 1919; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: *Chicago Tribune*, pg. 17.

performances prompted by the monument in this moment reflect how the tomb's purpose may have transformed. In this description, the monument was a type of community space that ignored the original intent of mourning or celebrating the dead Douglas. The monument became simply a public place where one could socialize near the railroad line and Lake Michigan, a park where people could relax rather than a space to remember Douglas. The social script had seemingly shifted.

In addition to describing the state of the monument, the 1919 *Chicago Tribune* article highlighted a woman who wanted to organize a cleanup of the site in honor of Douglas's birthday.[27] While it is unclear whether this cleanup occurred, this incident and its writeup highlight the changing nature of the area where the Stephen Douglas Tomb sat. When Stephen Douglas originally purchased the property on which his tomb now stands, the area was empty. By the early twentieth century, the area was definitively not empty. It was highly populated with Black communities which gave the South Side the reputation of Chicago's center of Black life.[28] This shift and the racist violence that followed was highlighted by the Chicago Race Riot in the summer of 1919, the same year the *Tribune* published this brief article. The neighborhood where Stephen Douglas and his tomb resided was now home to many people whose parents and grandparents Douglas had not seen as deserving equal treatment and protection under the Constitution.

By twenty year later, in 1941, this major demographic shift on the South Side led to a debate about the future of the Stephen Douglas Tomb. While the Tomb had had roughly 2000

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[27] "Forgotten? Woman Suggests Practical Recognition of Stephen A. Douglas Anniversary," *Chicago Daily Tribune.*

[28] Michelle R. Boyd, *Jim Crow Nostalgia: Reconstructing Race in Bronzeville* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008); Gladys Priddy, "Elegance Gives Way in Douglas: Community Grows in Way Debater Never Planned," *Chicago Daily Tribune (1923-1963)*, Feb 6, 1955, W11.

visitors a year throughout the 1930s and 1940s, the idea that the neighborhood was shifting towards a less white future was untenable for some.[29] At the end of September 1941, the Illinois General Assembly set up a commission headed by Chicago State Representative Roland Libonatti to determine whether Douglas's tomb should be moved.[30] They planned a meeting for November 1941 that would bring in "old timers who knew Lincoln and Douglas" and had seen the debates between the two men in 1858.[31]

At a wreath-laying ceremony at the Douglas Tomb on November 9, 1941, attended by committee members including four men affiliated with Abraham Lincoln , residents of the area gathered to protest the idea of moving the Tomb, turning the ceremony into "an informal public hearing."[32] The *Chicago Tribune* quoted a homeowner from the area as saying that "the memorial keeps many old residents in the neighborhood."[33] In comparison, Representative Libonatti told the crowd: "We want future generations to honor Douglas. Very few persons of this generation know about this memorial. The legislative commission will attempt to ascertain where there is a possibility that this neighborhood can rehabilitate itself."[34] The question of the neighborhood's identity was central to whether the Tomb would stay or go.

From the newspaper records, it is unclear exactly why the Illinois State Assembly decided to consider moving the Stephen Douglas Tomb, except "the belief that the neighborhood

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[29] *Waukegan News-Sun*, December 22, 1934, https://www.newspapers.com/image/699246965; *Daily Dispatch, Moline, Illinois,* June 25, 1941, https://www.newspapers.com/image/341275554.
[30] "Commission Named to Move Douglas Tomb," *The Decatur Daily Review,* September 21,1941: 1, newspapers.com, https://www.newspapers.com/image/88446142.
[31] "Plan Open Hearing on Moving Tomb," *Morning Star* (Rockford, Illinois), October 29, 1941: 5. *NewsBank: Access World News – Historical and Current*. https://infoweb-newsbank-com.turing.library.northwestern.edu/apps/news/document-view?p=WORLDNEWS&docref=image/v2%3A12B97C4B94C955B8%40WHNPX-1344EFE2518291DC%402430297-1344EE94C0EBFD34%404-1344EE94C0EBFD34%40.
[32] "Idea of Moving Douglas' Tomb Stirs Neighbors," *Chicago Daily Tribune* (1923-1963); Nov 16, 1941; *ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Chicago Tribune*, pg. 15.
[33] "Idea of Moving Douglas' Tomb Stirs Neighbors," *Chicago Daily Tribune* (1923-1963).
[34] "Idea of Moving Douglas' Tomb Stirs Neighbors," *Chicago Daily Tribune* (1923-1963).

in which the tomb is situated has declined to a point where it is no longer appropriate for a resting place for the Illinois statesman who participated in the famous debates with Lincoln."[35] This brief article from the *Chicago Tribune* demonstrates both how the Stephen Douglas Tomb had been forgotten and how it was being reinterpreted for political means. While the residents of Bronzeville and Douglas may have remembered their namesake as it related to the Tomb, Douglas the historical figure was compared to Abraham Lincoln in the wider media discourse. Further, the population of the area around the Stephen Douglas Tomb had trended dramatically toward Black residents: by 1940 the population of the Douglas neighborhood was over 90% Black.[36] The use of the words "decline" and "appropriate" signal that for white lawmakers, having the Stephen Douglas Tomb in a Black space was not tenable. Much like the *Chicago Tribune* article two decades earlier, the presence of Black people in the white commemorative space altered the social script. If Douglas was to be remembered, it had to be on the terms of the state's white majority.

Two years later, in June 1943, the commission issued their ruling on the Tomb's fate: it would stay where it was.[37] In a more extended article in the *Chicago Tribune*, the report of the commission stated: "The Douglas monument and tomb in its present location is, in the opinion of the commission, more symbolic of the man it commemorates than it would be if placed in a site having lesser intimate relationship to his [Douglas'] life and career."[38] Among their recommendations included making the park that held the monument bigger and creating a bridge

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[35] "Idea of Moving Douglas' Tomb Stirs Neighbors," *Chicago Daily Tribune* (1923-1963).
[36] "A Century of Change in Chicago's Demographics," *Chicago Agent Magazine*, Volume 13, 2016, accessed March 10, 2023, https://chicagoagentmagazine.com/current-issue/vol-13-2016/century-change-chicagos-demographics/.
[37] "Will Not Move Tomb," *Daily Illinois State Register*, June 29, 1943: 5. *NewsBank: Access World News – Historical and Current*. https://infoweb-newsbank-com.turing.library.northwestern.edu/apps/news/document-view?p=WORLDNEWS&docref=image/v2%3A13D09CDA6F396332%40WHNPX-179CEFFA351BED1C%402430905-179CA07765E0845A%404-179CA07765E0845A%40.
[38] "Survey Reports Against Moving Douglas Tomb," *Chicago Daily Tribune (1923-1963);* Jun 29, 1943: 6, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Chicago Tribune.

over the railroad to connect the monument site with Burnham Park on Lake Michigan, plans intended to be executed after the resolution of World War II.[39] The scenography of the space around the Tomb needed to be revised in order to make the monument relevant and accessible to white visitors.

This article from the end of the commission process also reaffirms the idea that those who wanted to move the monument were concerned about "shifting population" and the monument being "little frequented."[40] While the commission decided that the monument would stay at the corner of 35th Street and Cottage Grove, the recognition that the neighborhood had changed and that investment was needed to keep the Stephen Douglas Tomb up to standard is intriguing. It illustrates what happens to monuments in the reification and revision stage of the commemorative process. Shifting the location of the monument, according to the state's commission, would have made the Stephen Douglas Tomb less symbolic of the man and his work, despite the fact that by the 1940s he was mostly known for his debates with Abraham Lincoln rather than any of his own political actions.[41] The symbolism of the space was critical to the meaning of the monument, as was getting people to visit the site. The recommendation to keep Douglas and his tomb in situ was reification for a now-obscure historical figure's symbolic value.

Despite the determination that the Stephen Douglas Tomb would remain in place and would receive further development from the state of Illinois, the Tomb remained a minor tourist destination in the Chicago area. It appears episodically in the newspapers for the following

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[39] "Survey Reports Against Moving Douglas Tomb," *Chicago Daily Tribune.*
[40] "Survey Reports Against Moving Douglas Tomb," *Chicago Daily Tribune (1923-1963);* Jun 29, 1943: 6, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Chicago Tribune.
[41] Percy Wood, "Lincoln-Douglas Debate Series Ends in Alton," *Chicago Daily Tribune (1923-1963);* Mar 24, 1958, pg. B2; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Chicago Tribune. See also Barry Schwartz, *Abraham Lincoln and the Forge of National Memory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000).

decade. In the early 1950s, there was an attempted architectural revision of the site, and a new caretaker was appointed for the Stephen Douglas Tomb.[42] According to a July 6, 1954, *Chicago Tribune* article, "vandals" knocked a bust of Douglas from the top of the sarcophagus inside the Tomb, breaking its neck and nose (Figure 3.2).[43] The new caretaker, Herman Williams, fixed the bust and began to clean the site after "years of neglect."[44] The *Tribune* article stated that the promised upgrades to the site would finally occur, over a decade after they had been recommended.[45] The vandalism of the Tomb demonstrates how neglect can be another facet of revision and reification. While some monuments are constantly maintained, such as the memorials on the National Mall or the Statue of Liberty, many others are not. The neglect and abandonment of commemorative sites does not halt performances, per se, but does significantly shift performative encounters.

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[42] "Douglas Tomb Repairs Begun By State Crew," *Chicago Daily Tribune (1923-1963);* Nov 4, 1954: pg. B6, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Chicago Tribune.

[43] Alex Small, "Little Giant's Tomb Here to be Restored," *Chicago Daily Tribune (1923-1963);* Jul 6, 1954: 23, *ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Chicago Tribune.* I have checked in the few sources I have about the Tomb and cannot find whether the bust was added later, it was not a part of the original design as proposed by Volk but he had sculpted one in 1866.

[44] Alex Small, "Little Giant's Tomb Here to be Restored," *Chicago Daily Tribune (1923-1963);* Jul 6, 1954: 23, *ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Chicago Tribune.*

[45] Alex Small, "Little Giant's Tomb Here to be Restored," *Chicago Daily Tribune (1923-1963);* Jul 6, 1954: 23, *ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Chicago Tribune.*

Caretaker Herman Williams at work refurbishing long neglected park at Stephen A. Douglas tomb.
(Story on page 23)

Bust of Douglas, broken at neck and nose, after caretaker made temporary repairs.

(Figure 3.2: Images of the Stephen Douglas Tomb, *Chicago Daily Tribune (1923-1963);* Jul 6, 1954: 23, *ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Chicago Tribune*)

In the case of the Stephen Douglas Tomb, neglect made the monument an unappealing destination. Despite the hiring of a new caretaker in 1953, by 1954 "liquor bottles and trash" had piled up around the site, the monument itself was dirty, and the entire park was dilapidated and unlit.[46] Although investment in a monument brings with its stakeholders, funding, and visitors,

[46] Alex Small, "Little Giant's Tomb Here to be Restored," *Chicago Daily Tribune (1923-1963);* Jul 6, 1954: 23, *ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Chicago Tribune.*

neglect allows monuments to fade from public view. While amateur historians attempted to keep Stephen Douglas in the public imagination, their work did little to help support the site where he was buried.[47] The neglect of the Stephen Douglas Tomb illustrates an absence of stakeholders who invested in its maintenance and legacy. The residents of the Douglas/Bronzeville area and officials from the state government appear to have collectively decided that the monument was not a landmark that needed protection or investment.

The images accompanying the 1954 article show both the monument itself with Williams standing in front of it and the repaired bust of Douglas. In his thirty-year tenure as the caretaker of the Stephen Douglas Tomb, Williams made it his mission to get the site the funding he felt it deserved. It is beyond the capacity of this author to explain why a Black man cared so especially for the Stephen Douglas Tomb, a monument to a man who spent his political career attempting to ensure Black men did not receive equal rights in the United States.

The restoration of the site and Williams' work eventually attracted attention from Chicago newspapers. In 1965, a lengthy article in the *Chicago Tribune* about the history of the Stephen Douglas Tomb referred to the hiring of Williams a decade earlier and the new upgrades to the park as giving the monument the "dignity and serenity" that architect and sculptor Leonard Volk wanted for the monument.[48] In cleaning the park and acting as its caretaker, Williams and his work reperformed the stewardship of Volk. As this article demonstrates, Williams and his care of the tomb acted to bring some limited public consciousness to the site and to refresh, even in a small way, the public memory of Douglas. However, the Stephen Douglas Tomb still had

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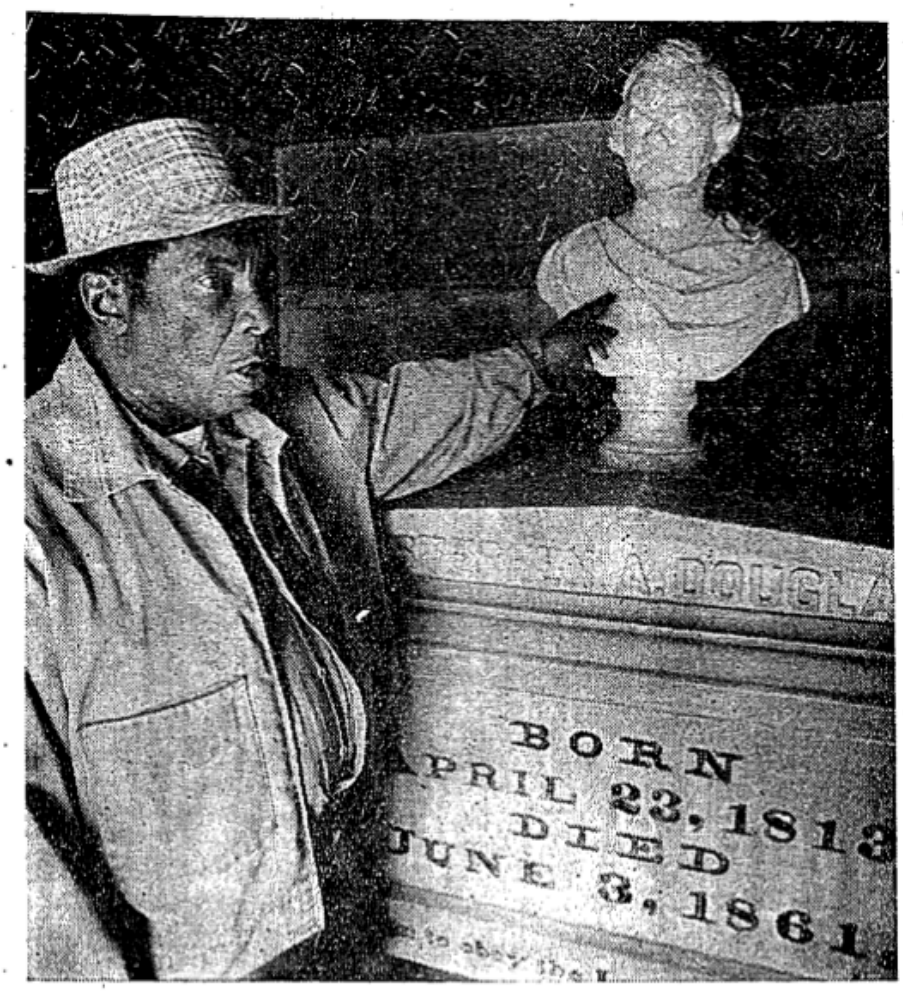
[47] Joseph L. Eisendrath, Jr., "Illinois' Oldest Memorial: The Stephen A. Douglas Monument," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society*, Vol. 51 No. 2 (Summer 1958), pp. 127-148, penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Gazetteer/Places/America/United_States/Illinois/_Texts/journals/JIllSHS/51/2/Illinois_Oldest_Memorial*.html

[48] Lawrence Knutson, "Monument Honors 'Little Giant'," *Chicago Tribune (1963-1996),* Jul 8, 1965: pg. N1, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Chicago Tribune.

funding issues. By 1968, the monument was under-resourced and needed infrastructure repairs. Cracks had begun to form in the granite that made up the base, and the paint on the bust that Williams had repaired two decades earlier was peeling (Figure 3.3).[49] There was a clear lack of interest in keeping the public memory of Stephen Douglas relevant beyond his connection to Abraham Lincoln.



Herman Williams, caretaker for the Stephen A. Douglas memorial and tomb, points to the bust which rests on the tomb's crypt.

(Figure 3.3: Image of Herman Williams and Stephen Douglas Tomb, from *Chicago Tribune*, August 1, 1974)

[49] Alan Merridew, "Caretaker criticizes upkeep of Douglas tomb," *Chicago Tribune (1963-1996);* Aug 1, 1974: pg. N5, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Chicago Tribune.

By 1973, the situation had become so dire that Williams took to protesting in Springfield, the Illinois state capital, to receive funding to care for the site. His protests were ignored.[50] Williams believed the Illinois Department of Conservation was not answering his requests because he was Black: "Those people in Springfield are probably more prejudiced than Douglas ever was."[51] This assertion by Williams is illuminating; it illustrates how the Stephen Douglas Tomb was performatively revised and reified from its dedication to this moment almost a century later. In Williams's rhetoric, the monument and tomb he was hired to care for was less racist than the practices of the state officials who refused to listen to his requests to care for the Tomb. As performance scholar Elizabeth Son notes, monuments can prompt performances of care from people who are invested in the commemorative project.[52] Herman Williams cared for the monument, just as Leonard Volk and the residents of Douglas/Bronzeville had done, prompting action on his part to ensure the Stephen Douglas Tomb was preserved.

The Freedmen's Memorial Monument/Emancipation Memorial

While the Stephen Douglas Tomb was chronically neglected, Lincoln Park where the Freedmen's Memorial Monument was installed gained new company. The new statue added to the park made for major revisions to the performances elicited by the statue of Abraham Lincoln and Archer Alexander. Shortly after the dedication of the monument, Douglass had written: "What I want to see before I die is a monument representing the negro, not couchant on his knees like a four-footed animal, but erect like a man. There is room in Lincoln park for another

[50] Alan Merridew, "Caretaker criticizes upkeep of Douglas tomb," *Chicago Tribune (1963-1996);* Aug 1, 1974: pg. N5, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Chicago Tribune.
[51] Alan Merridew, "Caretaker criticizes upkeep of Douglas tomb," *Chicago Tribune (1963-1996);* Aug 1, 1974: pg. N5, ProQuest Historical Newspapers: Chicago Tribune.
[52] Elizabeth W. Son, *Embodied Reckonings: "Comfort Women," Performance, and Transpacific Redress* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2018), 219.

monument."[53] A little under a century later, this came to fruition, albeit not quite in the form Douglass described.

Instead, it was a memorial to Mary McLeod Bethune, a Black female educator and civil rights champion. Her statue in some ways embodied how society had shifted in the century since the Civil War was fought. From 1960 to 1974, the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW) worked to place the Mary McLeod Bethune Memorial in Lincoln Park, continuously connecting their efforts to the campaign for the Freedmen's Memorial Monument a century earlier.[54] In this section, I trace the NCNW's efforts as they relate to the changing mise-en-scène of Lincoln Park: especially, how the Freedmen's Memorial Monument was, and continues to be, in a spatial confrontation with the Mary McLeod Bethune Memorial.[55]

My examination of the materials surrounding the Mary McLeod Bethune Memorial builds on the work of American studies scholar Jenny Woodley, who wrote one of the only academic articles on the monument in 2018.[56] Woodley focuses on the efforts of the NCNW and the Bethune Memorial as a racialized and gendered commemoration, while I am focused on the relationship between the Bethune Memorial and the Freedmen's Memorial Monument. Though my approach pays close heed to how race and gender shape these commemorations, my core interest is how the Bethune Memorial prompted new scripts from audiences to the Freedmen's Memorial. By 1974, Lincoln Park held two monuments funded almost exclusively by Black donors, providing two separate visions for the United States in their forms. By examining how the NCNW used the Freedmen's Memorial Monument to further their goals of placing a

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[53] Frederick Douglass, "A Suggestion," *The National Republican*, April 19, 1876, accessed July 1, 2020 via newspapers.com.
[54] Jenny Woodley, "'Ma Is in the Park': Memory, Identity, and the Bethune Memorial," *Journal of American Studies* 52.2 (May 2018), 474–502.
[55] Woodley, "Ma is In the Park," 480.
[56] Jenny Woodley, "'Ma Is in the Park': Memory, Identity, and the Bethune Memorial."

monument to Mary McLeod Bethune, I demonstrate how the reification phase of the commemorative process depends upon continued investment from (in historian John Bodnar's formulation) both official and vernacular memory groups.[57]

The placement of the Mary McLeod Bethune Memorial in Lincoln Park highlights how monuments can mutually alter their scripts. The Bethune Memorial was seen as making a progressivist narrative about American history through commemorative action. In their fundraising efforts and in the commemorative efforts surrounding the Bethune Memorial, the NCNW used language of reification and revision to legitimize the Bethune monument's placement in Lincoln Park. They went to far as to change the scenography of the space, repositioning the Freedmen's Memorial Monument to face the spot where the Bethune Memorial would be installed. As monuments prompt performances and engagement through social scripts, the addition of the Mary McLeod Bethune Memorial fundamentally altered the social script created by the Freedmen's Memorial Monument, which had taken on the name of the Emancipation Memorial by the time of the new monument in Lincoln Park.[58]

In the decades after the dedication of the Emancipation Memorial in 1876, the monument, and Lincoln Park more broadly, were sites for District Emancipation Day and Decoration Day celebrations for the Black community of Washington, D.C.[59] Crowds would gather in Lincoln Park to hear orations and decorate the monument with flowers.[60] The image of

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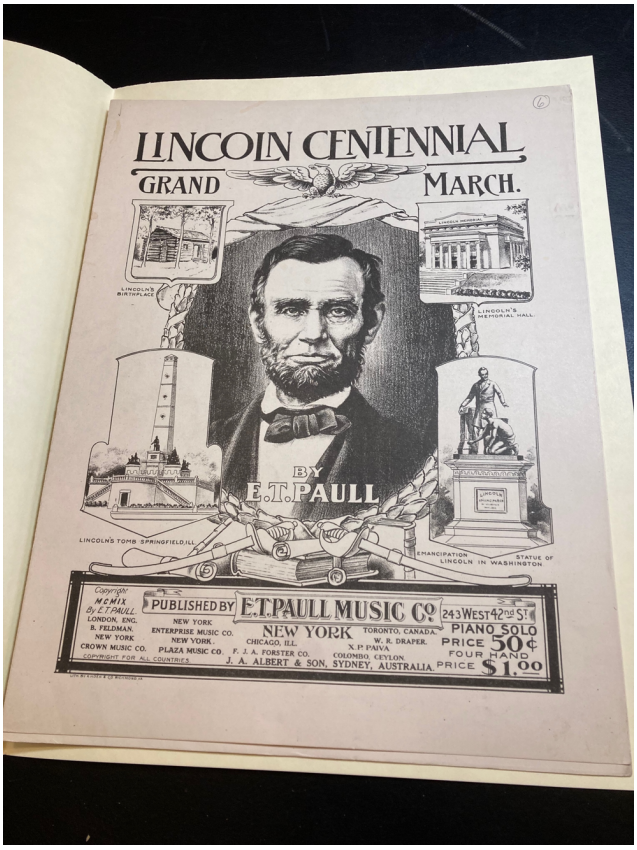
[57] Bodnar, *Remaking America,* 14.
[58] While I have been using the name the Freedmen's Memorial Monument to refer to the statue by Thomas Ball, from here forward in this chapter and in the next I will be calling it the Emancipation Memorial, by which it is most known now. See also Bernstein, *Racial Innocence,* 72.
[59] "The Emancipation Celebration," *The Washington Post (1877-1922)*, Mar 9, 1886, 2.
[60] "THEIR DAY OF FREEDOM: Emancipation Parade Reviewed by the President," *The Washington Post (1877-1922)*, Apr 17, 1897, 12; "STREWING OF FLOWERS: Elaborate Observance of Memorial Day," *The Washington Post (1877-1922)*, May 31, 1891, 2.

the memorial was used to sell commemorative objects such as sheet music during the centennial of Lincoln's birth in 1909 (Figure 3.4).



(Figure 3.4: Sheet music of Lincoln Centennial Grand March, from the collections of the Boston Athenaeum)

Despite this use of the statue's image, the Emancipation Memorial began to fade from view, at least for white Washington, D.C., residents. In a 1910 *Washington Post* article, Washington, D.C., was proclaimed to be "without a fitting memorial to Lincoln," ignoring the presence of the Emancipation Memorial completely.[61] As the plans for the Lincoln Memorial began to take shape, newspapers and lawmakers ignored the Emancipation Memorial, a mile from Capitol Hill in Lincoln Park.[62] By the time that the Lincoln Memorial was built and

[61] "IN LINCOLN'S HONOR: Rumor Says Congress Soon May Erect Memorial," *The Washington Post,* Nov 19, 1910, 3; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The Washington Post, https://www-proquest-com.turing.library.northwestern.edu/historical-newspapers/lincolns-honor/docview/144963454/se-2
[62] Kirk Savage, *Monument Wars*, 83.

dedicated in 1922, the Emancipation Memorial had faded from public consciousness, overshadowed by the much larger commemoration of Lincoln on the National Mall.[63]

While the Emancipation Memorial faded from public consciousness, however, the woman whose legacy would change the park was rising to prominence. Mary McLeod Bethune (1875-1955) was a Black educator, activist, the highest-ranking Black woman to serve in President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's administration, and a vice-president of the NAACP. Through her political and educational work, she fundamentally changed educational standards at Black colleges and universities.[64] Three years after her death, the organization Bethune helped found, the National Council of Negro Women (NCNW), began fundraising efforts for her memorial.[65]

From the start, the NCNW's efforts to build a memorial to Mary McLeod Bethune were connected to the Emancipation Memorial. Lincoln Park was the first and only location mentioned in planning documents for the memorial, and was explicitly mentioned when the Joint Resolution to create the Memorial was put forth by Representative Frances Bolton of Ohio in July 1959:

> It is the hope of the council that the statue of Mrs. Bethune can be erected in Lincoln Park on East Capitol Street where the dramatic figure of President Lincoln and the Negro slave, known as the emancipation group, was erected by the Western Sanitary Commission of St. Louis. Dedicated on April 14, 1876, the 11th anniversary of the assassination of President Lincoln, this memorial was built with funds contributed solely by emancipated citizens.[66]

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[63] Kirk Savage, *Monument Wars*, 169.
[64] Debra Michals, "Mary McLeod Bethune," *National Women's History Museum*, 2015, accessed October 15, 2020, https://www.womenshistory.org/education-resources/biographies/mary-mcleod-bethune.
[65] Woodley, "'No Longer Just Lincoln and a Slave': Consider Mary McLeod Bethune's Lincoln Park Statue," *History News Network*, July 19, 2020, accessed October 20, 2020, https://historynewsnetwork.org/article/176409.
[66] "Congressional Record of Remarks of Hon. Frances P. Bolton of Ohio, August 17, 1959," National Archives of Black Women's History (hereafter NABWH) Series 8, Box 1, Folder 3.

As seen in this excerpt from Representative Bolton's speech, the "dramatic figure" of the Thomas Ball statue and, more importantly, how it was funded were critical to the NCNW's efforts to build the Mary McLeod Bethune Memorial. The Emancipation Memorial and the story of how it was built were used repeatedly in the NCNW's fundraising materials, inexorably linking the two monuments.

After the Joint Resolution that was needed to place a monument in Washington, D.C., received President Dwight Eisenhower's signature in 1960, the NCNW began to design and raise private funds for the monument, as was outlined in the Congressional Act.[67] As stated by NCNW president Dorothy Height in the Congressional testimony leading to the Act of Congress, the NCNW's goal was to have the monument to Bethune built by 1963, demonstrating "the progress and contribution which has been made in American life during the 100 years since the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation."[68] In her remarks, Height specifically cited Lincoln Park as the site for the memorial to Bethune because it featured the Emancipation Memorial, which had been "constructed solely by contributions from emancipated citizens."[69] As discussed in Chapter 2, the Emancipation Memorial's funds were not solely raised from freed people, but as happened throughout the process to build the Bethune Memorial, the story of the Emancipation Memorial served as a helpful argument for the commemorative efforts of the NCNW.

By early 1961, the organization chose sculptor Robert Berks to design the monument and architect Hilyard Robinson to redesign Lincoln Park, in cooperation with Berks and the National Park Service.[70] Berks's design was consistent throughout the

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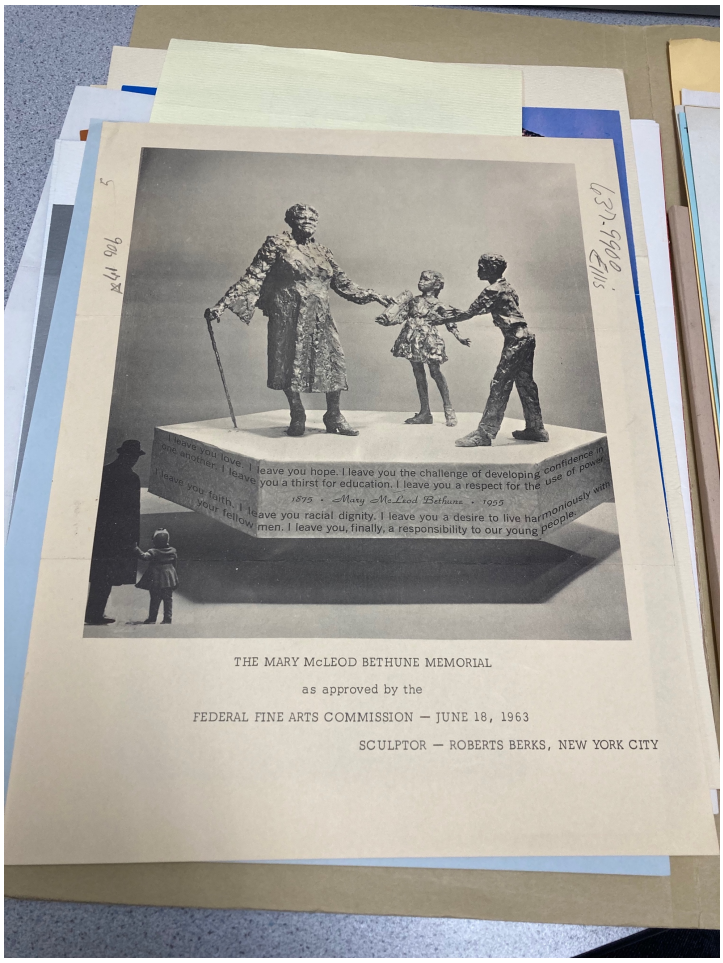
[67] "Calendar No. 1378, 86th Congress," NABWH Series 8, Box 7, Folder 101.
[68] "Remarks of Miss Dorothy I. Height, President of the National Council of Negro Women, Before The House Administrative Committee February 23, 1960," NABWH Series 8. Box 7, Folder 101.
[69] "Remarks of Miss Dorothy I. Height, President of the National Council of Negro Women, Before The House Administrative Committee February 23, 1960," NABWH Series 8. Box 7, Folder 101.
[70] Letter from Robert Berks to Dorothy Height, October 27, 1961, NABWH Series 8, Box 1, Folder 13.

NCNW's campaign. The statue (Figure 3.5) depicts three bronze figures. Bethune, at the viewer's left, is handing a scroll, her Last Will and Testament, to two young children.[71] Under the three bronze figures, the pedestal lists Bethune's name, birth and death years, and quotes from Bethune's Last Will and Testament.[72] The design was approved by both the NCNW and the Federal Final Arts Commission by the middle of 1963, already delayed from their original intention of dedicating the statue a century after the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation.



(Figure 3.5: "The Mary McLeod Bethune Memorial as approved by the Federal Fine Arts Commission, June 18, 1963, Sculptor – Robert Berks, New York City" flyer, NCNW Archives, Series 8, Box 2, Folder 17, image from author)

[71] Woodley, "Ma Is in the Park," 478.
[72] The Last Will and Testament was used extensively throughout the fundraising campaign for the Bethune Memorial, but given I am focused on the Emancipation Memorial I have chosen to not delve deeply into it here.

In the NCNW's early fundraising efforts, the idea of emancipation and its connection to the Emancipation Memorial were linked, heightening the importance of a monument to Bethune as a symbol of progress. In a press release from 1962 to highlight their fundraising campaign, the NCNW stated:

> In Lincoln Park there stands the Emancipation Group – Abraham Lincoln – the slave with broken chains. This statue was erected in 1874 by the emancipated citizens of the United States. Charlotte Scott gave the first five dollars earned in freedom to establish this memorial when she learned Mr. Lincoln had been assassinated. We sought the authority to erect in Lincoln Park a sculptural memorial which will symbolize the contributions of the American Negro over the Century since Emancipation.[73]

There are two aspects of this quote that are particularly compelling as revisionist aspects of the commemorative process. The first is the date the NCNW uses for the erection of the Emancipation Memorial: 1874. As discussed at length in the previous chapter and mentioned in the Congressional Record cited above, the Emancipation Memorial was dedicated in 1876. In their fundraising appeals and materials regarding the Bethune memorial, the NCNW goes back and forth between 1874 and 1876 when discussing the Emancipation Memorial.[74] The reasoning behind this is unclear and is ultimately immaterial to the building of the Bethune Memorial, but for the purposes of understanding how the Emancipation Memorial's meaning changed in the decades after its dedication, it is intriguing. The NCNW, using the monument for its own commemorative purposes, would shift the dedication date of the Emancipation Memorial. It highlights the mobility of the Emancipation Memorial as a symbol that was not fully attached to its dedication date.[75]

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[73] NCNW Press Release, September 19, 1962, NABWH Series 8, Box 10, Folder 214.
[74] I found multiple instances of this through the NABWH boxes on the creation and dedication of the Mary McLeod Bethune Memorial, including in Box 1, Folder 3; Box 2, Folder 24; Box 3, Folder 40; and Box 10, 214, among others.
[75] For more on monumental mobility (in this case in a literal sense) see Jean O'Brien and Lisa Blee, *Monumental Mobility: The Memory Work of Massasoit.*

Second, the story of Charlotte Scott is used throughout the materials to fundraise for the Bethune Memorial, linking Scott's efforts to the NCNW's efforts to build Bethune's monument. The NCNW utilized rhetoric about Charlotte Scott from the beginning of the fundraising process until the Bethune memorial's dedication in 1974.[76] The NCNW created a chain of surrogation where the Black women of the NCNW followed in a historical tradition that began with a Black woman building a monument in Lincoln Park. This made the Bethune Memorial symbolize progress from the Emancipation Memorial to the contemporary moment. The addition of the Bethune Memorial would fundamentally change Lincoln Park by adding a monument that highlighted the efforts of Black women who helped pay for the Emancipation Memorial but are not represented by it. By adding a statue of Bethune to Lincoln Park, the social dramaturgy of the space would be altered.

The fundraising efforts for the Bethune Memorial were varied, from banquets presided over by First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt to cotillions to concerts sponsored by Marian Anderson and Lena Horne.[77] The NCNW sold calendars and baby books, raffled off vacations, and gave their members brown and white tin boxes to collect funds. The effort was considerable, as the monument's estimated cost was $400,000.[78] Despite these efforts, fundraising was slow going. Robert Berks, the sculptor, delayed casting the monument multiple times when he did not receive sufficient funds.[79]

As the Civil Rights Movement came to a head in the mid-1960s, the NCNW's efforts to build the monument were overshadowed by the more urgent needs of the organization to support

[76] Multiple mentions of Charlotte Scott are found in NABWH Series 8 Box 1, Folder 3; Box 2, Folder 24; Box 3, Folder 40; and Box 10, 214-217, amongst others.
[77] *The Pittsburgh Courier*, Nov 4. 1961, via newspapers.com.
[78] NABWH Box 1, Folders 5-9, Box 2, Folder 19; Box 7, Folder 98.
[79] Letter from Robert Berks to Dorothy Height, December 21, 1970, NABWH Series 8, Box 1, Folder 13.

protests and legislation.[80] In the NCNW's 1965 progress report, Dorothy Height wrote to the Department of the Interior Stewart Udall: "No one could have anticipated the trend of events in our national life and their impact these last two years. The developments in civil rights make this positive symbol [the Bethune Memorial] urgently needed."[81] Later, under a section titled "Why Lincoln Park," the 1965 report again noted the story of Charlotte Scott and the misremembered 1874 date of dedication and argued: "A Century after Emancipation we seek to erect another point in Lincoln Park, a monumental memorial in tribute to the contributions of the Negro in American life. Not only the descendants of those emancipated citizens, but all who love freedom are called upon to participate."[82] The NCNW's rhetoric remained consistent as it used the Emancipation Memorial, refusing to negatively discuss the statue but rather focus on the positive value that adding the Bethune Memorial to Lincoln Park would bring as a representation of Black life in the United States. It is worth noting that the 1965 press release called upon "all who love freedom" to fund the statue, rather than the 1962 framing of "emancipated citizens," broadening their possible pool of funders.[83]

As the NCNW persisted with fundraising through the years, they sought multiple extensions from Congress that would allow them to place the monument in Lincoln Park.[84] By 1969, despite political turmoil, the NCNW had raised enough funds to begin the renovations needed to Lincoln Park to accommodate the Bethune Memorial.[85] The park was updated with new walkways and two playgrounds, and critically, the Emancipation Memorial was rotated 180

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[80] Woodley, "Ma is In the Park," 476.
[81] Letter from Dorothy Height to Stewart Udall in "Progress Report for the Mary McLeod Bethune Memorial," May 25, 1965, NABWH Series 8, Box 10, Folder 209.
[82] "Progress Report for the Mary McLeod Bethune Memorial," May 25, 1965, NABWH Series 8, Box 10, Folder 209.
[83] Ibid. In the NABWH archives there was one entire box dedicated to fundraising appeals to corporations to fund the statue.
[84] NABWH Series 8, Box 7, Folders 101-106.
[85] NABWH Series 8, Box 10, Folder 217.

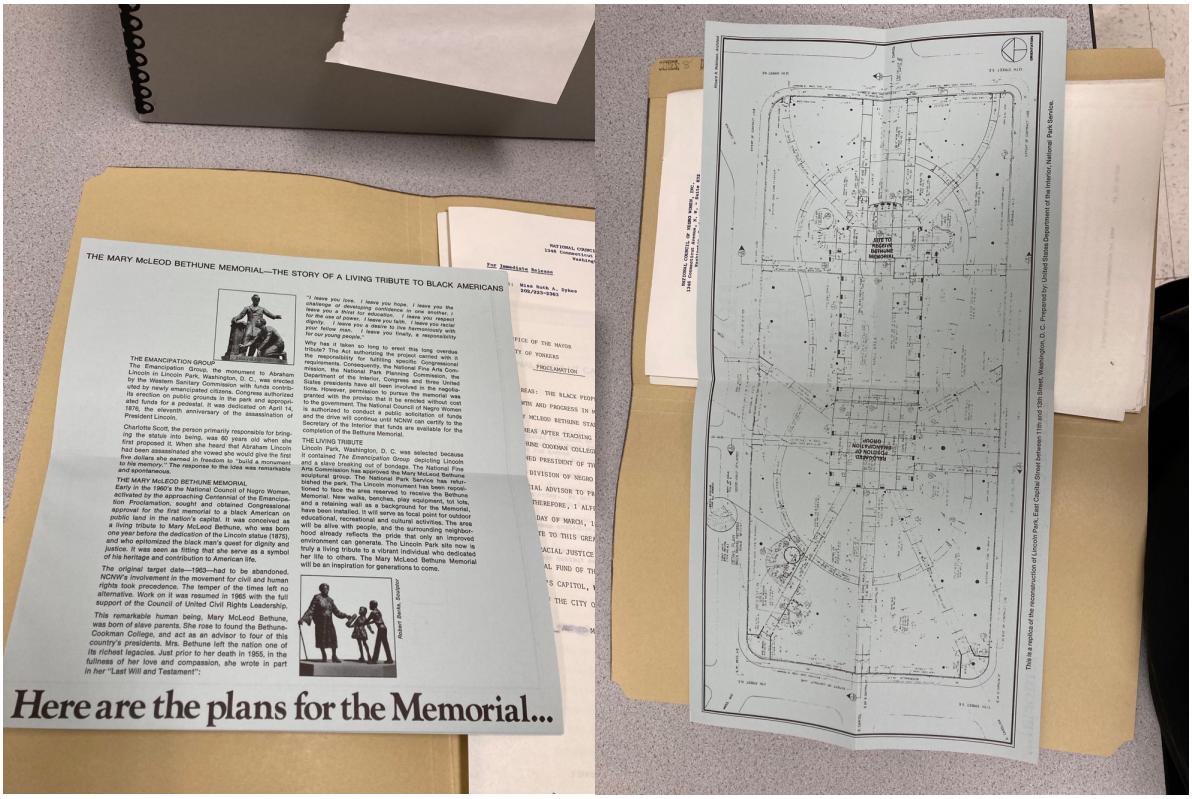
degrees to face where the Bethune Memorial would be placed.[86] From archival records, it seems that the plan was always to change the scenography of Lincoln Park to give equal space to the Bethune Memorial and the Emancipation Memorial.[87]

While the NCNW did not often negatively comment on the emotions and performance prompted by the Emancipation Memorial, generally utilizing drawing on the monument as a model through Charlotte Scott's participation or referring to it as the statue of "Abraham Lincoln with the slave and broken chain," it is clear from the planning process that the rearrangement of the Emancipation Memorial was of great importance.[88] In planning meetings for the redesign of Lincoln Park with the National Capital Planning Commission in 1967, while debating whether the Emancipation Memorial should be moved, a commissioner jokingly said "He [Lincoln] might not like what he sees the other way," referring to the idea that Abraham Lincoln may not have wanted a statue of himself in the same space as one to a Black woman.[89] Yet the optics of keeping the Emancipation Memorial where it was were untenable, as it would appear Abraham Lincoln was disrespecting Mary McLeod Bethune in bronze for eternity because his back would be turned towards her. The social script prompted by the commemorative space of Lincoln Park would have been divisive rather than unifying, as was the NCNW's goal.[90]

Instead, the Emancipation Memorial was rotated away from the Capitol Building and Lincoln would instead face Bethune handing her Last Will and Testament to future generations. In a brochure sent out by the NCNW in 1971, the two monuments are seen in the same space via a ground plan in the center of the brochure (Figure 3.6). The ground plan shows the layout of

[86] NABWH Series 8, Box 10, Folder 212.
[87] NABWH Series 8, Box 7, Folders 101-106.
[88] July 8, 1970 NCNW Progress Report, NABWH Series 8, Box 10, Folder 212.
[89] Woodley, "Ma is In the Park," 480, footnote 17.
[90] NABWH Series 8, Box 7, Folders 101-106.

Lincoln Park as newly redesigned by the National Park Service. The image shows the "Relocated Position of Emancipation Group" near the bottom and the "Site to Receive Bethune Memorial" near the top.[91] The park was reconfigured to hold both monuments, equally balancing the space. Between them is a mall area, almost acting in the ground plan as a stage on which the meaning made between the two monuments could be enacted. With this change in scenography, the social script prompted by the Emancipation Memorial would be greatly revised by adding a new player onto the commemorative stage. Rather than Lincoln alone defining Black experience by freeing the kneeling Black man at his feet, Berks' statue of Bethune and two young Black children would demonstrate how Black Americans gained emancipation on their own terms.



(Figure 3.6: "We have plans for you" NCNW brochure and map interior, ca. 1971, NABWH Series 8, Box 3, Folder 43)

[91] "We have plans for you" NCNW brochure, ca. 1971, NABWH Series 8, Box 3, Folder 43.

The rhetoric of the brochure argues that Lincoln Park's meaning would change due to the Bethune Memorial becoming "a living tribute to a vibrant individual who dedicated her life to others."[92] This brochure ignores the Emancipation Memorial in favor of a new vision of the commemorative space of Lincoln Park where Bethune's legacy is at the center. The Emancipation Memorial's new position would mean that, visually, instead of being in dialogue with the seat of government, this bronze statue paid for by Black people but designed by white men would now be in conversation with a memorial to a Black woman, paid for and designed in conversation with Black women. The symbolic chain of surrogation that allowed for the image of Lincoln as Great Emancipator was spatially disrupted, making visitors consider the relationship between the two monuments rather than letting the Lincoln statue stand on its own. The dramaturgy was fundamentally altered.

The National Park Service successfully moved the Emancipation Memorial by the summer of 1970, but the NCNW still had not raised enough funds to complete the Bethune Memorial. They received a final extension from the US Congress in 1971, this time sponsored by Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm, the first Black female member of Congress. In the Congressional debate around the extension of the Joint Resolution approving the placement of the monument in Lincoln Park, Chisholm, in responding to a Louisiana Congressman's claims about Bethune being a Communist, noted:

> This statue is not being provided for by Federal funds of any sort in the way certain other statues from the days of the Confederacy have been maintained and built in Washington, D.C. This has been a movement on the part of a deprived, disillusioned ethnic minority in this country in terms of seeking for themselves an image to which they can relate.[93]

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[92] "We have plans for you" NCNW brochure, ca. 1971, NABWH Series 8, Box 3, Folder 43.
[93] *Congressional Record*, House of Representatives, July 19, 1971 Vol, 117, No. 111, p. H 6868, NABWH Series 8, Box 7, Folder 106.

In her speech, Chisholm highlighted both the importance of the Bethune memorial as a symbolic object and the hypocrisy that the project was receiving no Federal monies while Confederate memorials received funds for their maintenance in Washington, D.C. Additionally, Chisholm's lack of reference to the Emancipation Memorial in this debate shows how, despite the use of the monument throughout the NCNW's fundraising campaign, the Emancipation Memorial was not considered to be any sort of representation of Black life, and was not an image to be related to. The performances prompted by the statue of Lincoln and the newly freed slave were of the past; the Bethune Memorial would be a commemoration for the future, as emphasized by the presence of children in the monument. The Bethune Memorial was a way to revise the commemorative process of the Emancipation Memorial. Rather than centering a white man as a savior, it would center the critical contributions of Black women.

By 1973 the NCNW had raised enough funds to complete the monument and began to plan the dedication ceremony for July 10, 1974, on what would have been the 99th birthday of Mary McLeod Bethune.[94] It was the first commemoration to a Black woman in monumental form in Washington, D.C.[95] In a 1974 press kit for the dedication activities, the NCNW again used the Emancipation Memorial to demonstrate how the Bethune Memorial would be a part of a chain of surrogation.[96] The addition of the Bethune Memorial would "serve as the culmination of a monument to freedom and justice begun when, on April 14, 1876, the nation's newly-freed black citizens erected in Lincoln Park a monument to Abraham Lincoln and emancipation."[97] This time, "history will do more than just repeat itself" when it came to dedicating the Mary

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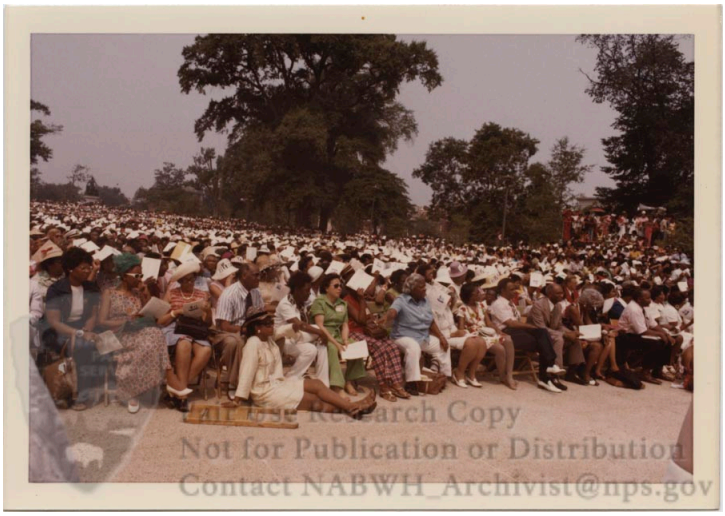
[94] "Call to Celebration: Live the Legacy!" press release, ca. 1974, NABWH, Box 6, Folder 77.
[95] Woodley, "Ma is In the Park," 474. There was an attempt in the early twentieth century to build a monument to the Mammy stereotype; see Laura Ferdinand, "Ladies Made: Racialized Performances of Femininity in the Segregated South," (Doctoral Dissertation, Northwestern University, 2022) and Miriam J. Petty, *Stealing the Show: African American Performers and Audiences in 1930s Hollywood* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2016).
[96] Roach, *Cities of the Dead*, 3.
[97] "Call to Celebration: Live the Legacy!" press release, ca. 1974, NABWH, Box 6, Folder 77.

McLeod Bethune Memorial.[98] The long awaited addition of the Bethune Memorial would revise how emancipation and freedom would be represented in statuary by making it a dialogue between two visions of Black life in Lincoln Park.



(Figure 3.7: Crowd at the Bethune Memorial dedication ceremony, Emancipation Memorial at the far back, NABWH Series 14, Box 4, courtesy of the National Park Service)

The July 10, 1974, ceremony was attended by 18,000 people and was followed by two days of events including a parade down Pennsylvania Avenue and a 24-hour vigil at Lincoln Park to honor Bethune.[99] As Figure 3.7 shows, the Emancipation Memorial is visible at the back of the crowd, and in video taken on the day of dedication, the camera zooms over the Emancipation Memorial before focusing squarely on the stage next to the veiled Bethune Memorial.[100] The NCNW, in dedicating the Bethune Memorial, made several explicit choices during the ceremony that gestured to the Emancipation Memorial and how adding the Bethune Memorial changed the meaning of the Emancipation Memorial.

The Mary McLeod Bethune Memorial dedication ceremony also made an intentional and explicit call back to the 1876 dedication of the monument to Lincoln. After the opening prayer,

[98] "Call to Celebration: Live the Legacy!" press release, ca. 1974, NABWH, Box 6, Folder 77.
[99] Mary McLeod Bethune Memorial Dedication Schedule, NABWH Series 8, Box 7, Folder 90.
[100] Dedication of Mary McLeod Bethune State at Lincoln Park video, Anacostia Community Museum, ACMA.09-023, Item ACMA AV003558, viewed June 21, 2022.

the Secretary of the Interior Rogers C.B. Morton introduced actor Roscoe Lee Brown, who read an excerpt of Frederick Douglass's dedication day address from April 14, 1876. Before beginning, he noted a change he was making to Douglass's words: "There are only two alterations, if you'll forgive the word, and that is where there was the name 'Abraham Lincoln' will be the illustrious name 'Mary McLeod Bethune,' and on this day in this place, in this speech 'man' becomes 'woman.'"[101] Browne only read from the first section of Douglass's address, before the address goes into substantial criticisms of Lincoln (discussed pp. 65-68), but the decision to include Douglass's address at all is an act of commemorative revision through performance.[102] The name and gender of Bethune were transplanted into Douglass's address dedicating the monument to Lincoln. Through this revision, Douglass's words in praise of the act of commemoration, "performing a national act," became words of praise to Mary McLeod Bethune.[103] For that audience, this literal act of substitution shifted what Douglass's performative actions meant to both commemorations in the park.

NCNW President Dorothy Height's speech made multiple references to the Emancipation Memorial, crafting her own interpretation of the statue.[104] Before the assembled crowd, she said: "If you look at the statue of Abraham Lincoln and the slave while here in the park, you will see that the sculptor in 1874 had the genius to so place the slave at Mr. Lincoln's knee that it is very clear that the Emancipation Proclamation followed because the slave broke his own chain. He set

[101] Roscoe Lee Brown, Audio Transcription, Dedication, Lincoln Park, 10 July 1974, Tape #1, NABWH Series 15, Subseries 5, Folder 86.
[102] Roscoe Lee Brown, Audio Transcription, Dedication, Lincoln Park, 10 July 1974, Tape #1, NABWH Series 15, Subseries 5, Folder 86.
[103] Douglass, "Oration," 480 and Roscoe Lee Brown, Audio Transcription, Dedication, Lincoln Park, 10 July 1974, Tape #1, NABWH Series 15, Subseries 5, Folder 86.
[104] Jenny Woodley, "'Ma Is in the Park': Memory, Identity, and the Bethune Memorial," *Journal of American Studies* 52, no. 2 (May 2018): 474–502, DOI:10.1017/S0021875817000536, 480.

himself free."[105] While Height got the date of the statue wrong, her interpretation of the monument reflected a revised social script for the monument. Rather than the disdain shown by Douglass about the Emancipation Memorial presenting a Black man on his knees, Height offered a vision for the monument that aligned with how she saw the Bethune Memorial. The script of the patriarchal Lincoln was, for a moment, disrupted.

Height went on to discuss the scenic dramaturgical changes to Lincoln Park, describing what the pivot of the Emancipation Memorial did to change the meaning of the monument:

> This park, in the years since we started to work on this memorial, has been refurbished. Mr. Lincoln has been repositioned so that his back will not be to our gracious lady. They will face each other in Lincoln Park. [applause] This is a symbol of the kind of partnership that has to take place in our own country of men and women, of people of all backgrounds.[106]

In Height's articulation, the shifting of the Emancipation Memorial held the potential for partnership and respect between different groups of people.[107] The "civic estrangement" that Salamishah Tillet argues Black Americans feel at sites of remembrance to slavery would be diminished because the two monuments together symbolized a change towards racial equality.[108] Facing each other, the Mary McLeod Bethune Memorial and the Emancipation Memorial could prompt performances for progress rather than division.

The placement of the Bethune Memorial in Lincoln Park demonstrates how commemoration is a process that undergoes periodic revision and performance. The addition of Bethune staring into the eyes of Lincoln and Archer Alexander added another player into the

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[105] Dorothy Height, Audio Transcription, Dedication, Lincoln Park, 10 July 1974, Tape #1, NABWH Series 15, Subseries 5, Folder 86.
[106] Dorothy Height, Audio Transcription, Dedication, Lincoln Park, 10 July 1974, Tape #1, NABWH Series 15, Subseries 5, Folder 86.
[107] Dorothy Height, Audio Transcription, Dedication, Lincoln Park, 10 July 1974, Tape #1, NABWH Series 15, Subseries 5, Folder 86.
[108] Salamishah Tillet, *Sites of Slavery: Citizenship and Racial Democracy in the Post-Civil Rights Imagination* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2012) 3.

commemorative space, not allowing for the dominant narrative of the Great Emancipator to overshadow the contributions of Black women in the shaping of history and memory. The act of remembrance offered by the Freedmen's Memorial Monument became inextricably linked to the commemoration of Bethune. In Lincoln Park, a visitor could no longer only see the image of Lincoln standing over a kneeling Black man; they would also be confronted with the vision of Mary McLeod Bethune handing her knowledge to the next generation. The social script prompted by the Emancipation Memorial was fundamentally revised, making it hard for Lincoln to be reified in public memory in the same manner as before.

The Statue of Liberty

Unlike the other two monuments at the center of this study, the Statue of Liberty occupied a larger-than-life presence since its dedication in 1886. Tourists consistently visited the Statue, and it was viewed by the thousands of immigrants who were processed through Ellis Island, opened in 1892.[109] Over the first 100 years of its existence, the Statue transformed from a symbol for the Franco-American relationship and a nebulous ideal of American liberty to being the symbol of America itself, equaling the American flag as a signifier of the United States. Much like the other monuments at the center of this study, after its dedication the Statue of Liberty was reified through a process that transformed the monument's social scripts to visitors. The monument also changed hands within the oversight of the federal government, transferring from the War Department to the National Park Service in 1933. The addition of Ellis Island to the management structure of the monument in 1965 reified what had become one of the defining social scripts for the Statue of Liberty: its link to immigration. This becomes even clearer when

[109] "Ellis Island – A Chronology," *National Park Service*, March 17, 2022, accessed September 10, 2022, https://www.nps.gov/elis/learn/historyculture/ellis-island-chronology.htm.

studying the rhetoric surrounding the Statue of Liberty's centennial, when a restoration campaign once again revised its meaning. At the same time, popular media such as *Schoolhouse Rock!* and the Ken Burns documentary *The Statue of Liberty* (1985) engaged with the script of the Statue as an ideal of immigration, reifying how it symbolized American ideals for some Americans, but not all.

In following how the Statue of Liberty's meaning was revised and reified, I use newspaper articles, magazines, visual art, letters, and video media to follow the monument over time. By doing so, I document how the Statue of Liberty symbolized a vision of America that welcomed immigrants, and how that inherently political idea was popularized after the monument came under the National Park Service's jurisdiction, along with the decommissioned Ellis Island. I also utilize the only two secondary sources that I have found that analyze the period after the Statue of Liberty's dedication, gender scholar Erica Rand's *The Ellis Island Snow Globe* (2005) and rhetorician David E. Procter's *Enacting Political Culture: Rhetorical Transformations of Liberty Weekend 1986* (1990), to contextualize this process, but instead using performance as a framework to explicate how the meaning of the Statue of Liberty changed over a century. The reification and revision process of commemoration created a social script from the Statue of Liberty that was rigid in how the Statue could be understood, even as some, such as the Black author James Baldwin, challenged the idea that the monument had any bearing on American public life while others used the reified symbol to protest for their own aims.

From 1886, the Statue of Liberty received scores of visitors every year who took tours to see "this colossal work of art."[110] As a visual icon, it was easy to spot.[111] In an 1887 illustration from *Frank Leslie's Illustrated* (Figure 3.8), some of the immigrants pictured are gesturing towards the Statue in excitement, while others are looking out wistfully at the idea of "the land of freedom."[112] In the accompanying article, the *Leslie's Illustrated* staff described what they believed immigrants would enact while seeing the new statue: "every eye is turned towards the statue, which, if it could speak, would salute the newcomers with welcomes, and every soul is stirred feebly it may be, but none the less really, by emotions for which there is no fitting speech."[113] From this description of the image, the Statue of Liberty prompts in viewers feelings of awe and welcome. Despite assertions in 1886 that the monument symbolized the alliance between France and the United States and the notion of liberty as the rule of law, less than a year later the monument was already being entangled in the rhetorics of freedom and immigration.

[110] "Statue of Liberty Excursions" brochure, in the Richard Watson Gilder papers, Box 10, Folder 4, Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library. This folder also contains a document which states that by 1900 the Statue was receiving at least 60,000 visitors a year.
[111] "New York - Welcome to the land of freedom - An ocean steamer passing the Statue of Liberty - Scene on the steerage deck / from a sketch by a staff artist," in *Frank Leslie's Illustrated*, July 2, 1887, pp. 324-325, from the Library of Congress, https://lccn.loc.gov/97502086
[112] "New York - Welcome to the land of freedom - An ocean steamer passing the Statue of Liberty - Scene on the steerage deck / from a sketch by a staff artist," in *Frank Leslie's Illustrated*, July 2, 1887, pp. 324-325, from the Library of Congress, https://lccn.loc.gov/97502086
[113] "Welcome to the land of freedom," *Frank Leslie's Illustrated*, July 2, 1887, pp. 327, *Internet Archive*, accessed October 6, 2022, https://archive.org/details/sim_leslies-weekly_1887-07-02_64_1659/page/326/mode/2up.

(Figure 3.8: "New York - Welcome to the land of freedom - An ocean steamer passing the Statue of Liberty…" in *Frank Leslie's Illustrated*, July 2, 1887, pp. 324-325, from the Library of Congress, https://lccn.loc.gov/97502086)

In 1892, when Ellis Island opened as an immigration checkpoint, the relationship between the Statue of Liberty and the thousands of primarily European people immigrating to the United States was brought even closer.[114] This guaranteed that those who passed through one of the busiest immigration checkpoints in the United States were unable to miss the Statue.[115] The monument itself also changed. Spiral staircases were added in 1888 to make access to the Statue easier.[116]

There were additions to the statue beyond infrastructure improvements, including the addition of Emma Lazarus' poem to the pedestal. The poem, "The New Colossus," written to

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[114] "Ellis Island – A Chronology," *National Park Service*, March 17, 2022, accessed September 10, 2022, https://www.nps.gov/elis/learn/historyculture/ellis-island-chronology.htm.
[115] For more information on theatre and immigration in New York at this time see Elizabeth H. Kinsley, *Here In This Island We Arrived: Shakespeare and Belonging in Immigrant New York* (University Park: Pennsylvania University Press, 2019). The cover of this book is fittingly a drawing of the Statue of Liberty reading Shakespeare's *The Tempest*.
[116] "Liberty Island – A Chronology," *National Park Service*, February 4, 2018, accessed September 10, 2022, https://www.nps.gov/stli/learn/historyculture/liberty-island-a-chronology.htm.

help raise money for the monument's pedestal in 1883, was not a part of the discourse surrounding the Statue of Liberty when it was built and dedicated.[117] The sonnet imagines the monument as a towering figure welcoming exiles in New York Harbor:

> Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,
> With conquering limbs astride from land to land;
> Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand
> A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame
> Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name
> Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand
> Glows world-wide welcome; her mild eyes command
> The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame.
> "Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!" cries she
> With silent lips. "Give me your tired, your poor,
> Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
> The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
> Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,
> I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"[118]

Lazarus died in 1887, and her poem remained obscure until 1901, when Lazarus's friend Georgina Schuyler rediscovered it and campaigned to place a plaque with the poem on the Statue itself.[119] In her campaign, Schuyler focused on commemorating Lazarus, a prolific writer and social campaigner, but others involved in the campaign were focused on the importance of the poem to the monument's meaning.

In letters received by Richard Watson Gilder, one of the leaders of the campaign for the plaque, there were disagreements over the poem's meaning in relation to incoming immigrants. One 1902 letter Gilder received urged him to work with Schuyler to change the wording of Lazarus's poem, as the language of "huddled masses" and "wretched refuse" were "impossible"

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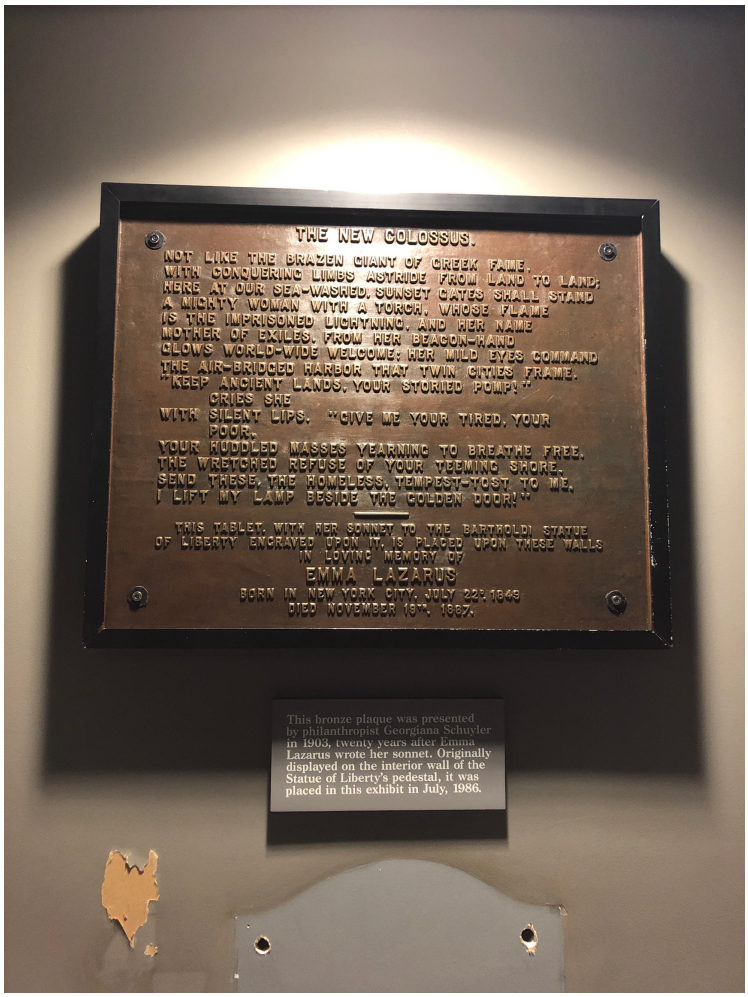
[117] David Lehman, "Colossal Ode," *Smithsonian Magazine*, April 2004, accessed September 15, 2022, https://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/colossal-ode-103151288/.
[118] Emma Lazarus, "The New Colossus," *Poetry Foundation*, accessed December 15, 2022, https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/46550/the-new-colossus.
[119] David Lehman, "Colossal Ode," *Smithsonian Magazine*, April 2004, accessed September 15, 2022, https://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/colossal-ode-103151288/.

to “put into a stately and monumental sonnet,” especially as, according to the writer, it did not describe the people coming to the United States.[120] From this letter, the language of this poem regarding the immigration situation was a matter of concern, specifically because the poem was going to be attached to the Statue of Liberty.



(Figure 3.9: 1903 bronze plaque of “The New Colossus” in the pedestal at the Statue of Liberty. December 10, 2019, photo by author)

Despite these concerns, in 1903 the original poem was placed on the interior wall of the pedestal of the Statue (Figure 3.9). In remarking on the plaque, the *New York Times* noted that the choice of its addition was due to “the interest Emma Lazarus took in the Liberty Statue as a

[120] Letter from Samuel Ward to Richard Watson Gilder, February 20, 1902, in the Richard Watson Gilder papers, Box 10, Folder 4, Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library.

symbol, for a land where the down-trodden and despised have the chance to develop their own careers."[121] In this framing, the Statue of Liberty was transformed into a symbol for the potential and promise of America. With the installation of the plaque bearing Lazarus's poem, this understanding of the monument's meaning was literally attached to the Statue. Almost twenty years after the monument was dedicated, the Statue of Liberty's meaning was fundamentally shifting away from the original intentions of sculptor Frederic Bartholdi—a monument to the ideals of liberty and emancipation—to a statue that embodied American ideals about freedom and what the country could offer immigrants.

This major revision of the meaning of the Statue of Liberty continued throughout the early to mid-twentieth century, as the jurisdiction of the monument transferred from the US Lighthouse Board to the Army Board to the War Department to the National Park Service within the Department of the Interior in 1933.[122] Beyond its use as a symbol for the hopes of immigrants coming to the United States, the Statue of Liberty was used for a multitude of purposes in both print and visual media, including propaganda posters for World Wars I and II (Figures 3.10 and 3.11) and social commentaries on American racial violence (Figure 3.12). In each of these examples, different aspects of the monument are highlighted (or in some cases changed) showcasing that despite being made of copper and iron, the Statue of Liberty had malleable meanings.

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[121] "In Memory of Emma Lazarus," *New York Times*, May 6, 1903, 9, accessed September 12, 2022, https://www.nytimes.com/1903/05/06/archives/in-memory-of-emma-lazarus-tablet-on-liberty-island-to-the-poetess.html.

[122] "Liberty Island – A Chronology," *National Park Service*, February 4, 2018, accessed September 10, 2022, https://www.nps.gov/stli/learn/historyculture/liberty-island-a-chronology.htm.

(Figure 3.10: "You--Buy a Liberty Bond--Lest I perish!" lithograph, 1917, photograph from Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/00652900/)

(Figure 3.11: Albina Garlinski, "Liberty for all, Keep 'em flying" lithograph, Pennsylvania Works Progress Administration: circa 1941 and 1943, *Library of Congress Photograph*, https://www.loc.gov/item/96513610/.)

In the World War I propaganda poster, the figure of the Statue of Liberty is brought to life. The crown and gown are the green color the Statue is known for today, but the tablet in the figure's left hand is missing. That left hand is instead pointing directly at the viewer of the image (not unlike the famous 1917 drawing of Uncle Sam) and directing them to "buy a Liberty Bond" or this personification of liberty "will perish!"[123] The chains that are at the monument's feet have also disappeared, suggesting that even the subtlest nod to the abolition of slavery has been removed from the monument's meaning. In contrast, the World War II poster uses the statue as

[123] "You--Buy a Liberty Bond--Lest I perish!" lithograph, 1917, photograph from Library of Congress, https://www.loc.gov/item/00652900/; for more on the famous Uncle Sam poster see James Montgomery Flagg, *I want you for U.S. Army: Nearest Recruiting Station,* United States, ca. 1917. Photograph. https://www.loc.gov/item/96507165/.

the background for the planes and boats in the foreground, prompting the viewer to see the monument as the ideal and object being protected and that everyday Americans needed to "keep 'em flying" in order to protect "liberty for all!"[124] Both posters highlight how the Statue of Liberty, already a highly circulated image, had become a reified symbol of America during wartime, prompting those who came across images such as these to buy objects like war bonds as a patriotic performative act.[125] The Statue could, and did, stand in as a symbol for America and liberty, reified as an object to idealize and protect.

The Statue of Liberty was also used as a type of shorthand for America when it came to the rise of Jim Crow and the burgeoning Civil Rights movement in the United States. In the graphic illustration from 1942 by Black cartoonist Oliver Wendell Harrington (Figure 3.12), the Statue's torch-bearing arm is being deployed as the apparatus from which three Black men are strung up and lynched. The illustration, entitled *Statue of "Liberty,"* makes clear that the symbol used to represent the ideals of liberty and freedom could just as easily be revised and used as a weapon against Black Americans. Harrington's illustration deploys the Statue of Liberty as a means of personifying white supremacy and racial terrorism, arguing that the statue's meaning was hypocritical as a beacon of liberty. While the Statue was often narrowed to a reified performative object of American values, Harrington's illustration demonstrates what the monument could mean for different groups of Americans.[126]

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[124] Albina Garlinski, "Liberty for all, Keep 'em flying" lithograph, Pennsylvania Works Progress Administration: circa 1941 and 1943, *Library of Congress Photograph*, https://www.loc.gov/item/96513610/.

[125] For more information on buying items and American patriotism as performative acts see Ann Folino White, *Plowed Under: Food Policy Protests and Performance in New Deal America* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2015) and Emily Roxworthy, *The Spectacle of Japanese America Trauma: Racial Performativity in World War II* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2008).

[126] For more on performance practices challenging white understanding of symbols, see Daphne Brooks, *Bodies in Dissent: Spectacular Performances of Race and Freedom, 1850-1910* (Chapel Hill: Duke University Press, 2006).

(Figure 3.12: Oliver Wendell Harrington, *Statue of "Liberty,"* illustration, The Melvin Holmes Collection of African American Art, https://www.holmesartgallery.com/oliver-wendell-harrington-19121995)

These various invocations of the Statue of Liberty highlight that the monument had taken on a rhetorical and social life of its own. Unlike either the Stephen Douglas Tomb or the Emancipation Memorial, images of the Statue of Liberty circulated broadly and globally. This was aided by the monument's scenography: in the middle of one of the busiest harbors in the United States in the biggest city in the country, next to a well-known immigration station.[127] Moreover, the colossal nature of the Statue brought the monument into broad social discourse as a surrogate for the United States.[128]

This was continually reinforced until the 1960s, when the monument became more firmly linked to the idea of immigration and the Statue was cemented as a symbol of freedom. In 1965, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Immigration and Nationality Act into law on Liberty Island. Meanwhile Ellis Island, which was decommissioned as an immigration station a decade

[127] Rand, *The Ellis Island Snow Globe*, 152.
[128] Roach, *Cities of the Dead*, 105.

prior, was added to the Statue of Liberty National Monument under the purview of the National Park Service.[129] The bureaucratic connection between the two sites meant that facilitation and interpretation for both would, in future, be led by the National Park Service. The joining of these sites also highlights how their scenography had crafted almost eighty years of discourse that celebrated America through the guise of immigration.[130] Visitors to the Statue of Liberty would be prompted to consider Ellis Island while experiencing the monument, reifying the Statue as a symbol of the American ideals of freedom and liberty.

The continued reification of the Statue of Liberty as a symbol of American ideals specifically tied to immigration continued into the 1970s. In 1972, after Ellis Island and the Statue of Liberty came under the same National Park Service unit, an American Museum of Immigration was placed in the pedestal of the Statue and dedicated by President Richard Nixon.[131] The Bicentennial Celebration of the United States used the monument as the ending point of the July 4th festivities in 1976 in New York City, turning the monument into a celebration of the nation.[132] Protests at the Statue throughout the 1970s from women's liberation activists, Vietnam Veterans Against the War, and Puerto Rican nationalists utilized the monument as a symbol of America as a critical set piece for their activism.[133] The monument and the rhetorical connections to immigration were even on display in children's television:

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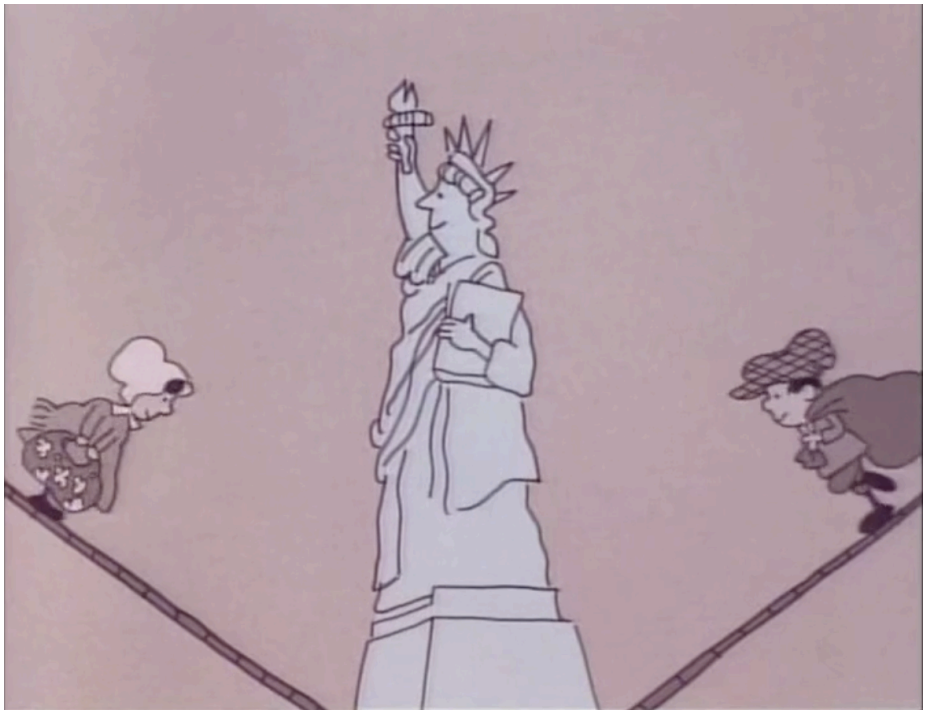
[129] "Ellis Island – A Chronology," *National Park Service*, March 17, 2022, accessed September 10, 2022, https://www.nps.gov/elis/learn/historyculture/ellis-island-chronology.htm.
[130] For more on NPS bureaucracy, see Denise Meringolo, *Museum, Monuments, and National Parks: Towards a New Genealogy of Public History* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2012).
[131] Erica Rand, *The Ellis Island Snow Globe*, 23 and David E. Procter, *Enacting Political Culture: Rhetorical Transformations of Liberty Weekend 1976* (New York: Praeger, 1990).
[132] Tammy S. Gordon, *The Spirit of 1976: Commerce, Community, and the Politics of Commemoration* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2013).
[133] "Liberty Island – A Chronology," *National Park Service*, February 4, 2018, accessed September 10, 2022, https://www.nps.gov/stli/learn/historyculture/liberty-island-a-chronology.htm. There is little scholarship on these protests outside of works on Vietnam Veterans Against the War's protest activities. Neither I nor the archivist at the Statue of Liberty National Monument have been able to find much documentation on the other protests.

Schoolhouse Rock! used the Statue of Liberty in the song "The Great American Melting Pot" (Figure 3.13).[134]



(Figure 3.13: Screen shot of "Schoolhouse Rock! – 'The Great American Melting Pot,'" music and lyrics by Lynn Aherns, screen shot of 0:36, *TV* Über, YouTube, 3:21, ABC-TV 1977, uploaded February 26, 2013, accessed November 5, 2022, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5ZQl6XBo64M.)

In the song, the Statue stands over gangplanks of ships bringing passengers to the United States, providing a physical representation of America/hope to immigrants (America and hope becoming indistinguishable). The chorus makes clear the rhetorical connections between the monument and immigration, even implicating the monument in the project of cultural assimilation by using the metaphor of America as a melting pot of cultures.[135] In the animation, the tablet in the statue's left hand is a cookbook: "Lovely Lady Liberty/with her book of recipes/and the finest one she's got/the Great American Melting Pot/What good

[134] There are of course many other cultural uses of the Statue of Liberty, some of which will be discussed at the end of the chapter. Most notably, the end of the 1968 film *The Planet of the Apes* makes stark use of the monument's head and crown to signal to the main character that he was on Earth and not an alien planet.
[135] Charles Hirschman, "America's Melting Pot Reconsidered," *Annual Review of Sociology* 9, no. 1 (1983): 397–423, https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.so.09.080183.002145.

ingredients/Liberty and immigrants."[136] The three-minute song makes it impossible to rhetorically separate the Statue from the imagined process of immigration. The video, a part of a popular children's cartoon series, highlights how enmeshed the monument had become to the idea of immigration.

Despite this extensive use of the Statue of Liberty as a symbol of America, the monument suffered something of the same fate as other sites of commemoration: it began to show its age. Sculptor Frederic Auguste Bartholdi's design in combination with Gustav Eiffel's had been ingenious in the 1870s, but a century later the iron bars holding the monument together from the inside began to bend.[137] The torch, which had undergone renovations to make its illumination functional and to replace the glass, now needed extensive work.[138] By 1982 it was clear that despite (or perhaps due to) the millions of visitors each year, the monument needed extensive renovation.[139] Unlike the Stephen Douglas Tomb or the Emancipation Memorial, however, the Statue of Liberty would have a much quicker revision, led by President Ronald Reagan and the newly formed Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island Foundation to restore the monument for its centennial celebration.[140]

In 1982, Reagan appointed Chrysler chairman Lee Iacocca to head the Centennial Commission. Iacocca set to work fundraising to renovate the Statue and to support the massive

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[136] "Schoolhouse Rock! – 'The Great American Melting Pot,'" music and lyrics by Lynn Aherns, ABC-TV, 1977. There are many racist implications in "The Great American Melting Pot," as the song lists many European immigrant groups individually (Germans, Poles etc.) while it calls all immigrants from Africa "Africans." The effect of Schoolhouse Rock on American civic ideals is a prolific subject beyond the scope of this study.
[137] Robert Belot, *The Statue of Liberty: The Monumental Dream* (New York: Rizzoli, 2019), 165.
[138] Belot, *The Statue of Liberty: The Monumental Dream*, 167. Of note is that Gustav Borglum, the sculptor of Mount Rushmore, did this renovation work, and apparently did it poorly.
[139] Harpers Ferry Center, Preliminary Draft Interpretive Prospectus Statue of Liberty/Ellis Island, November 2, 1983, Statue of Liberty part 2, box 25, folder 2323, Bob Hope Archives, Statue of Liberty National Monument.
[140] Liberty Centennial Campaign brochure, Statue of Liberty part 1, box 63, folder 414, Bob Hope Archives, Statue of Liberty National Monument.

celebration planned for the 100th anniversary.[141] The goals of the Liberty Centennial Campaign were to "restore and preserve the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island," "establish a lasting memorial to millions of immigrants who built the United States of America," and "teach the traditions of liberty through the observance of the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island Centennials."[142] In their promotional and fundraising materials, the Commission focused on the relationship between the two sites and their combined power as "dramatic symbols" of America that needed to be saved from irreparable damage.[143] But as their goals suggest, the restoration of the Statue also had the aims of "teach[ing] the traditions of liberty" through the celebration of the monument's centennial.[144] The Statue of Liberty would be restored and used as a means of instruction, prompting visitors to enact performances of traditions of liberty (as the event's coordinators understood liberty). If inter(in)animation is created in the many faces who pass by a monument, the centennial celebration of the Statue of Liberty would provide an opportunity to show the Commission's idea of liberty to the world.

[141] Liberty Centennial Campaign brochure, Statue of Liberty part 1, box 63, folder 414, Bob Hope Archives, Statue of Liberty National Monument.
[142] Liberty Centennial Campaign brochure, Statue of Liberty part 1, box 63, folder 414, Statue of Liberty National Monument.
[143] Liberty Centennial Campaign brochure, Statue of Liberty part 1, box 63, folder 414, Statue of Liberty National Monument.
[144] Liberty Centennial Campaign brochure, Statue of Liberty part 1, box 63, folder 414, Statue of Liberty National Monument.

(Figure 3.14: *Statue of Liberty renovation New York*. Bernard Gotfryd, photographer. United States, New York, [Between 1982 and 1986] Photograph courtesy of Library of Congress. https://www.loc.gov/item/2020734443/.)

While public-private partnerships supplied the funds, scaffolding went up around the Statue of Liberty so work could commence (Figure 3.14). The monument itself was cleaned and renovated: the torch was replaced and, inside the Statue, stainless steel bars were inserted to replace the broken iron framing.[145] As Figure 3.14 demonstrates, the Statue of Liberty was fully

[145] Robert Belot, *The Statue of Liberty: The Monumental Dream* (New York: Rizzoli, 2019) 167.

covered with scaffolding, which itself changed the social script of the monument. Liberty was literally under renovation.

Workers came over from France to help repair the monument using the same techniques that Bartholdi and his team had used a century earlier. Their efforts included making a replica head and foot of the Statue for the reconfigured museum in the pedestal.[146] While the Franco-American relationship was revived with the Statue of Liberty's centennial, this hiring of French workers prompted protests. American unions, government officials, and the New York branch of the NAACP were outraged that American workers were not hired to replicate parts of the monument. In the New York branch of the NAACP letter, which is demonstrative of the Iron Workers Union campaign, they wrote: "For us, the Statue of Liberty is a symbol of hope for the common man and as such many common Americans have come forward with donations for the Restoration. It would be fitting that American Workers be given an opportunity to display their skills and sense of pride."[147] The Statue of Liberty, in this rhetoric, was revised from a monument of unity between France and the United States to a symbol of America and hope that everyday people were invested in. For Americans to work on the monument would be seen as a performance of patriotism; for French workers to do so was unpatriotic. The meaning of the Statue had dramatically shifted.

To market "Liberty Weekend," as the celebration surrounding the reopening of the Statue was named, Iacocca and the Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island Foundation worked to brand the Statue of Liberty for merchandising purposes. T-shirts, booklets, and ashtrays were among the many

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[146] Franco-American Committee for Restoration of the Statue of Liberty Inc. Report, Statue of Liberty part 1, box 63, folder 414, Statue of Liberty National Monument.
[147] Letter from Annie B. Martin (President, NAACP New York Branch) to John Robbins (Historical Architect, National Park Service), April 1, 1986, Statue of Liberty Series 1, box 64, folder 427, Statue of Liberty National Monument.

items that were created.[148] Even more lucrative were objects made from the discarded metal from the monument's renovation, such as commemorative coins (see Figure 3.15) that raised millions of dollars for the foundation:[149]

(Figure 3.15: Statue of Liberty commemorative coin, July 1985, Postal Commemorative Society and Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island Foundation, from the author's collection)

[148] Belot, *The Monumental Dream*, 168. See also Marita Sturken, *Tourists of History: Memory, Kitsch, and Consumerism from Oklahoma City to Ground Zero* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007).
[149] Belot, *The Monumental Dream*, 168.

Each commemorative coin had a certificate of authenticity from Lee Iacocca, informing the recipient that they were involved in "supporting the restoration and preservation of the Statue of Liberty – one of our nation's most cherished treasures and America's foremost symbol of freedom and hope."[150] Purchasing the souvenir was a performative encounter with the revision and reification of the Statue of Liberty, whereby individuals participated in enacting the monument's meaning.[151] Just as Americans a century earlier had donated small amounts to build the Statue's pedestal, so purchasing items such as commemorative coins brought individuals into the commemorative and restorative process.

The Committee was also actively planning the events for the Statue's rededication. On October 29, 1985, the day after the 99th centennial of the Statue of Liberty's dedication, the Chairman of the Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island Foundation Lee Iacocca announced the plans for Liberty Weekend on July 3-6, 1986. Produced by David Wopler, the man who had successfully arranged the opening and closing ceremonies of the 1984 Summer Olympics, Liberty Weekend would include an opening ceremony to rededicate the Statue and light the torch, a Tall Ships procession, and a star-studded concert celebrating the ideas of liberty and freedom to the United States and around the world.[152] In announcing the slate of events celebrating the centennial of the monument, Iacocca stated: "the ideals of liberty represented by the statue have a universal meaning and this will be an event heard and seen around the world."[153] The Statue and its centennial, in Iacocca's rhetorical configuration, were performative events of international

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[150] Lee Iacocca in "Certificate of Authenticity," Statue of Liberty commemorative coin, July 1985, Postal Commemorative Society and Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island Foundation, from the author's collection.
[151] For more on souvenirs and performance, see, Harvey Young, "The Black Body as Souvenir in American Lynching," *Theatre Journal* 57.4 (2005), 639-57.
[152] "Plans Unveiled for July Celebrations of Liberty Centennial" press release, The Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island Foundation, Statue of Liberty part one, Box 64, Folder 414, Statue of Liberty National Monument.
[153] "Plans Unveiled for July Celebrations of Liberty Centennial" press release, The Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island Foundation, Statue of Liberty part one, Box 64, Folder 414, Statue of Liberty National Monument.

implications because the monument had a "universal meaning" of liberty that could be understood by whoever viewed it, and would be reinforced by the events surrounding the Statue's centennial. The Statue's meaning had been performatively revised and reified to become a symbol whose meaning could not be in doubt, even as the planned celebration was not held on the monument's actual centennial, but rather around a date more conducive to celebrating the United States, July 4th. This choice of date reinforced how the monument would perform explicitly American conceptions of liberty.

Liberty Weekend, held on July 3-6, 1986, was full of events designed to celebrate an idealized version of America as captured in the performances prompted by the Statue of Liberty. During his remarks at the unveiling ceremony for the restored Statue, President Ronald Reagan discussed the French and American workers coming together to restore the monument. He made use of his oft-repeated anecdote about the "shining city on the hill," connecting the Statue of Liberty to the public memory of America as a place of "divine providence."[154] Reagan ended his speech with his personal hopes for the future of the Statue:

> We're bound together because, like them, we too dare to hope -- hope that our children will always find here the land of liberty in a land that is free. We dare to hope too that we'll understand our work can never be truly done until every man, woman, and child shares in our gift, in our hope, and stands with us in the light of liberty -- the light that, tonight, will shortly cast its glow upon her, as it has upon us for two centuries, keeping faith with a dream of long ago and guiding millions still to a future of peace and freedom.[155]

Reagan's address connected the ideas of liberty and freedom through the symbol of the Statue of Liberty, articulating that the monument would rhetorically be able to usher in the ideals of

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[154] Ronald Reagan, "Remarks at the Opening Ceremonies of the Statue of Liberty Centennial Celebration in New York, New York," July 3, 1986, *Ronald Reagan Presidential Library*, accessed November 10, 2022, https://www.reaganlibrary.gov/archives/speech/remarks-opening-ceremonies-statue-liberty-centennial-celebration-new-york-new-york. For more on Reagan's rhetoric see Vanessa B. Beasley, *You, The People*.
[155] Ronald Reagan, "Remarks at the Opening Ceremonies of the Statue of Liberty Centennial Celebration in New York, New York."

America through sheer presence alone. The Statue of Liberty was fully reified as *the* symbol of the United States, a symbol of liberty and freedom, by Reagan's words and the surrounding mass spectacle of Liberty Weekend.[156] Anyone who interacted with the monument would be "in the light of liberty," prompting them to performances of American liberty and freedom.[157]

Through his speech, Reagan articulated that the monument had the ability to spread ideology of America throughout the "free world." Reagan's rhetoric of the "light of liberty" was in opposition to the Reagan administration's Cold War enemies of the USSR. This performance of hope as embodied by the newly refurbished Statue was not intended to apply to the policies in which Reagan's rhetoric would be hypocritical, such as the War on Drugs or anti-democratic uprisings in Central America backed by the United States.[158] Though there had been precursors to seeing the Statue as the symbol of an unwaveringly positive America, Reagan's rhetoric in that moment cemented the connection.

The whole weekend was televised to millions across the United States.[159] After the Statue's unveiling, there was a naturalization ceremony for new American citizens on Ellis Island, presided over by Warren Burger, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court at the time, reaffirming the connection between the two sites and the idea of the United States as welcoming to immigrants.[160] Over the next three days, the Statue of Liberty hosted thousands of visitors and a multitude of spectacles to celebrate the monument and synonymously the United States,

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[156] Procter, *Enacting Political Culture*, 62.
[157] Reagan, "Remarks at the Opening Ceremonies of the Statue of Liberty Centennial Celebration in New York, New York."
[158] Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* (New York: New Press, 2012); Christian Smith, *Resisting Reagan: The U.S. Central America Peace Movement* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).
[159] Procter, *Enacting Political Culture*, 31.
[160] "Schedule of Events – Liberty Weekend 1986," Statue of Liberty part one, Box 64, Folder 414, Statue of Liberty National Monument.

televised with commentary from Peter Jennings and Barbara Walters. A flotilla of tall ships and other vessels from around the world reperformed the journey of ships passing by the Statue of Liberty to Ellis Island (Figure 3.16).

(Figure 3.16: An elevated starboard quarter view of the aircraft carrier USS JOHN F. KENNEDY (CV 67) during the International Naval Review, photograph by Emmett Francois, Department of Defense, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:DN-ST-87-01292.jpg)

There were multiple concerts with scores from composers such as John Williams and Irving Berlin and performers such as Neil Diamond and Frank Sinatra.[161] There was even a "Sports Salute the Statue," where gymnasts, figure skaters, and cheerleaders showed off their skills and the two local National Football League teams, the New Jersey Giants and the New York Jets, competed in the "Liberty Tug," a tug of war competition.[162] In each successive spectacular performance, the Statue of Liberty was centered as an American icon, reaffirming the

[161] Richard Stengel, "The Lady's Party," *TIME Magazine*, July 14, 1986, 10, Statue of Liberty Series 2, Box 2329, Folder 321, Statue of Liberty National Monument.
[162] Official Liberty Weekend program, uncatalogued materials from Alan Levitt, Deputy Director of Public Affairs at Department of the Interior during Liberty Weekend, Statue of Liberty National Monument. I am aware they are called the New York Giants now but at the time there was an agreement to call them the New Jersey Giants.

social scripts that had been created in the decades since the monument's dedication almost a century earlier.

In the aftermath of Liberty Weekend, *TIME Magazine* described the celebration as a unifying force, quoting a spectator as saying, "This country needs these things every ten years or so."[163] "These things," in this case, was the reification of the Statue of Liberty as a means of performing American exceptionalism. As evidenced by the buildup to the celebrations and the events themselves, there was little room for other interpretations of the monument as anything but a symbol of the promise of America. The events of Liberty Weekend were a culmination of a century of shifting the monument's meaning from one of alliance and abolition to becoming the symbol of what the United States purported itself to be.[164]

Overshadowed by the loud celebrations and reifications of the Statue of Liberty, there were critiques of the Statue as a performance of American exceptionalism. One such critique is found in the 1985 Ken Burns documentary *Statue of Liberty*. Overall, the documentary perpetuates a narrative that was by then very familiar about the rhetorical connections between the monument, immigration, and "uniquely" American ideals of liberty and freedom.[165] A lone detractor to this narrative surrounding liberty came from Black writer and public intellectual James Baldwin.

In a closing section of the documentary that otherwise portrays the Statue of Liberty as a beacon of hope, Baldwin appears on screen and states: "For a Black American, for a Black inhabitant of this country, the Statue of Liberty is simply a very bitter joke, meaning nothing to

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[163] Richard Stengel, "The Lady's Party," *TIME Magazine*, July 14, 1986, 10, Statue of Liberty part two, Box 2329, Folder 321, Statue of Liberty National Monument.
[164] Procter, *Enacting Political Culture*, 103.
[165] Ken Burns, *The Statue of Liberty: A Film by Ken Burns*. New York, N.Y: Infobase, 1985. This film is one of Burns' first and it shows all the hallmarks of his style. Particularly important is his use of historian David McCullough to provide an air of authenticity. I hope to engage more with this film in future work.

us."[166] Baldwin's words stand in stark contrast to the rest of the film and much of the rhetorical discourse about the Statue of Liberty, but they were captured on film, saved for posterity by Ken Burns and used by Burns 35 years later to discuss reckonings with monuments in 2020.[167] A portion of an earlier part of Baldwin's interview for the documentary also highlights the tensions between the ideal of liberty and lived reality:

> What is liberty? Oh, wow. That's quite a question, that I suppose almost nobody really asks themselves that question. Well, I can always quote the Declaration. 'May all these truths be self-evident, that all men are created equal.' And the moment I do that, I'm in trouble again, because obviously I was not included in that pronouncement. 'That they are endowed by their creator inalienable rights, that among these rights are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.' Ah, what is liberty?[168]

Baldwin's comments highlight how far removed the ideal of liberty is from the lived realities of life in the United States in a film that celebrates, to an excessive degree, the monument as a symbol for freedom. The founding ideals to which Baldwin links the Statue did not include Black Americans, reminding viewers of the failed promise of liberty for many in the United States. In this moment, Baldwin echoed other Black Americans in questioning the meaning of the monument. For Black Americans, in these estimations, the performances prompted by the Statue of Liberty were not reifying but instead can be interpreted as critical of what a monument to such lofty ideals could offer. For the dominant audience, the monument's revision reinforced an inflexible narrative of white liberty. For those in the minoritized audience, the monument's revision evoked new performances of frustration and distancing.

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[166] James Baldwin in *The Statue of Liberty: A Film by Ken Burns* (New York, N.Y: Infobase, 1985) 55:15.
[167] Ken Burns, "Opinion: Our monuments are representations of myths, not facts," *Washington Post*, June 23, 2020, video, accessed July 30, 2020, https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2020/06/23/ken-burns-our-monuments-are-representations-myth-not-fact/.
[168] James Baldwin in *The Statue of Liberty: A Film by Ken Burns* (New York, N.Y: Infobase, 1985) 4:00. The first three sentences are used as flavor text in an interactive exhibit in the new museum on Liberty Island.

Conclusion

James Baldwin's insightful commentary about the Statue of Liberty in one documentary did not change the performative dimensions of the monument in the American media in general. Rather, the monument continued to saturate public media in the aftermath of Liberty Weekend. For example, the Statue of Liberty makes a critical appearance in the 1989 film *Ghostbusters II*. To save New York City from a malevolent force, the heroes (the Ghostbusters) must find a large object to channel energy. As they debate what to do, they articulate what the object needs to be: "We need something that everyone in this town can get behind. We need a symbol. Something that appeals to the best in each and every one of us. Something good. Something decent. Something pure."[169] The camera pans to a New York license plate featuring the Statue of Liberty, then cuts to the Ghostbusters looking up at the monument itself, bringing it to life to save the city.

(Figure 3.17: Screenshot from *Ghostbusters II* (1989), 0:46, "Statue Of Liberty, Higher & Higher! | Film Clip | GHOSTBUSTERS II | With Captions," *YouTube*, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U0nlEcKSjmY&t=25s)

[169] "Statue Of Liberty, Higher & Higher! | Film Clip | GHOSTBUSTERS II | With Captions," *YouTube*, accessed November 13, 2022, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U0nlEcKSjmY&t=25s.

While this is by no means the most famous or only example of the Statue of Liberty in cinema, this 1989 scene, three years after Liberty Weekend, demonstrates how the social script offered by the monument had changed since its dedication. The Statue was not only a monument to immigration or the Franco-American relationship but had come to rhetorically function as a unifying symbol of hope and triumph.[170]

I end the discussion here, on a seemingly lighthearted note from a poorly-received sequel, to consider how revision and reification, in the recurrent performative process of commemoration, can take monuments in unexpected directions. In *Ghostbusters II*, the Statue of Liberty became so enmeshed with a specific meaning that it operated as shorthand for romanticized notions of hope and freedom, of power and heroism, understandable for any audience member. The monument in this case is far removed from what its original intent was, and instead has taken on a new layer of meaning that prompts different types of performance from fictional visitors.

For each of the monuments under consideration, the reification and revision phase of the process of commemoration acts as a way for new generations to make claims on space and American public memory. While all three monuments differ in terms of scale and national renown, there are distinctive patterns. All three underwent revisions based on the needs of the community surrounding them. All needed repair, which they received as more attention was paid to them in the space of public memory.[171] Because of its location in the South Side, the Stephen Douglas Tomb served as a gathering space for Black Chicagoans and prompted a fight over the

[170] While I use this moment in *Ghostbusters II* for my own purposes, it is clear that the filmmakers needed to go bigger than the Stay-Puft Marshmallow Man seen in *Ghostbusters* (1984). It makes sense that they turned to the Statue of Liberty for this purpose.
[171] Edward S. Casey, "Public Memory in Place and Time," in *Framing Public Memory,* edited by Kendall R. Phillips (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2004), 17–44.

identity of Douglas/Bronzeville in the 1940s before the Black custodian of the historic site was forced to protest at the Illinois State Capitol for the Tomb's funding in the 1970s. The Emancipation Memorial was changed by the addition of the Mary McLeod Bethune Memorial in Lincoln Park, making it impossible for the statue of Lincoln and the slave to be the only representation of a Black person in statuary in the nation's capital. The Statue of Liberty was embraced as a symbol of American ideals, first as the beacon of hope for immigrants, then as the personification of American ideals in civil society, even as the monument could not match all the signification it was asked to carry. As monuments are revised over time in public memory, the social scripts they prompt also change. Revision does not necessarily imply reification, but the two concepts go hand in hand.

Performance helps us see these acts of revision. I have asserted throughout this project that monuments—and, by extension, all commemorative sites—make meaning because people interact with them. Understanding sites of public commemoration as places that prompt performances can clarify what decisions are made, where funding is placed, and who can change a monument's meaning. People interact with monuments differently over time as the monuments' social scripts change. As is evident in the case of these three monuments, the act of revision and reification allowed for new meanings to be added to the sites, prompting different types of engagement. The performances prompted by these revised social scripts enacted new and varied meanings of liberty and freedom in American public memory.

Commemoration is a seemingly simple action: a monument is built, and the person, event, or idea is remembered by anyone who passes by. In following what happens after a monument is built, it becomes clear that the act of remembering is an intentional process that is

dependent on social, economic, and political investment. To revise or reify a monument is to reinterpret the act of commemoration to suit the needs of the moment.

Chapter 4: Reckoning (2001-2023)

It was a sight no one expected to see on Independence Day. For four hours on the afternoon of July 4th, 2018, American media was transfixed by a video of a lone person attempting to climb the Statue of Liberty.[1] The person in question, Patricia Okoumou, was an activist protesting the detention of migrant children in cages on America's southern border. The Trump administration's policy of separating migrant children from their parents and detaining them in horrific conditions sparked nationwide protests in June and July 2018. Among the calls from activists included the demand to dismantle and abolish the US Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency (ICE), the agency responsible for the egregious separation of families.[2]

(Figure 4.1: Rise and Resist, unfurling a banner off Fort Wood, Liberty Island, in "Seven people were arrested after an 'Abolish ICE' banner was unveiling at Statue of Liberty in New York on Wednesday," in Elizabeth Chuck and Dennis Romero, "July 4th protest closes Statue of Liberty; holiday heat fuels Western wildfires," *NBC News*, July 4, 2018, accessed June 30, 2022, https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/july-4th-sees-sticky-weather-east-wildfires-west-n888881)

[1] Brynn Gingras and Alanne Orjoux, "A woman climbed the base of the Statue of Liberty on the Fourth of July to protest migrant family separations," *CNN*, July 5, 2018, accessed July 10, 2021, https://www.cnn.com/2018/07/04/us/new-york-statue-of-liberty-protest/index.html

[2] Patricia Okoumou, interviewed by Joanna Walters, "'Are they going to shoot me?': Statue of Liberty climber on her anti-Trump protest," *The Guardian*, July 7, 2018, accessed June 15, 2021, https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2018/jul/07/statue-of-liberty-protester-patricia-okoumou-interview.

On July 4, 2018, Okoumou and forty other activists took the ferry to Liberty Island to stage a protest with their group Rise and Resist. Ten protestors unfurled an "Abolish ICE" banner from the wall of Fort Wood, the former military base under the Statue (Figure 4.1). Okoumou took the protest one step further. Without the knowledge of other protestors in her group, she had made plans to climb the statue.[3] As her fellow activists were being arrested for unlawful protest for unfurling the "Abolish I.C.E." banner, Okoumou began scaling the pedestal and attempting to climb the metal gown to get to the top of the statue.[4] The internet immediately circulated images of Okoumou's attempts, how she hid behind the folds of the Statue of Liberty's dress and underneath the statue's raised heel, until her eventual arrest (Figures 4.2 and 4.3).[5]

[3] Jamiles Lartey, "US immigration: what is Ice and why is it controversial?," *The Guardian*, July 4, 2018, accessed June 15, 2021, https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2018/jul/05/us-immigration-what-is-ice-and-why-is-it-controversial.
[4] Susan Leigh Foster, "Choreographies of Protest," *Theatre Journal* 55, no. 3 (2003): 395–412. https://doi.org/10.1353/tj.2003.0111.
[5] Jennifer Peltz and Jake Pearson, "Protester's climb shuts down Statue of Liberty on July 4," *Associated Press*, July 4, 2018, accessed July 15, 2021, https://apnews.com/article/immigration-north-america-us-news-ap-top-news-arrests-5c1c7e497d8b45b9b19825d0451206d8. See also Rachel Grant & Vicki Brown, "'As High as I Could:' Media Discourse Shaping Patricia Okoumou's Statue of Liberty Protest," Howard Journal of Communications, 33:4, 2022: 335-350, DOI: 10.1080/10646175.2021.1988769

(Figure 4.2: Okoumou seated (left) on the Statue of Liberty, from "Police identify woman who climbed Statue of Liberty," *ABC7News*, July 4, 2018, accessed June 30, 2022, https://abc7news.com/woman-climbs-statue-of-liberty-video-protest-person-climbing/3705457/)

(Figure 4.3: Okoumou (right) prone under heel of Statue of Liberty with police (left), from "Woman climbs Statue of Liberty following 'Abolish ICE' protest," *WSAZ NewsChannel*, July 4, 2018, accessed June 30, 2022, https://www.wsaz.com/content/news/Woman-climbs-Statue-of-Liberty-following-Abolish-ICE-protest-487348981.html)

In an interview given after her protest was seen by millions, Okoumou said: "I was thinking of Lady Liberty above me, you are so huge, you have always been a symbol of welcome

to people arriving in America and right now, for me under this sandal, she is a shelter."[6] While the Statue has not always conveyed the meaning Okoumou claimed, in this moment the Statue became the shelter, embodying the romanticized ideal of what the United States could offer to "tired," "poor," "huddled masses."[7] The image of Okoumou, her prone body dwarfed by the giant copper-plated statue she used as protection from police helicopters and officers attempting to pull her off the statue, was a haunting visual demonstrating the rhetorical tensions of the ideal of liberty in the United States. The statue could not help Okoumou evade the forces looking to arrest her, but it became an essential prop in her fight to draw attention to draconian immigration policies. Okoumou's protest was a performance which highlighted ironies between the monument and the actions of the U.S. government: the core symbol of American *liberty* became the site of protest against American *cruelty*.

In this example of performance at the Statue of Liberty, the monument came to embody the symbols of liberty and freedom to protect Okoumou from the police forces trying to stop her protest. In many ways, it is the clearest example of how people use commemoration as a means of performing what matters to them, bringing the past to bear on the present moment to make a stand. Okoumou's protest emphasized the paradox of the ideals of the United States and the ongoing subjugation of marginalized people seeking to enter the country.

This chapter examines attempts such as Okoumou's to bring the past to bear on the present, or reckonings, as a part of the recurrent performative process that follows the rising (Chapter 2) and revision (Chapter 3) of monuments. I have named these moments as reckonings because it was the term consistently used in media to describe the social movement of protests

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[6] Patricia Okoumou, interviewed by Joanna Walters, "'Are they going to shoot me?': Statue of Liberty climber on her anti-Trump protest."
[7] Emma Lazarus, "The New Colossus," Poetry Foundation, accessed July 16, 2021, https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/46550/the-new-colossus.

which occurred after the murder of George Floyd, a Black man, by Minneapolis, Minnesota, police in 2020.[8] To reckon, as it was used, is to consider and evaluate the realities of the past. A reckoning in this moment held the rhetorical implications that *something* would change, that harms would be redressed in some way, that while nothing could bring back the lives of the many people murdered by the mechanisms of white supremacy, perhaps the United States, and in particular its white citizens, could grapple with the racism embedded in American culture.[9] In the aftermath of Floyd's death and the subsequent protests, over fifty statues have been removed from public space as of May 2023.[10] To reckon with monuments and memorials was to consider them as set pieces of white supremacy and colonization—an easier task for some monuments than others. Reckoning with whiteness and American identity allowed for some commemorations once perceived as innocuous, such as the monuments at the center of this study, to be read with a revised social script.[11]

I argue that these moments of reckoning are another phase of the performative process of commemoration, following the rising of monuments and their revision and reification. Reckoning echoes earlier iterations of meaning-making but with the crucial new element of the possibility of societal change—a widespread revision of meaning for the general public—which addresses how the monument's dominant script fails to realize the ideals of American liberty and freedom. I trace how individuals, interest groups, politicians, and institutions reckoned with

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[8] Derrick Bryson Taylor, "George Floyd Protests: A Timeline," *The New York Times*, November 5, 2021, accessed January 7, 2022, https://www.nytimes.com/article/george-floyd-protests-timeline.html.
[9] For more on the meanings of a racial reckoning, see "The Racial Reckoning That Wasn't," *Code Switch* on NPR, June 9, 2021, accessed July 30, 2021, https://www.npr.org/2021/06/08/1004467239/the-racial-reckoning-that-wasnt.
[10] I am pulling this number from the work of historian and teacher Kevin Levin, who has been tracking them on his website (https://cwmemory.com/recent-confederate-monument-removals/) as well as Dr. Lyra Monteiro's Washington's Next! Project, *How to Kill a Statue* (https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/5b07e6525410472387a525319cfb798a).
[11] For more on social scripts as performance, see Robin Bernstein, *Racial Innocence: Performing American Childhood from Slavery to Civil Rights* (New York: New York University Press, 2011).

changing social and cultural demands in relation to the three monuments featured in this study. I include my own experience visiting the sites in 2021 and 2022 to provide a sense of what the commemorative performative spaces embody in the contemporary moment. These monuments, to varying degrees, must be reckoned with: there is significant potential for new social scripts and new public understandings to arise if we are so bold as to do so.[12]

As has become clear, the three monuments studied in this project receive greatly varied public attention and engender differing degrees of public affection. Their reckonings thus look quite different across the time period covered in this chapter, from roughly 2001 to 2023. Given that these monuments resonate on different scales, from the local to the global, their varied moments of reckoning provide a variety of interpretations of how in the present day, contending with the past through a monument allows for performances that can possibly hold multiple truths about the past. In the case of the global symbol of the Statue of Liberty, it meant a recognition from the National Park Service and the Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island Foundation of what the original intentions of the memorial were, as well as the implications of its use as *the* symbol of America. For the Stephen Douglas Tomb in Chicago, the reckoning was a clash over what Stephen Douglas the historical figure means to the neighborhoods of Douglas and Bronzeville, and what it represents to have a statue of a senator who supported slavery overlooking a Black neighborhood. As for the Emancipation Memorial, the reckoning was the culmination of the tension over who paid for it and what the physical piece represented, leading to barricades protecting the statue, protests, and the removal of a copy of the statue in Boston. These reckonings provide a glimpse into what contending with the past could mean, and how the

[12] For more discussion on reckoning in general in the aftermath of the 2020 protests see Derecka Purnell, Olúfẹ́mi O. Táíwò, and Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor, "After The Uprising, What Is To Be Done?," *Hammer and Hope*, no.1, Winter 2023, https://hammerandhope.org/article/issue-1-article-5.

performative process makes space for many interpretations of what reckoning with any commemoration can or cannot do.

The reckonings with these monuments became a possibility, in the words of Saidiya Hartman, to "incite the hopes of transforming the present" by confronting the past.[13] The recurrent, performative process of commemoration was and is a means to reckon, successfully and unsuccessfully, with conceptions of American liberty and freedom that were not ever fully realized. In Hartman's formulation and in the case of these monuments, this transformation comes from calling forth the historical traumas of slavery in the United States. To reckon with the Emancipation Memorial, for example, would mean to contend with the ideals of the original concept, the donations from Black American donors, the white men who chose the racist symbol, and the dissent that arose from the monument's design. The performances—by which I mean the dedications, rededications, protests, additions/subtractions, and everyday interactions between visitors and statues—surrounding these monuments grapple with what it means for them to be in public space. In some of these cases, the performances generated are ones of indifference, ignorance, and removal. For others, the performance is recontextualization, with additional information provided on the violence of slavery and genocide of Indigenous peoples.

My core theoretical interlocutors in this chapter are Pierre Nora, Sandra Richards, Kirk Savage, and Freeman Tilden. I push back on Nora's assertion that "statues...owe their meaning to their intrinsic existence; even though their location is far from arbitrary, one could justify relocating them without altering their meaning." [14] This assertion ignores the importance of scenography *and* an audience in making meaning for a statue within a public space. The statue of

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[13] Saidiya Hartman, *Lose Your Mother: A Journey along the Atlantic Slave Route*. (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007) 170.
[14] Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History," *Representations* 26 (Spring 1989), 22.

English slave trader Edward Colston, for instance, had a different meaning when it sat in Bristol Harbor in June 2020 after protestors threw it into the water than it did in its customary place in a public park in Bristol. The statue may have had meaning from its "intrinsic existence," but it was certainly perceived differently after it was submerged in water.[15] This issue of location has become one of the critical foci of reckoning with monuments. The performative process of commemoration shifts when a new place creates a potentially new script for the monument and visitor.

Furthermore, as performance scholar Robin Bernstein articulates, objects can provide social scripts that prompt viewers to certain actions.[16] A monument, in an ideal world, prompts a visitor to reflect on the subject of said monument and perhaps consider its place in their own life. Theatre scholar Elizabeth Son takes Bernstein's concept to monuments in recognition of Korean survivors of Japanese military sexual assault, arguing that these commemorations suggest "performances of care" towards the monuments.[17] In contrast, I contend that a reckoning with the monuments in this study prompts performances of reflection and action, sometimes against the monument itself. It is possible for social scripts created by monuments to be both positive and negative. A reckoning implicates action on part of the audience to grapple with the historical forces that created the monument and where the commemoration belongs in public space.

A focus on monument location also highlights how, in performance historian Sandra Richards's words, "memory serves a presentist agenda."[18] Richards's claim about presentism in

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[15] Dolly Church, "Why the Edward Colston Statue Should Have Been Left in Bristol Harbor," *Hyperallergic*, June 30, 2021, accessed July 9, 2021, https://hyperallergic.com/660331/edward-colston-statue-should-have-been-left-in-bristol-harbor/.
[16] Robin Bernstein, *Racial Innocence: Performing American Childhood from Slavery to Civil Rights* (New York: New York University Press, 2011), 80-81.
[17] Elizabeth W. Son, *Embodied Reckonings: "Comfort Women," Performance, and Transpacific Redress* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2018), 147-176.
[18] Sandra L. Richards, "What Is to Be Remembered?: Tourism to Ghana's Slave Castle-Dungeons." *Theatre Journal* 57.4 (2005): 617–37; 618.

memory practices and performance practices is essential to understanding why the meaning of monuments can be reinscribed while still embodying the original intentions of a monument's creators. The work of reckoning with a monument requires attention to the past and present moment with an eye toward the future. Understanding reckoning as a part of the recurrent performative process of commemoration is a way of understanding how individuals, groups, and societies remember over time, including in the contemporary moment.[19] A monument's presence in public space collapses archive and repertoire into one object, as Bernstein suggests all scriptive things do.[20] The monuments at the center of this study rely on this palimpsest-like understanding of the past, present, and future, as their presence in public space is alternatively reified or ignored based on their value in the present moment, which in turn depends on what stakeholders view as their monument's value in the past.

This idea of presentism is echoed in the work of art historian Kirk Savage, who in his own work about nineteenth-century American sculpture articulates the idea that monuments inevitably come to represent a consensus over time.[21] Where my own work, and the work of others such as Karen Cox and Clint Smith differ is the acknowledgement that there is no such thing as a "common voice" in understanding American commemorative practice.[22] The creation of the monuments at the center of my project was often dictated by wealthy, heterosexual, white men, so the re-performances that rearticulated what freedom and liberty meant a century later were sometimes created by marginalized communities. As the pages that follow demonstrate, the

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[19] Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 102.
[20] Bernstein, *Racial Innocence,* 13.
[21] Kirk Savage, *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves: Race, War, and Monument in Nineteenth-century America* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2018 revised edition), 211.
[22] Karen L. Cox, *No Common Ground: Confederate Monuments and the Ongoing Fight for Racial Justice* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2021) and Clint Smith, *How the Word Is Passed: A Reckoning with the History of Slavery Across America* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2021).
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reckonings with the Statue of Liberty, the Stephen Douglas Tomb, and the Emancipation Memorial do not fall so cleanly along these lines and never come to a consensus. The reckonings that can be seen around the discourses of these monuments cannot cleanly break away from the past; they are always reflecting how others in the past performed in relation to the monuments and are always dependent upon the subjectivity of the audience.

Furthermore, the question of interpretation (and who is in control of interpretation) is critical to understanding how these reckonings come about. I rely on the work of Freeman Tilden, who wrote the landmark *Interpreting Our Heritage: Principles and Practices for Visitor Services in Parks, Museums, and Historic Places* in 1957 as a guide for the National Park Service rangers. In the text, Tilden lays out six principles of interpretation that continue to be in use by the National Park Service and other sites of public commemoration today. There are two principles of interpretation critical to this phase of the commemorative process. First, interpretation should be connected to the artifact being interpreted; second, "the chief aim of Interpretation is not instruction, but provocation."[23] The provocation to learn is often the impetus for reckoning in the recurrent performative process of commemoration.

The analysis of reckonings in this chapter begins with the Statue of Liberty. In 2019, a new museum on Liberty Island sought to affirm and seemingly complicate the statue's history and meaning.[24] At the same time, the statue was frequently used as a symbol of the United States during the Trump presidency, personifying the crushing weight of the openly racist, sexist, and xenophobic administration of American ideals through political cartoons. Actions such as

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[23] Freeman Tilden, *Interpreting Our Heritage: Principles and Practices for Visitor Services in Parks, Museums, and Historic Places* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1957), 9.

[24] Bedloe's Island was renamed to Liberty Island in 1956 by a Joint Resolution signed by Dwight Eisenhower. "Liberty Island Chronology," *Statue of Liberty National Monument*, National Park Service, last updated March 4, 2018, accessed June 29, 2021, https://www.nps.gov/stli/learn/historyculture/liberty-island-a-chronology.htm.

Okoumou's were counterpointed with actions from Trump administration officials, showcasing the uneasy tension in the performance of American liberty embodied in the statue. I analyze two aspects of the contemporary interpretation of the Statue: the museum on the island (including its exhibit, film, and interactive elements) and the audio guide tour of the island, which is included in the price of admission to the site. My analysis of the interpretation of the site comes from four visits, one in December 2019, two in August 2021, and one in December 2022. Given the COVID-19 pandemic, not all of the aspects of the museum were available during all visits. My dramaturgical analysis concludes that in its usage as *the* symbol for the United States, the Statue of Liberty cannot fully reckon with its original intentions to overcome what it now represents.

I then turn to the Stephen Douglas Tomb, which for several years hosted the Bronzeville Historical Society in the groundskeeper's cottage on the site. The work of the Historical Society provided daily interpretation that challenged the narratives of the tomb, while local activists worked to rename a nearby park from Douglas to Douglass, in honor of Frederick Douglass. However, in 2019 the Bronzeville Historical Society was removed from the site and relocated to the nearby Illinois Institute of Technology, casting interpretation at the Douglas Tomb to the wayside via exhibit placards. The site was not wholly forgotten in public memory as, at the height of the protests over monuments in the aftermath of the murder of George Floyd in 2020, three Illinois state legislators wrote a letter to Illinois Governor J.B. Pritzker asking for the removal of the statue on top of the tomb, arguing that the "Little Giant" was "looking down" on the Black citizens of the South Side from his gravesite.[25] The discourse surrounding Stephen Douglas's statue illustrates what a reckoning in performance means when the audience is largely

[25] Letter attached to tweet from Rep. Kam Buckner (@RepKamBuckner), "Today, I join with my colleagues @RepTarver & @LamontJRobinson to implore @GovPritzker to remove the Stephen Douglas statue from the Neighborhood that I live in & rep. Douglas looked down on black people during his life. We shouldn't allow it in his death.," Twitter, July 14, 2020, https://twitter.com/RepKamBuckner/status/1283115081295896584.

absent. The Stephen Douglas Tomb has few visitors, but it remains on the South Side as a reminder of a past that idealized Stephen Douglas and his beliefs. My analysis is enhanced by three visits I made to the site in January 2020, May 2021, and July 2021. Douglas's pillar is still visible from I-90, and the metal figure creates a tangible tension between what the creators of Douglas's final resting place thought the city would look like and the contemporary neighborhood of Bronzeville.

The chapter ends where this project began, with the Emancipation Memorial. In the wake of the addition of the Mary McLeod Bethune Memorial to Lincoln Park, the scenography of the space around the Emancipation Memorial shifted. By 2014, some residents were calling for the park to be renamed for Bethune, while others began to call for a re-examination of the symbolism of the Emancipation Memorial. Like the Stephen Douglas Tomb, the Emancipation Memorial prompted protests in the wake of the death of George Floyd, but due to its origin and its placement in the nation's capital, the protests and calls for protection of the Emancipation Memorial outshone the dissent, prompting a nuanced debate over what to do with a monument that had multiple layers of meaning. My findings are supported by my own visits to the site in August 2021 and October 2022. By studying the reckonings with the Emancipation Memorial, I elucidate how commemoration prompts performative moments which showcase the inability of presentist understanding to grapple with the implications of the past. The chapter ends with the only removal (to date) of a monument related to this project: Boston's copy of the Emancipation Memorial. An empty pedestal has been left behind, creating an open script for more commemorative acts in Boston's public spaces.

It is critical to include reckoning as a stage of commemoration because monuments, though many are made of stone or metal, do not last forever. They are ephemeral to some degree,

as is performance.[26] Monuments require individuals, groups, and societies to maintain their importance, context, and value in public space. The questioning and possible removal of commemoration is a critical aspect to public memory of any given group, as it allows for re-examination and growth. As these three monuments show, the work of reckoning with the past through commemoration can be a vexing, messy process, but it is one that is essential to the task of identity formation and, in the case of the United States, can provide instruction for how to grapple with the atrocities of the past in the present day.

The Statue of Liberty

After the successful reopening of the pedestal in 1986 and celebrations of the centennial, the Statue of Liberty continued to host visitors. Millions of tourists participated in a recurrent performance: they took a ferry into New York Harbor, stepped onto Liberty Island, climbed into the pedestal of the statue, and then, if they were physically able, walked up the dizzying steps to the crown.[27] The Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island Foundation, created to restore the Statue of Liberty to its former glory and boost American connections to the islands in New York Harbor, began to restore the Statue of Liberty's sister site Ellis Island in the late-1980s. Ellis Island's restoration, finished in 1990, continued the rhetorical work of Liberty Weekend by celebrating a whitewashed vision of American liberty and immigration.[28]

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[26] On the ephemerality of performance, see Peggy Phelan, *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance* (London: Routledge, 1993); Joseph Roach, *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996); Rebecca Schneider, *Performing Remains: Art and War in Times of Theatrical Reenactment* (New York: Routledge, 2011); and Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memories in the Americas* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), among others.

[27] "Interior Secretary Visits Liberty's Crown," *The New York Times*, January 23, 2009, accessed June 2, 2021, https://cityroom.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/01/23/interior-secretary-visits-libertys-crown/.

[28] For more on this whitewashing, see Erica Rand, *The Ellis Island Snow Globe* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005).

The public-private partnership between the National Park Service and the Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island Foundation allowed for quotidian performances of tourism that gently reminded visitors of the "tremendous power of the Statue's image around the world."[29] This repetitive practice of heritage tourism continued apace, embracing what performance scholar Barbara Kirschenblatt-Gimblett refers to as the "produced" memory of corporate capitalism and manufactured memory-making at sites like the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island.[30] In the wake of 1980s America, where conservatism and capitalism dominated, the boom of New York City tourism resounded, partially spurred by performance events like Liberty Weekend and the aggressive clean-up of tourist areas like Times Square; the Statue of Liberty was further cemented as a tourist destination in one of the most visited cities in the world.

The attacks on the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001, abruptly ended this repetitive cycle for visitors to Liberty Island. The last staff ferry was leaving the dock at Battery Park to head to Liberty Island when the first plane hit the Twin Towers.[31] The ferry turned around, and in that moment, the Statue's relationship with its audience of visitors shifted.[32] Visitors were prohibited from visiting the island; no one was allowed to enter the pedestal or climb up to the crown as the statue became a "terrorist target."[33] A few months later, tourists were once again allowed access: first on the island in December 2001, into the pedestal in 2004,

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[29] Robert Belot, *The Statue of Liberty: The Monumental Dream* (New York: Rizzoli, 2019) 181.
[30] Barbara Kirschenblatt-Gimblett, *Destination Culture: Tourism, Museums, and Heritage* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998) 187.
[31] As expressed to me by Statue of Liberty National Monument archivist Matt Housch, who has spoken to NPS workers from the period.
[32] "Liberty Island Chronology," *Statue of Liberty National Monument*, National Park Service, last updated March 4, 2018, accessed June 29, 2021, https://www.nps.gov/stli/learn/historyculture/liberty-island-a-chronology.htm.
[33] Belot, *The Statue of Liberty: The Monumental Dream*, 184. This came back into the news in January 2022 when four people were held hostage in a Reform synagogue in Colleyville, Texas by a man who threatened to blow up the Statue of Liberty if a prisoner was not released, see Zia ur-Rehman and Michael Levenson, "Officials Investigating Synagogue Attacker's Link to 2010 Terror Case," *New York Times*, January 17, 2022, https://www.nytimes.com/2022/01/17/world/europe/texas-synagogue-hostages-aafia-siddiqui.html.

and into the crown in 2009. New security measures, including metal detectors, were put into place as a part of the tourist experience to protect the monument from ground attacks.[34]

I highlight this rapid change in procedure at the Statue of Liberty to show how enmeshed the monument became as a symbol of the United States and the values the nation claims to espouse. The Statue immediately entered the symbolism of 9/11. The image of the Statue as the symbol of America encased in smoke from the burning World Trade Center quickly entered the discourse of iconic imagery following the attack. As cultural scholar Marita Sturken notes, in the aftermath of 9/11 images of the Statue were turned into souvenirs celebrating the endurance of America.[35] Across the political spectrum, the monument was evoked in multiple art forms as a symbol of America. In the monologue from *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* from the program's first show following the attack (September 20, 2001), noted liberal Stewart ended his monologue with tears and an invocation of the monument:

> The view from my apartment was the World Trade Center. (long pause) And now it's gone. And they attacked it, this symbol of American ingenuity, and strength, and, and labor, imagination, and commerce, and it is gone. But you know what the view is, now? The Statue of Liberty. The view from the south of Manhattan is now the Statue of Liberty. You can't beat that.[36]

On the other side of the political spectrum, the country singer Toby Keith anthropomorphized the monument as "the Statue shaking her fist" against America's attackers and aggressors, showcasing how, in the white mainstream cultural imagination, the Statue was the embodiment of white American resilience and dominance.[37] Given the Statue's reigning position as the

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[34] Belot, *The Statue of Liberty: The Monumental Dream*, 184.
[35] Marita Sturken, *Tourists of History: Memory, Kitsch, and Consumerism from Oklahoma City to Ground Zero* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007) 214.
[36] Jon Stewart, "September 11, 2011," *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart,* recorded September 20, 2001, *Comedy Central*, 8:51, accessed August 20, 2022, 7:38-8:28, https://www.cc.com/video/1q93jy/the-daily-show-with-jon-stewart-september-11-2001.
[37] Toby Keith, "Courtesy of The Red, White, and Blue (The Angry American)," track one on *Unleashed*, (DreamWorks, 2002). Thanks to Todd Brian Backus for alerting me to this song.

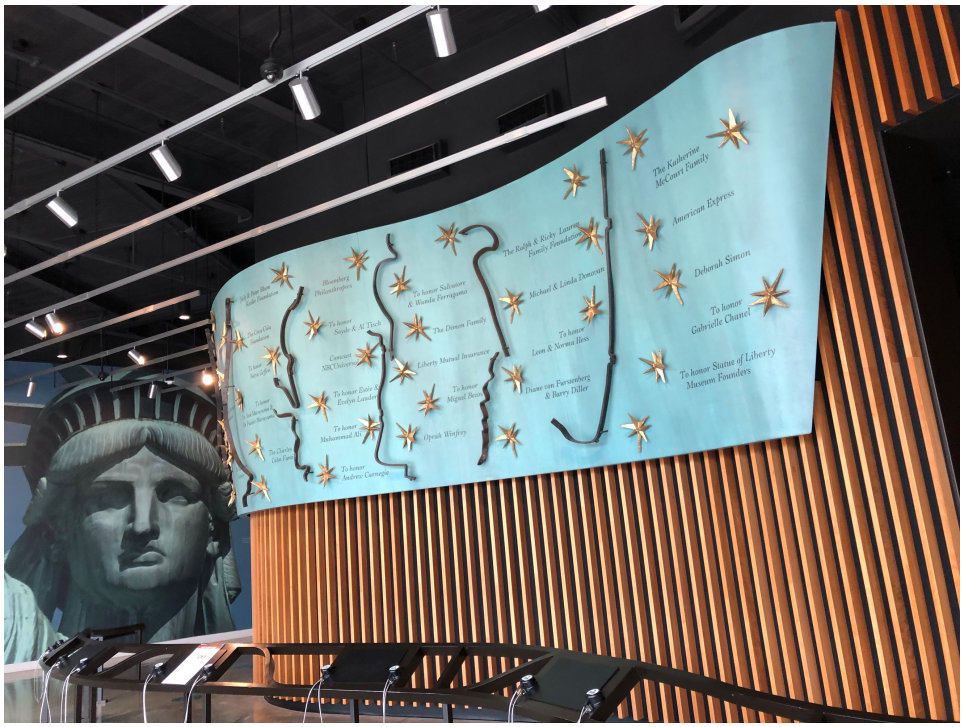
quintessential American symbol, it is unsurprising that the statue was deployed in similar ways in the jingoistic atmosphere of the post-September 11th terrorist attacks.

With new security measures to surveil visitors to the monument, the years after 9/11 provided the National Park Service and the Foundation an opportunity to reconsider the interpretation of the statue. In the wake of Hurricane Sandy in 2012, the Foundation decided to begin fundraising for a new museum, citing the damage to the outbuildings on Liberty Island and the limited access to parts of the statue for visitors due to increased security measures.[38] The Foundation called on fashion designer Diane von Furstenberg to chair the fundraising campaign, stating that it "served to right an injustice" as there were no women at the original dedication of the Statue.[39] This move foreshadowed much of the work of reckoning with the past at the Statue of Liberty and its new museum.[40] To rectify the lack of women involved throughout the original commemorative planning, the appointment of a wealthy female immigrant to the United States to usher in the new interpretation of the monument allowed for stakeholders such as the Foundation to make claims that they were contending with how women were not represented in the original vision for commemorating liberty.

Von Furstenberg fundraised for seven years, collecting over $200 million dollars to fund the museum. One of her initiatives was the "Liberty Star mural," which used original armature bars removed from the statue's interior during the 1986 restoration to entice donors to put their names on the wall of the museum (Figure 4.4).[41] When a visitor enters the museum today, it is one of the first things they see. While the interpretation within the museum and the audio tours of the monument work to reckon with its past, the fundraising of the new museum and the artistic

[38] Belot, *The Statue of Liberty: The Monumental Dream*, 184.
[39] Belot, *The Statue of Liberty: The Monumental Dream*, 184.
[40] Belot, *The Statue of Liberty: The Monumental Dream*, 186.
[41] Belot, *The Statue of Liberty: The Monumental Dream*, 187.

donor wall demonstrate how the linkages between the notion of liberty espoused by the 1986 Liberty Weekend and a particularly American capitalist enterprise were still at the forefront of how the Statue was interpreted.



(Figure 4.4: Liberty Star mural featuring original iron armature bars, Statue of Liberty Museum, August 3, 2021, photo courtesy of author)

In May 2019, the new museum opened to visitors with a star-studded gala featuring performances by singers Gloria Estefan and Tony Bennett and attended by celebrities including Oprah Winfrey and Hillary Clinton, a stark contrast to the quotidian performances that would soon become the norm at the museum.[42] An article in *The Washington Post* ran the following week with the headline, "The Statue of Liberty was created to celebrate freed slaves, not immigrants, its new museum recounts," based on research by historians Yasmin Khan and Philip Berenson into Statue of Liberty idea originator Eduard de Laboulaye and sculptor Frederic

[42] "See celebrities at the Statue of Liberty Museum opening celebration," *Washington Post*, May 16, 2019, accessed July 30, 2021, https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/celebrities-attend-the-statue-of-liberty-museum-opening-celebration/2019/05/16/b8f66f98-77d6-11e9-bd25-c989555e7766_gallery.html.

Bartholdi's original sketches and ideas for the statue.[43] This new interpretative stance was itself another reckoning, as the commonly understood narrative about the statue was as the "Mother of Exiles," as seen in the protest and performative encounters of Patricia Okoumou in the opening of this chapter. As discussed previously, this claim about the Statue is somewhat tenuous, particularly as there is no clear language from either Laboulaye or Bartholdi claiming the monument for abolition. In shifting the historical narrative around the Statue of Liberty, it created the possibility of reckoning with what the monument could mean in the future.

Despite the introduction of a new historical claim through the new museum, the decades-long understanding of the monument as a symbol of immigration and freedom lingers. The museum's website couches the interpretation of the monument in more general terms, stating in its mission that "by sharing Lady Liberty's story, we provide a powerful lesson in the fragility of freedom, and help visitors gain a new appreciation for one of the world's most inspiring icons."[44] For the museum, a new interpretation was "a provocation," in Freeman Tilden's words, for visitors to explore what liberty means to them.[45] As I will demonstrate, the interpretation and interaction with the monument in the contemporary moment is filled with attempts to reckon with historical injustices and the original intentions of the Statue while continuing to reinforce the long-celebrated understanding of American liberty and freedom embodied in the monument.

This tension between the monument's current interpretation is present when visiting the statue today. To visit the Statue of Liberty from the New York City side of Liberty Island, you must take a ferry that departs from Battery Park in Lower Manhattan. Tickets are now either

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[43] Gillian Brockell, "The Statue of Liberty was created to celebrate freed slaves, not immigrants, its new museum recounts," *The Washington Post,* May 23, 2019, accessed July 2, 2019, https://www.washingtonpost.com/history/2019/05/23/statue-liberty-was-created-celebrate-freed-slaves-not-immigrants/.

[44] "Statue of Liberty Museum," *Statue of Liberty & Ellis Island*, accessed July 10, 2021. https://www.statueofliberty.org/statue-of-liberty/statue-of-liberty-museum/

[45] Tilden, *Interpreting Our Heritage,* 5.

purchased in advance online or in Castle Clinton National Historic Site, located in Battery Park. Included in the ticket is the ferry ride to and from Liberty and Ellis Islands and an audio guided tour of both sites. Getting on the ferry itself requires passing through a TSA (Transportation Security Administration) style checkpoint complete with metal detectors and a scanned search of bags and coats, creating for visitors a sense of importance of protecting the Statue from any potential harm or threat. After passing through security, visitors wait in line for the ferries, which arrive every half hour. On either side of the queue are barricades between the greenery of Battery Park and New York Harbor with signage from the National Park Service and Statue City Cruises (the boat operator) featuring quotes from President John F. Kennedy and scholar Daniel J. Boorstein about the ideals of liberty and freedom.[46] From the start of visitors' trips to the island, they are constantly reminded to consider the visit as a part of their education on American liberty.

Once on the ferry, visitors can take photos of the views of Manhattan and the approaching Statue or purchase snacks and souvenirs, such as their own Statue of Liberty statuette or foam crown, from the concession stand on the boat. They can also listen to the recorded National Park Service history of both Liberty Island and Ellis Island, discussing how immigrants made this journey in reverse at the end of the nineteenth century. Stating that visitors are retracing that journey makes the trip out to Liberty Island one that prompts imagined performances. This provides a script for visitors to imagine what that journey looked and felt like.

[46] There is some debate as to who decided on these specific quotes due to the nature of the relationship between the National Park Service, Statue City Cruises, and the Park Police, all of whom have shared jurisdiction over this space.

As the ferry approaches Liberty Island, visitors crowd towards the starboard (right) side of the vessel. When the Statue appears in its full glory, they take the photos proving they visited one of the most iconic statues in the world (Figure 4.5). On my research visits to the statue, I have spent these moments on the ferry rides to and from the island trying to see the shackles and chains that are at the feet of the statue, representative of the abolition of slavery in the United States. The scholar and poet Clint Smith III wrote of his own experiences visiting the Statue, remarking that he searched up and down on his ferry ride back to see if he could see the chains at the feet.[47] They are not visible from the pedestal or from anywhere on the island itself. Attempting to crane your neck to see them only causes pain. The presence of the chains, a featured part of some of the original drawings of the statue but mostly hidden from view in subsequent representation and imagery of the Statue, belies the fundamental issues that surround the Statue of Liberty and the performances of US tourists who go there; if the Statue is meant to celebrate the abolition of slavery, it is almost impossible to see that representation on the statue itself. The interpretation in the new museum attempts to rectify this by discussing this context; however, it is unable to fully reckon with the symbolic weight of the Statue of Liberty as a stand-in for American patriotism and freedom.

[47] Smith, *How the Word is Passed,* 238.

(Figure 4.5: Approaching the Statue of Liberty from the ferry, August 2, 2021, photo by author)

Once the ferry boat is docked, visitors cross onto a wooden deck and through brick gates that welcome them to the Statue. A National Park Service ranger stands nearby to direct them towards the audio tour booth, museum, or restaurant/gift shop. If visitors wish, they can simply walk around the island. On most visits to the Statue, I began with the Statue of Liberty Museum. Located behind the Statue, the museum is staffed by National Park Service (NPS) rangers who preside at the information desk. After climbing up the steps to the museum, visitors have two options: wait in line to watch the introductory video or begin touring the four sections of the exhibit, which is mostly a self-guided experience through exhibit panels and vitrines assisted by an optional audio guide.

The introductory video, a twelve-minute examination of the building and impact of the Statue of Liberty, is dispersed through three separate rooms. NPS rangers let in visitors who are

then greeted with a video of waves on the ocean. A soothing recognizable female voice, later credited as former ABC News anchor Diane Sawyer, starts the presentation with the line: "the statue began as an impulse of a human heart."[48] Sawyer's voice takes visitors through the statue's conception by Eduard de Laboulaye at the end of the American Civil War, linking the statue to the abolition of slavery and the alliance between France and the United States during the American Revolution eighty years earlier, "a war for the cause of liberty."[49] As Sawyer's voice narrates, the panoramic screen fills with images of Laboulaye, the designer of the statue Frederic Auguste Bartholdi, and depictions of the Roman goddess Libertas. The voiceover links the United States to the idea of liberty, consistently being tested by internal challenges. Though the monument's original intentions of depicting abolition are mentioned, the video more broadly highlights how the monument was a colossal achievement and served as a symbol of freedom the world over.

The rest of the twelve-minute video continues in this manner, guiding visitors into the second of the three video rooms. The second room details the construction of the statue in Paris, the fundraising efforts of newspaper publisher Joseph Pulitzer to convince Americans to donate funds to build the pedestal, and the dedication ceremony in October 1886. The voiceover at the end of this second room prompts visitors to recognize the intellectual work of Bartholdi's statue:

> Visitors experience, perhaps, what is Bartholdi's greatest stroke of genius: they can go inside the statue. Rising up through the sculpture, the statue is not just an engineering marvel, but an unforgettable metaphor for the dynamic and inspiring force of liberty. Visitors see the world as *Liberty* sees it. The statue lifts a torch of hope lighting a way to possibility, to the promise of liberty and justice for all.[50]

[48] Statue of Liberty Museum introductory video, Statue of Liberty Museum, May 2019, viewed August 2021.
[49] Statue of Liberty Museum introductory video, Statue of Liberty Museum.
[50] Statue of Liberty Museum introductory video, Statue of Liberty Museum.

Through this voiceover and the visuals paired with it, the implications of the Statue of Liberty as a monument that prompts performance become clear. As Sawyer's voice tells the viewing audience the "visitors see the world as *Liberty* sees it," the video pans to a view of New York Harbor from the windows in the crown of the statue.[51] If, as Robin Bernstein asserts, objects provide scripts for social behavior, this literal viewing from the crown to "lift a torch of hope…to the promise of liberty and justice for all" asks viewers of this panoramic video to take an expansive view of the meaning of the statue as the embodiment of the ideals of liberty, making the act of visiting and climbing the statue in some ways their own performance of liberty.[52]

The third and final room visitors are ushered into is where the museum attempts to grapple with the contradictions of American liberty but ultimately lands on inspirational language that compels visitors to link the statue with American liberty. Over images of Jim Crow America and women's suffrage marches, the voice of Diane Sawyer intones:

> The Statue of Liberty is at once an emblem of America's highest ideals and the deep ironies of our history: broken shackles at her feet, but the legacy of slavery still very real in 1886 as the statue is dedicated; human justice and equality guaranteed by the Constitution, but only a minority of Americans are allowed to vote. In the New York Harbor, she quickly becomes an icon for America and begins to gather layers of meaning as the United States rises to power and prominence in the world.[53]

In this part of the video, the images juxtaposed with the text suggest a type of reckoning or at the very least a performative naming in the Austinian sense—the museum through this video calls attention to historical contradictions, and by naming them seeks to address and reckon with

[51] Statue of Liberty Museum introductory video, Statue of Liberty Museum.
[52] Bernstein, *Racial Innocence*, 85; Statue of Liberty Museum introductory video, Statue of Liberty Museum.
[53] Statue of Liberty Museum introductory video, Statue of Liberty Museum.

them.[54] It pairs images of the broken shackles at *Liberty's* feet with images of formerly enslaved men and women, creating visual and auditory linkages to the ironies that the statue has embodied. However, in accreting more "layers of meaning," the Statue as framed in this introductory video and in the interpretation at the site cannot fully communicate the tension between the ideal of liberty and the realities of American experience. The proposed layers are subsumed by the narrative of Liberty as an American icon and exemplar.

This becomes clearer in the final montage of the video. The last lines spoken by Diane Sawyer state that the statue "stands for the belief that we are all born with the right to express the impulse of a human heart…[it] stands for the freedoms of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, and for the laws that guarantee those freedoms for all."[55] Underneath these lines orchestral music plays, and images of protests (such as the Women's March in 2017) and famous civil rights leaders Nelson Mandela and Martin Luther King, Jr. fill the screen before switching to panoramic shots of the Statue, though noticeably not returning to the broken shackles at her feet. The statue cannot continue to provide the social script for visitors of embodying the contradictions of liberty; it instead is interpreted to rise above these failings to become, in the words of the video, "the hope that speaks to the ages."[56]

After the end credits roll, visitors can enter the museum's exhibit. Or they may have already done so, as the layout of the museum does not immediately guide visitors to the introductory video. The exhibits are in four parts. The first section, "Imagining Liberty," covers the conception of the statue, with drawings and models from Bartholdi and other depictions of

[54] J.L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words,* 2nd Edition, editors J. O. Urmson and Marina Sbisà (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975) 5.
[55] Statue of Liberty Museum introductory video, Statue of Liberty Museum, May 2019, viewed August 2021.
[56] Statue of Liberty Museum introductory video, Statue of Liberty Museum, May 2019, viewed August 2021.

Liberty throughout history.[57] Notable here is the inclusion of Eduard de Laboulaye's writings against slavery, creating a connection for visitors to the idea of the statue as an abolitionist symbol. Overhead hang flags depicting individuals associated with American conceptions of liberty and freedom like Harriet Tubman, and phrases such as "Free Speech," "Equality," and "Suffrage" (Figure 4.6). The space suggests to visitors that these ideas are embodied and directly connected to the building of the Statue of Liberty.

(Figure 4.6: "Imagining Liberty" exhibit, Statue of Liberty Museum, December 7, 2022, photo by author)

The second and third sections, "Constructing Liberty" and "Supporting the Statue," focus on the labor it took to build the monument. Visitors walk through a soundscape of Bartholdi's

[57] Museum vitrines, Statue of Liberty Museum, May 2019, viewed August 2021.

workshop while examining the tools used to build the Statue, then towards vitrines filled with memorabilia about fundraising and building the pedestal of the Statue.[58] While the previous section of the exhibit emphasized how the statue was designed with powerful principles in mind, these sections emphasize how the statue was built to awe visitors. The monument's awe-inspiring scale is most viscerally conveyed through the replica foot of the Statue, moved to the museum after it was first built in 1986. Placed in the corner of the exhibit area (Figure 4.7), the foot prompts a significant amount of visitor engagement.

(Figure 4.7: Visitors posing with replica Statue of Liberty foot, December 7, 2022, photo by author)

[58] Constructing Liberty Soundscape, Statue of Liberty Museum, May 2019, viewed August 2021. For more on sound and performance in the museum space, see Susan Bennett, *Theatre & Museums* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013) and Ramón H. Rivera-Servera, "Exhibiting Voice/Narrating Migration: Performance-Based Curatorial Practice in ¡*Azúcar*! The Life and Music of Celia Cruz." *Text and performance quarterly* 29, no. 2 (2009): 131–148, among others.

The replica foot is situated next to the tools used to build the monument, prompting visitors to touch and climb on it—actions they cannot perform on the Statue itself. If museum exhibits are fundamentally theatrical because of their "power of display," as performance theorist Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett argues, then this exhibit argues that the Statue of Liberty is not only exceptional for its ideals but also for work it took to make it, work they can literally climb on.[59] The Statue gains another layer of meaning as a site of ingenuity and American success in innovation, in addition to celebrating liberty and the abolition of slavery in the United States.

The museum's scenography and rhetorical approach changes again in the next section, "Embracing Liberty." The introductory text of this section, placed on a wall within view of the original Statue's torch, underlines the complications of interpreting the Statue in any singular way:

> For many Americans, the Statue continues to represent an idea that is fundamental to their sense of identity as individuals and as a nation. Yet there is a continued tension between the declared commitment to liberty and the persistence of its unequal distribution in the United States and beyond. At times, the Statue represents strength and resilience. At other times, it is a reminder of injustice.[60]

In this panel, visitors are given a glimpse into the complicated task of interpretation at the Statue of Liberty. The "continued tension" is one that the museum makes visible through vitrines. The museum's vitrines in this section display quilts featuring the Statue next to words by James Baldwin heavily critiquing the famed monument. Yet, unlike the other exhibit sections in the museum, the argument of this museum section is not presented in large, interactive form, but behind glass. Visitors would only examine the contradictions these exhibits illustrate if actively pointed towards these tensions, an approach unique to this section. The idea of reckoning at the

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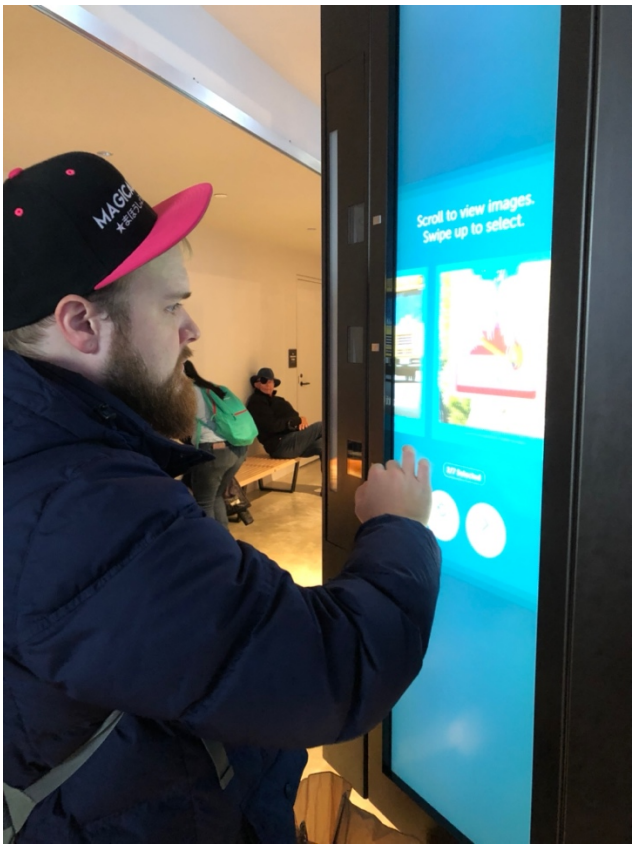
[59] Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, *Destination Culture,* 5. See also Tracy C. Davis, "Performing and the Real Thing in the Postmodern Museum," *TDR* 39.3 (1995).
[60] Exhibit text, Statue of Liberty Museum, May 2019, viewed August 2021.

Statue of Liberty does not suggest that visitors are forced to consider how the Statue has been used in the name of American identity, but rather provides them with the *option* of thinking critically about the monument. The performance of reckoning at the Statue can be ignored by visitors if they so choose, if they do not use their audio guides throughout the museum, or if they do not stop to read the exhibit texts.

As an example of this, a visitor could walk directly by the exhibit text that frankly states the symbolic issues of the Statue and head to the massive original torch on display at the front of the museum or participate in the "Becoming Liberty" interactive exhibit (Figures 4.8 and 4.9).[61]



(Figure 4.8: A visitor uses the Becoming Liberty interactive, December 10, 2019, photo by author)

[61] This interactive was available for use on my visits in December 2019 and December 2022, but was unavailable in August 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In the August 2021 visit, the large screen showed video of the Statue.

(Figure 4.9: Visitors pose for a photo in the Becoming Liberty exhibit, December 7, 2022, photo by author)

In this interactive exhibit, visitors answer the question: "What does liberty mean to you?" Responses are displayed on a large screen by the original torch, accompanied by photos of those who participate and readouts of their nationalities.[62] By asking visitors to offer their own vision of what liberty is, the interpretation at the museum attempts to prompt visitors to reckon with the monument as a symbol meant to capture multiple facets of liberty. If a visitor has not gone through the rest of the exhibit, however, they have not been guided by the museum to this reflective interpretation, diminishing the reckonings.[63]

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[62] For more on selfies, museums, and performance, see Elizabeth Hunter, "In the Frame: The Performative Spectatorship of Museum Selfies," *Text and Performance Quarterly* 38:1–2 (2018): 55–74, doi.org/10.1080/10462937.2018.1456673.

[63] For more on performance and museums, see Tracy C. Davis, "Performing and the Real Thing in the Postmodern Museum," *TDR* 39.3 (1995).

This reinterpretation and reckoning with what the Statue means in the contemporary moment goes beyond the newly built museum walls to the audio guided tours that are free with the purchase of a ticket to the Statue of Liberty. The audio guides that visitors pick up at the entrance of Liberty Island provide audio interpretation of the museum, the pedestal, and around the grounds of the island.[64] Available in over a dozen languages, the guide also features a walking tour which leads visitors around the island, stopping at various waysides to offer additional context on the history of the island and the statue. This audio-guided tour attempts a similar type of performative reckoning as the museum: the Statue of Liberty as an essential symbol of freedom and America is interwoven with critical examinations of what liberty means and upon whose land the Statue sits.

Two moments in the audio tour highlight how the National Park Service's interpretation attempts to reckon with the Statue's past and prompts performances from visitors as a means of addressing it. The first comes at the beginning of the outdoor walk prompted by the audio tour, when visitors are asked to "imagine this area before there was a Statue of Liberty—before there were any skyscrapers or even a working harbor. Just five centuries ago, none of this was here. Stop and stand still for a moment."[65] The narrator then brings in a Tribal Historic Preservation Officer from the Stockbridge-Munsee tribal nation, descended from the Lenape whose land the Statue stands upon, to explain how their ancestors used the space. Asking for visitors to stop their walking to reflect on the original stewards of the land is a big leap in terms of how

[64] As of May 2023, those languages are English, American Sign Language, Spanish, French, Italian, German, Mandarin, Russian, Arabic, Hindi, Korean, Portuguese and Japanese, see "Things to Do," https://www.nps.gov/stli/planyourvisit/things2do.htm.

[65] Stop 103, Statue of Liberty audio tour, Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island Foundation with Acoustiguides, Inc., recorded 2017, accessed August 2021. My thanks to Michael Amato, Chief of Interpretation, Education, and Visitor Services at Statue of Liberty National Monument for his help in getting the transcript of these tours.

Indigenous histories are told at monuments such as the Statue of Liberty.[66] This section of the audio tour asks visitors to briefly consider the concept of liberty as related to Indigenous people and employs a Stockbridge-Munsee member to invite the reflection. While the narration immediately turns to the Dutch and English colonists who murdered the Lenape, for a moment, and in the first moment of engagement, visitors are asked to imagine the world before the forces of colonization came to the shores of North America.

The second moment from the audio tour which highlights the tensions with reckoning with the past at the Statue of Liberty comes as the narration prompts visitors to walk around the front of the statue to the exhibit wayside panel entitled "Liberty's Symbols" (Figure 4.10). Much like the introductory video in the museum and the text on the panel, the audio tour directs visitors' attention towards the shackles at the Statue's feet. The narrator states that "you can't even see from here. A broken shackle and chains lie at Lady Liberty's feet. The broken shackle represents the end of political oppression, but, there was another meaning too."[67] The narration then turns to historian Alan Kraut, who describes the chains as "representing the broken chains of bondage…a direct reference to the recently fought Civil War in the United States."[68] The Statue of Liberty, in this narration and throughout the rest of the interpretation at the museum, briefly becomes a symbol of abolition before it is subsumed by the trappings of American exceptionalism that dominate much of the Statue's discourse. Visitors can try in vain to see the chains at the Statue's feet, but they are told they are there as a representation of ending the brutal

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[66] For more on Indigenous representation in commemoration in the United States, see Lisa Blee and Jean M O'Brien *Monumental Mobility: The Memory Work of Massasoit* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2019); Ari Kelman, *A Misplaced Massacre: Struggling over the Memory of Sand Creek* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2013).

[67] Stop 107, Statue of Liberty audio tour, Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island Foundation with Acoustiguides, Inc., recorded 2017, accessed August 2021.

[68] Stop 107, Statue of Liberty audio tour, Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island Foundation with Acoustiguides, Inc., recorded 2017, accessed August 2021.

system of slavery. The audio tour pivots quickly to how you as visitor see liberty, but for a brief moment, a visitor looking at the Statue and listening to the narration can create a performance with the monument that captures its complicated legacy through this imagined viewing of the chains.

(Figure 4.10: "Liberty's Symbols" wayside exhibit text, August 2, 2021, photo by author)

The new interpretation of the Statue of Liberty Museum prompts valuable questions about the degree to which a museum—an inherently opt-in experience—can change social discourse surrounding a monument. Though the museum explicitly asks viewers to consider the ironies and failures of American liberty, both domestic and foreign visitors can very easily miss the reckonings prompted by the contemporary interpretation at the monument. A visitor does not need to visit the museum at all; they could only walk around the island with or without the audio guide. They can enter the pedestal if they have a ticket and climb the steps up to the bottom of

the Statue itself, or they can exit through the gift shop. What seems to matter to many visitors, from observing visitors during my multiple visits to the monument, is to have been in the presence of the Statue. Its colossal size and symbolic meaning meant that I saw more than one person pose in front of the monument like the monument (Figure 4.11), something that occurred even in the pouring rain.

(Figure 4.11: A woman poses in front of the Statue of Liberty, August 3, 2021, photo by author)

Visitors such as the one pictured above are engaging with the monument, prompted by what the Statue offers. The woman is literally performing the action of the statue for an unseen photographer, using her body to imitate the massive monument behind her. Based on this image, there is no way to discern whether this visitor interacted with the interpretation of the Statue as offered by the audio guide or the museum. Rather, posing as the Statue and with the Statue

reifies the meaning of the monument as a symbol of American ideals—of freedom, of liberty—which gained traction in the twentieth century and was codified in the twenty-first. The current interpretation at the Statue of Liberty attempts at provocation, but the way that visitors engage with it does not mean that the reckonings offered by the revised social script come to pass.

This reinterpretation of the Statue of Liberty reckons with the history and interpretations of the statue in the contemporary moment. If, as I argue, a reckoning is a performative process that prompts visitors to Liberty Island to reconsider, reexamine, and recontextualize, then the interpretation at the Statue of Liberty both succeeds and fails. The museum provides critical context about the monument while continuing to use tropes about liberty and freedom regarding the Statue. Attempts to link the Statue to the abolition of slavery or fights for freedom globally are stated in a soft and unassuming, nonthreatening manner. Most critically, the new revisionist interpretation can be readily ignored. Visitors can theoretically pay their $24.30 to visit the statue and never receive any interpretation whatsoever.[69] The dominant pre-existing social script provided by the monument is so potent that, if visitors miss the reckonings the museum offers, the Statue continues to prompt performances of freedom, liberty, and American ideals.

This phase of reckoning at the Statue of Liberty demonstrates how the commemorative process can be fluid and complicated. Reckonings can provide critical historical context, allowing individuals to reevaluate what they thought they knew. But if visitors choose to ignore the reckoning, the monument can continue to reinforce the dominant social script. In the case of the Statue of Liberty, the act of reckoning created a space for performances of acknowledgement of genocide and slavery alongside the revered symbol. This uneasy interweaving of celebration and reckoning is not as simple in the case of the Stephen Douglas Tomb.

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[69] This is the February 2023 price of the ferry ticket with pedestal access to the Statue of Liberty. This has fluctuated throughout my time researching the monument. In 2022 over three million people visited the monument.

The Stephen Douglas Tomb

In almost direct contrast to the Statue of Liberty, reckoning at the Stephen Douglas Tomb has revolved around the question of absence, forgetting, and removal. In the aftermath of the tomb's brush with fame in 1968 (detailed in Chapter 3), the final resting place of Senator Stephen Douglas sat quietly on the border of the Chicago neighborhoods of Douglas and Bronzeville. Estimates from the late 1980s suggest it was visited by under 50,000 people each year.[70] In 1988 the Black American caretaker of the Tomb for over 30 years, Herman Williams, was profiled by the *Chicago Tribune* under the headline "Shhh! A chapter of Illinois history is resting quietly on 35th Street."[71] The article noted that the site, even after the years of Williams's care, did not receive many visitors and that "few people, even those who live nearby, know that the monument exists."[72] The monument was described as having fallen into disrepair before Williams became the caretaker in 1953. The *Tribune* also noted Williams's one-man fight to get funding for the tomb in 1973, protesting at the governor's mansion for eight hours by himself.[73]

Tension between restoration and ruin, and remembering and forgetting are inescapable when discussing the Stephen Douglas Tomb. In the decades that followed the *Tribune*'s brief article about the Tomb and its caretaker, the memory of Stephen Douglas became a battleground over what to do with historical figures who have fallen out of favor in the public imagination. As performative memory practices serve presentist agendas, the discourse around whether commemorations of Stephen Douglas should be allowed in public spaces in Illinois demonstrates how Douglas's nineteenth-century vision of America may not serve present-day circumstances.[74]

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[70] "Shhh! A chapter of Illinois history is resting quietly on 35th Street," *Chicago Tribune*, August 4, 1988, Newspapers.com, https://www.newspapers.com/image/388709105, Section 2, pp. 1 and 9.
[71] "Shhh! A chapter of Illinois history is resting quietly on 35th Street," *Chicago Tribune*, August 4, 1988, Newspapers.com, https://www.newspapers.com/image/388709105, Section 2, pp. 1 and 9.
[72] "Shhh!", 1.
[73] "Shhh!," 9.
[74] Richards, "What is to Be Remembered?," 618.

The question of the stakes of commemoration is an essential one for Stephen Douglas, who has faded from public consciousness. A politically conservative attempt in January 2022 to change Virginia's public school learning standards perhaps demonstrates this most succinctly: in mentioning several historical documents for public school students to read, the standards referenced reading the first of the Abraham Lincoln-*Frederick Douglass* debates, rather than the Abraham Lincoln-Stephen Douglas debates.[75] There are multiple ironies in this, most of which are not the purview of this chapter; however, there are two aspects that I want to call attention to. First, that in American public memory Stephen Douglas is only remembered (if he is at all) as attached to Abraham Lincoln; and second, that Douglas was replaced with Frederick Douglass. Both Lincoln and Douglass feature heavily in how contemporary discourse has understood the Stephen Douglas Tomb and Douglas Park, its related commemorative park in North Lawndale to the west of Bronzeville. Reckoning with Stephen Douglas' public memory has meant performances of neglect, by which I mean a lack of visitors to his grave site and monument, and removal, including (re)namings, removals of busts, and calls to remove the statue atop his tomb. While the Statue of Liberty's reckoning attempts to grapple with the hypervisibility of the statue in relation to its somewhat radical historical past, the Stephen Douglas Tomb's reckoning is predicated on its fading into the background.[76]

The performances of neglect are key to understanding the Stephen Douglas Tomb during the last four decades. Throughout the 1980s, 1990s, and early 2000s, the Tomb was advertised to tourists and school groups in newspapers in Illinois, Wisconsin, and Indiana in articles about the

[75] Maria Cramer and Amanda Hopluch, "A Bill Proposed a New Way to Teach History. It Got the History Wrong.", *The New York Times,* January 14, 2022, accessed February 1, 2023, https://www.nytimes.com/2022/01/14/us/virginia-lincoln-douglas-debates-bill.html.
[76] For monuments fading into the background see, Judith Pascoe, *The Sarah Siddons Audio Files: Romanticism and the Lost Voice* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2013) 1 and James Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993).

Pullman district or attractions on the South Side.[77] In surveying newspapers from the last four decades, I found that the Tomb most often arose when discussing the state of Illinois's budget.[78] In the early 1990s, the Tomb's open hours were shortened because of a lack of funding. During the Illinois budget crisis of the mid-2000s, only the Tomb and Lincoln's final resting place in Springfield remained open. The Tomb, the smallest state historic site in Illinois, kept regular hours with limited visitation.[79]

(Figure 4.12: View of the top of the Stephen Douglas Tomb from the pedestrian bridge over Metra tracks, May 29, 2021, photo by author)

[77] "Registration open for tour," *Northwest Herald* (Woodstock, Illinois), June 4, 2009, *Newspapers.com*, accessed March 21, 2021, https://www.newspapers.com/image/205313230
[78] "Budget cuts cut hours of operation at historic sites," *Chicago Tribune*, November 1, 1992, *Newspapers.com*, accessed March 21, 2021, https://www.newspapers.com/image/389709722
[79] "Two historical sites in the area will be open for summer season," *The Times* (Munster, Indiana), May 8, 2009, *Newspapers.com*, accessed March 20, 2021, https://www.newspapers.com/image/307541389

Visiting the tomb can be an extensive journey, especially from the North Side of Chicago, where it can be an hour-long ride on public transportation.[80] The statue of Douglas continues to look over the South Side from the top of his tomb, peeking out over the trees (Figure 4.12). The commuter rail (Metra) tracks, the I-90 highway, and a migratory bird preserve stand between the tomb and Lake Michigan. The sounds of the highway contrast with the otherwise quiet soundscape at the site. A gated fence surrounds the site. When the site is open, Friday through Sunday from 10 A.M. to 4 P.M. as of January 2022, an unlocked gate opens onto a concrete path that loops around the monument. On the walkway up to the monument, visitors can learn about Douglas's political career via two informational waysides that line the right-side walkway. One covers a brief overview of Douglas's life, including the Lincoln-Douglas debates and Douglas's death, while the other provides information on the tomb's construction. Visitors can also look at two other commemorative markers on the park grounds: the National Register of Historic Places marker at the entrance to the site and the Chicago Landmarks marker, obscured by the bushes directly in front of the monument. Each plaque notes that Douglas was a United States Senator from the state of Illinois, that he was a political rival of Abraham Lincoln, and that his tomb lies on the grounds of his former estate of Oakenwald.[81] On the signage at the Tomb, one cannot escape the shadow of Abraham Lincoln and his importance in American public memory, even where his political rival is laid to rest.[82]

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[80] I made three visits to the Stephen Douglas Tomb: in January 2020, May 2021, and July 2021. I was unsuccessful in seeing the Tomb in January 2020 but got access both times in 2021.

[81] National Register of Historic Places and Chicago Landmarks plaques, Stephen Douglas Tomb, viewed May 29, 2021.

[82] For more on Lincoln and public memory, see Barry Schwartz, *Abraham Lincoln and the Forge of National Memory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000),Merrill D. Peterson, *Lincoln in American Memory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), and Kirt H. Wilson, "Debating the Great Emancipator: Abraham Lincoln and Our Public Memory," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 13:3 (2010): 455–479, among others. Of note are the pamphlets that sit in a box next to the actual resting place of Douglas, which are not always refilled and are outdated regarding

This is how one experiences the Stephen Douglas Tomb in the contemporary moment: it is a little visited monument that, despite its towering physical presence, fades into the background. The path surrounding the monument is today used by runners and bicyclists as a roundabout.[83] The lack of in-person historical interpretation and upkeep prompts few interactions with the Tomb. The site itself appears neglected (Figure 4.13); benches surrounding the monument are broken, and the four representational statues on the corners of the Tomb are dusty.

(Figure 4.13: View of the Stephen Douglas Tomb showing wayside placards, May 29, 2021, photo by author. On the right side of the photograph there are broken benches.)

when the site is open. The pamphlets barely mention Lincoln and instead give an in-depth overview of Douglas and the building of the monument.

[83] In my own time at the tomb, I did not observe anyone but myself walk up to the sarcophagus of Douglas or close to the monument.

I conclude, based on my visits to the Stephen Douglas Tomb in January 2020 and May and July 2021, that the lack of care and attention at the site has altered the social script, making it difficult to engage with the monument. Theatre scholar Elizabeth Son has examined monuments to Korean survivors of Japanese military sexual slavery as performances of care; the performances prompted by the Stephen Douglas Tomb are the opposite.[84] The site as it stood in 2021 prompted performances of inattention that mirror other forms of neglect.

This was not the case ten years ago. From 2013 to 2017, the Bronzeville Historical Society was in residence at the Stephen Douglas Tomb, providing historical interpretation at the site. The organization rented the caretaker's cottage on the grounds for their archives and exhibits covering the history of Bronzeville.[85] Sherry Williams, the founder of the Bronzeville Historical Society, engaged in costumed interpretation, portraying her five-times grandmother, who was owned by a man who died at the nearby Camp Douglas during the Civil War.[86] In her interpretation, Williams showed visitors the ledger books that Douglas kept of the 129 enslaved people whom he owned.[87] Williams' performance changed the meaning of the monument for visitors, providing a different social script for them than the hagiographic interpretation by the signs provided by the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency.[88] The interpretation provided by the

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[84] Son, *Embodied Reckonings*, 220.
[85] Katherine Flynn, "Q&A with Sherry Williams of the Bronzeville Historical Society," *National Trust for Historic Preservation,* September 14, 2014, accessed January 17, 2022, https://savingplaces.org/stories/qa-sherry-williams-bronzeville-historical-society/#.YfiC-PXMJ0t.
[86] Neil Steinberg, "STEINBERG: Stephen Douglas 'despicable,' but his statue should remain." *Chicago Sun-Times* (IL), September 19, 2017. NewsBank: Access World News – Historical and Current. https://infoweb-newsbank-com.turing.library.northwestern.edu/apps/news/document-view?p=WORLDNEWS&docref=news/1670880444686718
[87] Steinberg, "Stephen Douglas 'despicable'"
[88] Bernstein, *Racial Innocence,* 80; informational waysides, Stephen Douglas Tomb, Illinois Historic Preservation Agency, viewed May 29, 2021.

Bronzeville Historical Society provoked the kind of reckoning that most public history aspires to achieve.[89]

Beyond these quotidian acts of performance through interpretation, the Bronzeville Historical Society created performances of reckoning at the site through the calling of names.[90] Beginning in 2014, members of the Historical Society read the names of every person Douglas owned at events hosted on the site.[91] According to Williams, the act of naming each person allowed participants at these events "to never forget" that Douglas made his money by enslaving other human beings.[92] This act by the Bronzeville Historical Society constituted a reckoning with the historical memory of Douglas. Nowhere on the site, from the waysides to the plaques to the outdated pamphlets that sit in a box next to the entrance of the Tomb, does the current interpretation acknowledge that Douglas owned enslaved persons, or that he was a proponent of keeping chattel slavery as a system in order to placate the South.[93] By naming the names of those men, women, and children, the Bronzeville Historical Society reckoned with the monument, redefining Douglas not as Lincoln's rival or a politician who allowed for slavery to advance, but as a part of the institution himself. While this act of naming ended when the Bronzeville Historical Society moved from the site in 2017, their reckoning with Douglas as an enslaver had ripple effects that changed his place in the commemorative landscape of Illinois.

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[89] Tilden, *Interpreting Our Heritage*, 6.
[90] Scott Magelssen, *Living History Museums: Undoing History through Performance* (Lanham, Md: Scarecrow Press, 2007).
[91] Sam Cholke, "Stephen Douglas' Slaves to be Honored Before Planting of Garden," *dnainfo*, April 4, 2013, accessed July 18, 2021, https://www.dnainfo.com/chicago/20130404/douglas/stephen-douglas-slaves-be-honored-before-garden-planting
[92] Comment by Sherry Williams on "A Case for Reparations at the University of Chicago," *Black Perspectives,* May 22, 2017, https://www.aaihs.org/a-case-for-reparations-at-the-university-of-chicago/
[93] "A Case for Reparations at the University of Chicago," *Black Perspectives,* May 22, 2017, https://www.aaihs.org/a-case-for-reparations-at-the-university-of-chicago/

An example of this shift in the public memory of Stephen Douglas is the efforts of students at the Village Leadership Academy in North Lawndale, to the west of Bronzeville. Around the same time as the Bronzeville Historical Society ended their interpretation that reckoned with Douglas's past at the Tomb, middle school students in North Lawndale began organizing to change the name of Douglas Park in their neighborhood. They argued that they did not want the name of a racist celebrated where they lived.[94] The students held teach-ins and attended meetings of the Chicago Park District to convince the city to change the name of the park to something that better represented the neighborhood's values.[95] As the petition gained momentum, a graffiti artist began to add an extra "s" to the signs in Douglas Park, in effect renaming the space after Frederick Douglass.[96]

In the weeks after the death of George Floyd in June 2020, the movement to reckon with the legacy of Stephen Douglas gained steam. Douglas Park in North Lawndale was renamed Frederick and Anna Douglass Park.[97] Illinois Speaker of the House Michael Madigan ordered a portrait of Douglas removed from the House Gallery in Springfield and replaced with a portrait of Barack Obama, who had been an Illinois State and US Senator for Illinois before becoming President of the United States. Madigan also led the call for the removal of two statues of Douglas on Illinois state house grounds.[98] The question of what to do with the Stephen Douglas Tomb, however, proved to be more complicated, so much so that the Chicago Monuments

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[94] Meghan Dwyer, "Students hold teach-in to push for Douglas Park name change," *WGN*, February 17, 2020, https://wgntv.com/news/students-hold-teach-in-to-push-for-douglas-park-name-change/
[95] Meghan Dwyer, "Students hold teach-in to push for Douglas Park name change."
[96] Meghan Dwyer, "Students hold teach-in to push for Douglas Park name change."
[97] Clare Proctor, "North Lawndale park no longer named after Stephen Douglas." *Chicago Sun-Times (IL)*, September 9, 2020. *NewsBank: Access World News – Historical and Current*. https://infoweb-newsbank-com.turing.library.northwestern.edu/apps/news/document-view?p=WORLDNEWS&docref=news/17D677460DF4D488.
[98] Chicago Sun-Times Editorial Board, "Remove the Stephen A. Douglas monuments but then take the next steps." *Chicago Sun-Times (IL)*, July 14, 2020. *NewsBank: Access World News – Historical and Current*. Madigan stepped down from his speakership in 2021.

Project (brought together by the City of Chicago to evaluate the city's monuments) made specific mention of the monument on its website, letting visitors to the site know that the Tomb is Illinois State property, and therefore they have no jurisdiction over it.[99]

Performances of neglect and indifference are key to understanding why the commemoration of Stephen Douglas looked different from performances around other monuments in 2020. In the discourse that has surrounded Douglas and his tomb, there were no public suggestions that his remains be exhumed and moved, or that the majority of the commemorative site be destroyed. The criticisms of the Douglas Tomb focused on the nine-foot-tall statue of Douglas that sits atop a 96-foot column on the tomb, which towers above the tree line and visually elevates Douglas in the city of Chicago. The reckoning for this monument concerned one particular component of the memorial: the figure of the man himself.

On July 14, 2020, six weeks after the nationwide protests for racial justice began, three General Assembly representatives sent a letter to Governor J.B. Pritzker about the statue on top of the tomb. The three representatives, Kam Buckner, Lamont J. Robinson, and Curtis Tarver II, represented districts in the South Side of Chicago that have direct connections to the legacy of Stephen Douglas and his final resting place. Their brief letter demonstrates both the rhetorical and performative stakes of reckoning with Douglas and his tomb in Bronzeville.

The letter started with the acknowledgement that Douglas had been "a distinguished statesman" but that he also "personally benefited from the slavery of Black people in America."[100] In this rhetorical move, the letter writers drew attention to the enslaved people

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[99] "Frequently Asked Questions," *Chicago Monuments Project*, accessed June 1, 2021, https://chicagomonuments.org/faq.

[100] Letter attached to tweet from Rep. Kam Buckner (@RepKamBuckner), "Today, I join with my colleagues @RepTarver & @LamontJRobinson to implore @GovPritzker to remove the Stephen Douglas statue from the Neighborhood that I live in & rep. Douglas looked down on black people during his life. We shouldn't allow it in his death.," Twitter, July 14, 2020, https://twitter.com/RepKamBuckner/status/1283115081295896584.

whom Douglas and his wife owned in Mississippi, just as Sherry Williams at the Bronzeville Historical Society did in her interpretation at the site.[101] The writers then turned to Douglas's own words about Black people and his belief in a government of "White men", quoting from the fifth Lincoln-Douglas debate in Jonesboro, Illinois.[102] For these reasons, they wrote, they felt "it is incredibly offensive that in a neighborhood that is predominantly Black that there is a state sanctioned ninety-six-foot tall granite structure affixed with a nine-foot bronze statue of Douglas."[103] They requested that the governor reckon with the Stephen Douglas Tomb by removing the statue on top of it.[104]

The nine-foot-tall bronze statue of Douglas, according to the letter, "is an edifice dedicated to allowing a bigot even in his grave to look down upon the Black community" and should be removed.[105] The act of looking down as described in this letter denotes the social script created in 1881, but explicitly names how the object prompts a continual implied power imbalance. For Representatives Buckner, Robinson, and Tarver, the statue of Douglas on top of his tomb was an object that prompted racist action in the contemporary moment.[106] The issue for these state representatives was not only with the statue, but also with how it performed in the scenography of the South Side. The object's racism was amplified by its presence in a particular scenography.

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[101] David Zarefsky, *Lincoln, Douglas, and Slavery: In the Crucible of Public Debate* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990) 199. While Zarfesky's discussion of this topic claims that any discussion of the mistreatment of these men and women by Douglas and his wife's family is unsubstantiated, other scholars, such as Martin Quitt argue that as the institution of slavery itself was violent and cruel, letting Douglas off the hook for his tacit involvement is morally suspect.
[102] "Jonesboro, Illinois," *House Divided: Lincoln-Douglas Debates Digital Classroom*, Dickinson College, accessed January 15, 2022, https://housedivided.dickinson.edu/debates/cloud/jonesboro.html
[103] Rep. Kam Buckner (@RepKamBuckner), "Today, I join with my colleagues…"
[104] Rep. Kam Buckner (@RepKamBuckner), "Today, I join with my colleagues…"
[105] Rep. Kam Buckner (@RepKamBuckner), "Today, I join with my colleagues…"
[106] Bernstein, *Racial Innocence*, 12-13.

In a practical move, the letter focused its critique on the depiction of Douglas at the top of the column rather than step into the firestorm that would be the removal of Douglas's remains. "In reverence of the sanctity of the final resting place of the deceased," the representatives wrote, "we are not asking to manipulate the actual tomb or the remains of Douglas at all; just that the statue be removed."[107] This rhetorical move by the letter writers is interesting. By focusing almost exclusively on the statue as the representation of Douglas, not the tomb where his remains are held, the bas-reliefs that decorate the tomb, or the interpretive signage that whitewashes Douglas's past, the letter posits that the removal of the statue will solve the problems created by the tomb's existence. In asking for the statue's removal, the state legislators were in direct opposition to Pierre Nora's assertion that the value of a monument comes from its intrinsic existence.[108] In the view of Representatives Buckner, Tarver, and Robinson, if the statue of Douglas was no longer in view, it would remove the monument's value as a racist object. Its meaning as a racist overseer of Black communities in the contemporary moment would be removed.

The representatives' letter concludes with a call to delist the Tomb as a tourist destination on various websites for the State of Illinois and the City of Chicago.[109] As discussed previously in this section, the site itself is difficult to get to and not extensively visited, even with these websites and their informational material available. The call by the representatives would attempt to render the site less visible; the tomb would ostensibly fade into the background. The Tomb would theoretically lose tourists to the site, making the task of remembering Stephen Douglas at the monument more difficult.

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[107] Rep. Kam Buckner (@RepKamBuckner), "Today, I join with my colleagues…"
[108] Nora, "Between History and Memory," 22.
[109] Rep. Kam Buckner (@RepKamBuckner), "Today, I join with my colleagues…"

While these representatives called for removal of the statue, other stakeholders stated different viewpoints. The head of the Stephen Douglas Association, George Buss, argued that removing the statue would be against the intentions of the architect Leonard Volk and would "disturb… his [Douglas's] final resting place."[110] Buss called for the statue to remain in place but with additional historical context.[111] Sherry Williams, the head of the Bronzeville Historical Society whose interpretation highlighted the role of slavery in Douglas's life, agreed with this sentiment, stating that "If they are thinking of investing money in taking it down, they should invest money in putting up meaningful context, to understanding a story that has been one-sided [for] too long."[112] As of this writing in February 2023, neither has happened. The statue remains on the top of the tomb, and no meaningful signage or hired interpreters have been brought in to contextualize Douglas's final resting place.

The questions surrounding Stephen Douglas, his tomb, and what is meant to be done with historical figures captured in bronze and stone in public space are numerous. Unlike the Statue of Liberty's reckoning via a multi-million dollar museum, reckoning with the Stephen Douglas Tomb has been suggested but has failed to occur. Unlike the best-known monument in the United States, the Stephen Douglas Tomb has been mostly forgotten. Douglas has faded from public memory, and it stands to reason that the tomb and monument to his remains have received similar treatment. The performances that have occurred there are quotidian, but for those who notice, the monument's scenography performs white supremacy for members of neighboring

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[110] Neal Earley, "Legislators call for removal of Stephen Douglas statue overlooking his Chicago tomb," *Chicago Sun-Times*, July 14, 2020, https://chicago.suntimes.com/politics/2020/7/14/21324767/stephen-douglas-statue-chicago-tomb-bronzeville-racism-slavery-civil-war

[111] Earley, "Legislators call…"

[112] Steinberg, Neil. "Douglas statue flap: 'A lot of catching up to do'." Chicago Sun-Times (IL), July 16, 2020. NewsBank: Access World News – Historical and Current. https://infoweb-newsbank-com.turing.library.northwestern.edu/apps/news/document-view?p=WORLDNEWS&docref=news/17C456A5D272D2F8.

Black communities. To reckon with the legacy of Stephen Douglas is to grapple with the notion that distinguished statesmen and legislators such as Douglas can be as much implicated in the horrors of slavery as Confederate generals. The performances created by such monuments suggest that the critical work of untangling white supremacy from commemoration is a difficult process requiring substantial public pressure and buy-in to achieve traction. This struggle is exemplified in the Emancipation Memorial.

The Emancipation Memorial

Throughout its 147-year history, the Emancipation Memorial has come closer to a reckoning than many other monuments, including the other two at the center of this project. While the Statue of Liberty employs new interpretation as a means of reckoning with its past and the Stephen Douglas Tomb has prompted calls for removal, the Emancipation Memorial's reckoning process involves protest, reinterpretation, removal, and new scenography. From its inception, the monument was consistently questioned, from Frederick Douglass in 1876 (as discussed in Chapter 2) to the National Council of Negro Women in 1974 (as outlined in Chapter 3). After the dedication of the Mary McLeod Bethune Memorial in 1974, Lincoln Park and its two competing visions of Black life in commemoration became a quiet neighborhood space, mostly overshadowed by the much larger sites of commemoration on the National Mall.

There have been attempts to reconsider the Emancipation Memorial over the past two decades. In 2012, *The Washington Post* examined the history of Emancipation Day in Washington, D.C., and discussed the Emancipation Memorial at length. While the whole article is interesting, I want to highlight two facets. The first is from 85-year-old Loretta Carter Hanes, who had fought to make Emancipation Day a holiday in Washington, D.C. She told the reporter:

"it was the only monument paid for by former slaves…The statue is something that is of that time and that place, but we need to study it as part of our history."[113] Alternatively, Hari Jones, then Assistant Director of the African American Civil War Museum, noted, "I've never met anyone who said they liked it or that they were happy with it. I think it's one that people kind of wish away."[114] These quotes highlight the fundamental tension enjoined by the Emancipation Memorial. Because it was paid for by formerly enslaved people, it became a commemorative act to celebrate, but because the monument uses racist imagery, it is also a monument many would love to take down. This tension makes the performative process of reckoning with the monument difficult, as no singular tactic can fully capture its complex past.

In 2014 and 2017, media outlets such as the Black news website *The Root* wrote critiques of the Emancipation Memorial, explicitly naming the image of Lincoln and the kneeling Black man as racist and calling for either the statue's removal or ignoring its presence completely by focusing on the Bethune Memorial at the opposite end of the park.[115] *The Root*'s 2014 article, entitled "How a Statue of a Freed Slave Kneeling at Lincoln's Feet Missed the Point" from the Image of the Black in Western Art Archive, focuses on the depiction of Archer Alexander.[116] The article posits that a better symbol of emancipation is the Lincoln Memorial on the National

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[113] Joe Heim, "On Emancipation Day in D.C., two memorials tell very different stories," Washington Post, April 15, 2012, accessed April 17, 2019, https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/style/on-emancipation-day-in-dc-two-memorials-tell-very-different-stories/2012/04/15.

[114] Heim, "On Emancipation Day in D.C." Historian C.R. Gibbs, also quoted, mentioned that a part of the lore of the park was that once the Bethune Memorial went in, some African Americans began call the park Bethune Park, but that the name did not stick.

[115] "How a Statue of a Freed Slave Kneeling at Lincoln's Feet Missed the Point," *The Root*, June 17, 2014, accessed April 15, 2019, https://www.theroot.com/how-a-statue-of-a-freed-slave-kneeling-at-lincoln-s-fee-1790876027; Gordon Mantler, "Is it Time for the Kneeling Freedman Statue to Go? Remolding our Political Aesthetics," *Public Seminar*, October 17, 2017, accessed April 16, 2019, http://www.publicseminar.org/2017/10/is-it-time-for-the-kneeling-freedman-statue-to-go/.

[116] "How a Statue of a Freed Slave Kneeling at Lincoln's Feet Missed the Point," *The Root*, June 17, 2014. The historiography around Lincoln has shifted over time from "Great Man" to more nuanced approaches of his political choices – while these are not the subject of this study this shift does inform how the Emancipation Memorial has been interpreted. See Barry Schwartz, *Abraham Lincoln and the Forge of National Memory* and Merrill Peterson, *Lincoln in American Memory*.

Mall, where no Black person is depicted but the site has been used to protest for Black freedom.[117] In this critique, the issue of the representation of emancipation in the Emancipation Memorial is consumed by the racist image of a "Christ-like figure of Lincoln" standing over the oft-used image of a kneeling Black man calling for freedom.[118] This debate about the statue, which has been occurring since it was first unveiled in 1876, demonstrates how a minority audience resists the dominant social script. *The Root*'s arguments are not dissimilar to the ones made by Frederick Douglass.

What changed in the intervening 145 years was how the monument acted in public space. New meanings have been added that are not easily removed. If D.C. tourists make their way to Lincoln Park today (which would need to be an explicit choice given the layout of the city), they will see a green space with trees, playgrounds, and benches. In its center are two statues facing each other with a large green space between (Figure 4.14).

[117] "How a Statue of a Freed Slave Kneeling at Lincoln's Feet Missed the Point," *The Root*, June 17, 2014, accessed April 15, 2019, https://www.theroot.com/how-a-statue-of-a-freed-slave-kneeling-at-lincoln-s-fee-1790876027. See also Nina Silber, *This War Ain't Over: Fighting the Civil War in New Deal America* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2018).

[118] "How a Statue of a Freed Slave Kneeling at Lincoln's Feet Missed the Point," *The Root*. For more on imagery of slavery and emancipation, see Marcus Wood, *Blind Memory* and *The Horrible Gift of Freedom.*

(Figure 4.14: The Emancipation Memorial [foreground] with the Mary McLeod Bethune Memorial [background], August 5, 2021, photo by author)

As one enters Lincoln Park from the eastern Capitol Hill side of the park, the Emancipation Memorial appears, elevated by risers and surrounded by shrubbery. Across from it is the Mary McLeod Bethune Memorial, raised on its somewhat lower pedestal base. The scenography gives the sense of a standoff between the two statues, but the Emancipation Memorial's height prompts performances that seem to make Lincoln look down on the visitor. The Bethune Memorial's raised base allows for children to sit underneath it and rest, creating a space for visitors to engage with it on their level, fitting for a statue of a famous educator.

There are neither informational waysides nor National Park Service rangers to provide information, despite both monuments being under NPS jurisdiction.[119] Visitors are left to make their own assumptions about the monuments, and on my visits there, most people avoided the statues altogether, making use of the multiple benches that surround the monuments and the grassy space of Lincoln Park itself. Unlike its commemorative counterparts at the Statue of Liberty (a tourist destination) and the Stephen Douglas Tomb (mostly empty), the act of commemoration at the Emancipation Memorial comes from the indelible image of Lincoln standing over a kneeling Black man. In its presence, it does not enact on visitors a social script of care or emancipation, but rather a sense that work of emancipation still needs to be done.[120]

As monuments to Christopher Columbus and Confederate generals came down in June 2020 during the global protests for Black lives, some eyes turned to Lincoln Park. The statue of Lincoln was no longer simply a recognition of Lincoln by the newly emancipated Black citizens of the United States but a performance of white supremacy, clearly rendered in public space. The tensions that had been a part of the monument's social script were explicitly rendered by the volatile political climate. On June 22, 2020, barricades were put up by U.S. Park Police around the Emancipation Memorial in Lincoln Park to "protect" it from protestors who might try and take it down.[121]Among those who wanted it to stay in its place was a re-enactor affiliated with the African American Civil War Museum who saw strength in the story of Charlotte Scott, the freedwoman who is forever connected to the statue by being its first donor.[122] The story of Scott

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[119] Waysides are planned to be placed in the park at some point in 2023, according to an NPS archivist at the National Archives for Black Women's History.
[120] Bernstein, *Racial Innocence* and Son, *Embodied Reckonings*.
[121] Courtney Pomeroy and Sam Ford, "Some want D.C.'s Lincoln statue gone. Others point out: Freed Black Americans paid for it.," *WJLA*, June 22, 2020, https://wjla.com/news/local/dc-lincoln-park-emancipation-memorial-freed-black-americans-paid.
[122] Courtney Pomeroy and Sam Ford, "Some want D.C.'s Lincoln statue gone. Others point out: Freed Black Americans paid for it."

had long been used as a means of demonstrating the importance of the monument, including being literally inscribed on a plaque on the monument's pedestal. In 2020 its deployment underlined the complicated question of what it would mean to take the monument down.

On June 24th, protests began at the statue, with both those wanting to take it down and those who wanted it to stand coming to Lincoln Park.[123] On June 25th, no less than three opinion pieces appeared on *The Washington Post'*s website discussing what could be done with the Emancipation Memorial, from recontextualization to removal to letting it be as it is.[124] The monument, which had always tangled with performances of protest and contextualization, was receiving national attention, and the act of reckoning with it was complex.

The next day, three separate protests happened in Lincoln Park, one to keep the monument, one to get rid of it, and one to provide historical context.[125] The Emancipation Memorial, inspired by a Black woman, paid for by mostly Black men, and designed by white men, underwent the commemorative process of reckoning. The chain of surrogation, started by the casting of Lincoln in bronze and stone, continuing through the rhetorical performances by Douglass and the memorial to Bethune, shifted yet again as the monument's origins and meaning were considered.[126] The monument could no longer fully stand as effigy for Lincoln as Great

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[123] Elizabeth O'Gorek, "Activists Vow Lincoln Park Statue Will Come Down," *HillRag*, June 24, 2020, accessed June 25, 2020, https://www.hillrag.com/2020/06/24/activists-vow-to-tear-down-lincoln-park-statue-thursday/. Other monuments, such as the Andrew Jackson Statue and Albert Pike Statue, were also targeted.

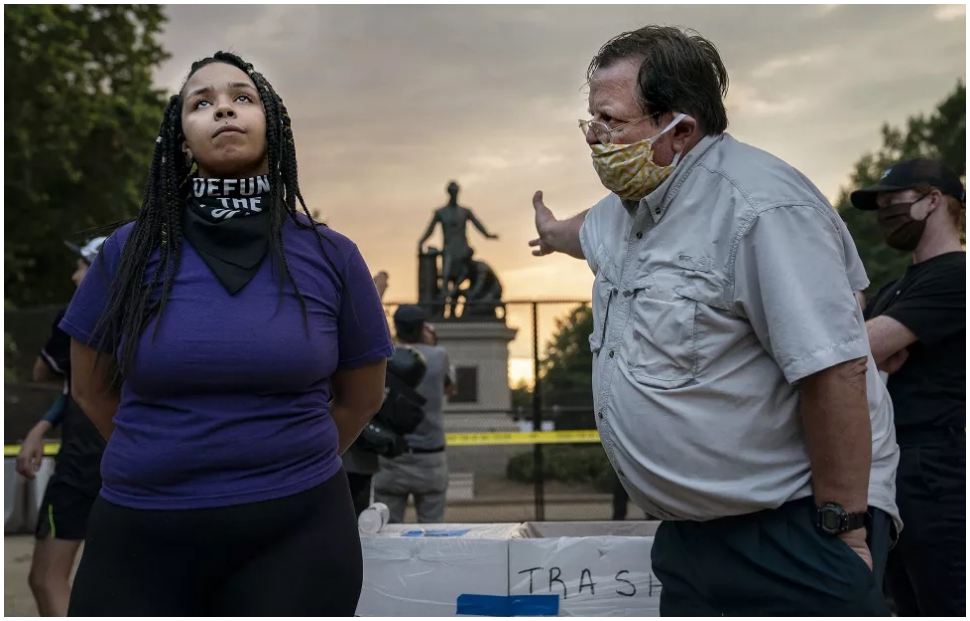
[124] David W. Blight, "Yes, the Freedmen's Memorial uses racist imagery. But don't tear it down," *The Washington Post*, June 25, 2020, https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2020/06/25/yes-freedmens-memorial-uses-racist-imagery-dont-tear-it-down/; Rebekah Bryer, "Yes, D.C.'s Emancipation Memorial advances White supremacy," *The Washington Post,* June 25, 2020, https://www.washingtonpost.com/outlook/2020/06/25/yes-dcs-emancipation-memorial-advances-White-supremacy/; Sean Kennedy, "Lincoln Park's memorial to the Great Emancipator should stand," *The Washington Post*, June 25, 2020, https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2020/06/25/lincoln-parks-memorial-great-emancipator-should-stand/.

[125] Elizabeth O'Gorek, "Three Events Friday at Lincoln Park Monument: Tough Discussions About History, Activism and Politics Converge on Lincoln Park," *HillRag*, June 25, 2020, https://www.hillrag.com/2020/06/25/three-events-friday-at-lincoln-park-monument/. My thanks to Dr. David McKenzie of Ford's Theatre who tipped me off to this event.

[126] Roach, *Cities of the Dead*, 105.

Emancipator, but was also unable to be embraced as a model for Black American emancipation and freedom because of its history and imagery.

An image from the protests around the Emancipation Memorial demonstrates the tension of reckoning with a monument that has become a complicated symbol and site (Figure 4.15). This photo, taken by Evelyn Hockstein on June 25, 2020 and circulated on Instagram, shows two protestors in front of the barricaded Emancipation Memorial. On the left, a young Black woman named Anais from Hockstein's caption, wearing a "Defund the Police" bandana looks resolute while an older white man gestures towards the monument, clearly and emphatically attempting to debate her.[127]



(Figure 4.15: "Emancipation Memorial Debate" by Evelyn Hockstein, June 25, 2020)

While we as viewers cannot guess what these two protestors are arguing about from the image alone, it is clear from gestures and the background that they disagree over the

[127] Evelyn Hockstein (@evelynpix), "Tonight, Anais, 26, from DC, who wants the statue depicting President Lincoln with an outstretched arm over a freed slave crouching at his feet removed from Lincoln Park, in an argument with a man who wants the statue to remain," digital image, June 25, 2020, accessed December 21, 2021. https://www.instagram.com/p/CB4WS_xFr_s/

Emancipation Memorial.[128] It is also evident that the woman is not interested in the conversation. The silhouetted monument reflects the two people; while the white man believes his opinion merits consideration, gesturing not unlike the statue of Lincoln behind him, the woman will not be seen as subservient, her eyes uplifted like the kneeling Black man in bronze behind her though standing upright. Thus, her upright gestures can be read as counter to the kneeling figure behind her, enacting the promise of fully fledged freedom and citizenship for Black lives by ignoring the discontented man next to her.[129]

The barricades around the Emancipation Memorial stayed up throughout the summer of 2020, reminding any visitors that this monument had risk attached to it. They were removed by the fall of that year.[130] While the major protests and discourse surrounding the monument had died down, the monument's fate is still being discussed. Representative Eleanor Holmes Norton of Washington, D.C., put forward a resolution to remove the Emancipation Memorial from Lincoln Park in February 2021, renewing her previous resolution from the summer of 2020 in the new congressional session.[131] In her press release, Rep. Holmes Norton noted that Frederick Douglass had reservations about the statue when it was dedicated and that "the statue fails to note how enslaved African Americans pressed for their own emancipation."[132] Holmes Norton's press release reckons with the inherent racism in the statue, directly challenging James Yeatman of the Western Sanitary Commission's speech during the monument's dedication in 1876, who

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[128] For more on rhetoric, memorials, and photography, see Robert Hariman and John Louis Lucaites, *The Public Image: Photography and Civic Spectatorship* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2016), 80-81.
[129] Connerton, *How Societies Remember*, 45.
[130] Confirmed by personal correspondence, Maine Congressperson Chellie Pingree's office.
[131] "Norton Kicks Off Black History Month Bill Series, Introduces Bill Removing Emancipation Statue from Lincoln Park," *Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton*, February 18, 2021, https://norton.house.gov/media-center/press-releases/norton-kicks-off-black-history-month-bill-series-introduces-bill.
[132] "Norton Kicks Off Black History Month Bill Series, Introduces Bill Removing Emancipation Statue from Lincoln Park," *Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton*, February 18, 2021, https://norton.house.gov/media-center/press-releases/norton-kicks-off-black-history-month-bill-series-introduces-bill.

thought that the statue did, in fact, demonstrate how the enslaved Black Americans seized their own freedom.[133]

As of today, the Emancipation Memorial still stands, with no waysides for historical intervention to encourage viewers into a reckoning with the site. However, this could change in the near future. Representative Holmes Norton's 2021 resolution was unsuccessful, but in February 2023 she resubmitted the act to remove the Emancipation Memorial. In her address to the Congress on resubmitting this bill, she argued: "It is time for Congress to place the original statue in a museum."[134] The call to remove the monument from its location and move it to a museum would shift the meanings of both the Emancipation Memorial and the Mary McLeod Bethune Memorial, changing the social dramaturgy of Lincoln Park. Doing so may provide the needed additional context to the Emancipation Memorial, but it would also remove the possibilities for reckoning with the monument in its original scenography.

As the case of the Emancipation Memorial demonstrates, studying commemoration as a recurrent performative practice allows those who build monuments and those who visit them to ascribe meaning onto the monument through symbolic action like speeches, reenactments, and protests. The Emancipation Memorial has always been a site of contention that prompted performances that ran counter to the exact social script supplied by the monument. In the present moment, the complications of the Emancipation Memorial demonstrate how these performances from the past have bearing on what is to be done with the commemoration now that stakeholders do not want it in public space, creating protests and petitions for and against removal. As shown

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[133] *Inaugural Ceremonies of the Freedmen's Memorial Monument to Abraham Lincoln, Washington City, April 14, 1876*, (St. Louis: Levison & Blythe, 1876), 7. Transcription from the Smithsonian Institution.
[134] "Norton Kicks Off Black History Month By Introducing Bill To Remove Emancipation Statue From Lincoln Park," *Representative Eleanor Holmes Norton*, February 1, 2023, https://norton.house.gov/media/press-releases/norton-kicks-black-history-month-introducing-bill-remove-emancipation-statue.

by each monument in this study, the act of commemoration is a seemingly simple task that becomes increasingly layered as time goes on.

Understanding commemoration as a performance means attending to the various audiences that might gaze upon a monument, from newly realized Black citizens to white men invested in protecting the work of past generations. Even a monument that is seemingly innocuous provides layered meanings: its dominant social script can yield positive performances from a majority audience, while minority viewers can reject that script and suggest alternative views. What the recurrent performative process of the Emancipation Memorial offers is the opportunity to see commemoration as a complicated task. The monument that still stands in Washington continues to "perform…an act which is to go into history," but this performance has shifted dramatically from the vision Douglass saw 147 years ago, even as the nation grapples with the same core issues that Douglass faced.[135]

Conclusion

There has been one removal of a statue connected to this dissertation project, and it came from the most unlikely of places. A copy of the Emancipation Memorial was placed in Park Square next to Boston Common in Boston in 1879. The statue was donated to the city by Moses Kimball, the owner of the Boston Museum Theatre, and resulted from a personal connection between Kimball and the sculptor, Thomas Ball.[136] As detailed in Chapter 2, many prominent Black Bostonians had worked to fundraise for the Emancipation Memorial in Washington, D.C.,

[135] Frederick Douglass, The Freedmen's Monument to Abraham Lincoln: An Address Delivered in Washington, D.C., on 14 April 1876," in *The Frederick Douglass Papers, Series One: Speeches, Debates, and Interviews,* vol. 4, *1867–80*, ed. John W. Blassingame and John R. McKivigan (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1991), 428.
[136] *Bronze group commemorating emancipation: A gift to the city of Boston from Hon. Moses Kimball. Dedicated December 6, 1879* (Boston: Printed by order of the City Council, 1879), in the collections of the American Antiquarian Society. Ball had worked for Kimball before leaving for Rome to study sculpture.

but they were not involved in the process to place a copy in their city.[137] While in 1879 the statue was in front of a streetcar station, infrastructure shifts and removal of aboveground streetcar lines in downtown Boston over the twentieth century meant that by 2020, the statue was almost invisible, hidden from the major thoroughfare of Boylston Street by the Park Plaza Hotel (Figure 4.16).[138]

(Figure 4.16: The Boston copy of the Emancipation Memorial pre-removal, photograph by Jesse Costa, in Andrea Shea, "Controversial Emancipation Statue Is Removed From Its Pedestal In Boston," WBUR, December 29, 2020, https://www.wbur.org/artery/2020/12/29/lincoln-emancipation-statue-boston-removed.)

However, given the rise in attention to public commemoration during the protests for Black life during the summer of 2020, the Boston copy of the statue came under scrutiny. On June 16, 2020, Boston artist Tory Bullock made a video calling attention to what the image of Lincoln standing over a kneeling Black man meant in public space and started a petition for the

[137] "Freedmen's Memorial Monument to Abraham Lincoln Association," in the collections of the American Antiquarian Society. My research indicates that no Black Bostonians were included in the planning, execution, or dedication of the Emancipation Memorial in Boston. For other discussions of Black memorialization in Boston, see Stephen H. Browne, "Remembering Crispus Attucks: Race, Rhetoric, and the Politics of Commemoration.," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 85.2 (1999): 169–87.

[138] Nancy Seasholes and Charles Bahne, "Public Transportation: 1919-1969," *The Atlas of Boston History*, edited by Nancy Seasholes (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2019) 129. I will also note that in a bit of irony, I walked by this statue many times when I lived in Boston from 2015-2017 and never noticed it.

statue's removal.[139] In his video, Bullock notes that the statue's depiction of a kneeling Black man (long used in the call for the abolition of slavery) caused him pain and distress, leading to the question: "If he's free why is he still on his knees?"[140] The symbolic gesture of abolition that had proved to be powerful amongst white abolitionists in the nineteenth century had a different meaning for Black communities in the twenty-first century, and the relationship between audience and commemorative object had taken on new meanings over the intervening 141 years.[141]

The call to remove the statue picked up steam, with then Boston mayor Marty Walsh agreeing it should be removed, along with a decapitated statue of Christopher Columbus in Boston's North End.[142] By the end of December 2020, Boston removed their copy of the Emancipation Memorial with approval of the Boston Arts Commission.[143] Workers wrapped the statue, lifted it off of its pedestal, and moved it into storage until the city decides, with public input, its ultimate fate. Almost three years later, the city has yet to make any decisions about what to do with the Emancipation Memorial. An empty pedestal sits near one of the busiest streets in Boston (Figure 4.17), proclaiming it as a gift to the city from a long dead sideshow promoter. What will happen next remains to be seen.

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[139] Kevin Levin, "Black Bostonians Fought For Freedom From Slavery. Where Are The Statues That Tell Their Stories?," WBUR, June 16, 2020, https://www.wbur.org/cognoscenti/2020/06/16/abraham-lincoln-statue-emancipation-memorial-kevin-m-levin.
[140] "Boston Considering Removing Statue of Lincoln Standing Over Freed Black Man," WBUR, June 13, 2020, https://www.wbur.org/news/2020/06/13/boston-lincoln-statue-remove.
[141] Levin, "Black Bostonians Fought For Freedom From Slavery. Where Are The Statues That Tell Their Stories?" See also Marcus Wood, *Blind Memory* and Jessica Moody, *The Persistence of Memory: Remembering Slavery in Liverpool, "Slaving Capital of the World"* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2020).
[142] Levin, "Black Bostonians Fought For Freedom From Slavery. Where Are The Statues That Tell Their Stories?"
[143] Andrea Shea, "Controversial Emancipation Statue Is Removed From Its Pedestal In Boston," WBUR, December 29, 2020, https://www.wbur.org/artery/2020/12/29/lincoln-emancipation-statue-boston-removed.

(Figure 4.17: Empty pedestal of the Boston copy of the Emancipation Memorial, October 7, 2021, photograph by author)

The Boston monument's final performative moments in its original location demonstrates the difficulty of the reckoning process. On December 29, 2020, someone observed watching the monument's removal stated that they thought the monument should be placed in a museum where "it can be put in the proper context as something that was ostensibly created to honor one man [Lincoln] who actually ends up doing the exact opposite for the other [Alexander, the kneeling Black man]."[144] This change of location certainly could change the context, providing new interpretation about the monument, but it seems likely that monument itself would create the

[144] Shea, "Controversial Emancipation Statue Is Removed From Its Pedestal In Boston."

same social scripts. The image of "Lincoln and the slave" would still be able to perform the same distress and would still provide opportunities for performances of white supremacy.

The question of reckoning with monuments such as the Statue of Liberty, the Stephen Douglas Tomb, and the Emancipation Memorial is inexorably linked to who engages with a monument, and who gets to decide what is important to commemorate in public space.[145] Each of the monuments in this project was created from distinct motivations, and the meaning of each has changed over time because of how people have interacted with it. What was once a stately monument to house the remains of one of the most famous United States senators became a flashpoint for a discourse that recognizes the policies that that senator fought for in life. Revisionist interpretation at the most famous monument in the United States fights against but cannot overcome the American exceptionalism that has saturated its public image. A monument to Abraham Lincoln paid for by the formerly enslaved cannot escape its racist imagery: not in 1876 nor in 2023.

To reckon with commemoration is to question how choices made in the past can be critically considered in the contemporary context. The reckoning phase of the performative process of commemoration relies upon individuals, groups, and societies to embrace monuments with multiple meanings, recognizing that, like any cultural product, monuments are dependent upon those who erected them and those who allowed them to stand. Performance allows us to consider that time, location, and audience are variable. Monuments by their nature are static, but the conditions around them are not, meaning that they can be moved, changed, and removed if they are no longer useful.

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[145] Connerton, *How Societies Remember,* 71.

This chapter began with Patricia Okoumou climbing the Statue of Liberty on Independence Day, 2018, to protest the treatment of children at the southern border of the United States. Okoumou's act at once shows why performance is helpful to understanding the issue of public commemoration and the paradox of commemoration in the United States. Okoumou noted that "It's the Statue of Liberty, it's the Fourth of July and there are children in cages, we are doing a protest but I want to send an even stronger message and this is the perfect day for it."[146] Okoumou took her stand against horrific U.S. policies on a day known for celebrating American exceptionalism. Her act was a rhetorical reckoning of the legacies of the United States against the backdrop of one of the most American of icons. The impulses behind Okoumou's act were not so different from the ones that removed Boston's Emancipation Memorial: the use of a monument from the past to grapple with the present. To view commemoration as a performative act is to consider each monument as one view of the past. To reckon with it is to consider why the monument is here now and ask what it reveals about our social values.

[146] Patricia Okoumou, interviewed by Joanna Walters, "'Are they going to shoot me?': Statue of Liberty climber on her anti-Trump protest," *The Guardian*, July 7, 2018, accessed June 15, 2021, https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2018/jul/07/statue-of-liberty-protester-patricia-okoumou-interview.

Conclusion: The Power of a Monument

"What is a monument but a standing memory? An artifact to make tangible the truth of the past." - Caroline Randall Williams

In the June 25, 2020, *New York Times* opinion piece where the above epigraph appears, poet Caroline Randall Williams argued that her body, the product of generations of slave masters raping enslaved women, is its own Confederate monument. She then went a step further and contended that all man-made monuments to the Confederacy, those of stone or metal, should be torn down given that they "honor the oppressors at the expense of the oppressed."[1] For Williams, these monuments to the Confederacy have nothing to do with freedom or liberty and everything to do with the subjugation of Black people in the United States.

Williams was writing amidst the national reckoning with commemoration and racial injustice taking place during the summer of 2020. On May 25, 2020, four Minneapolis police officers murdered George Floyd, sparking widespread protests against police brutality. An aspect of the protests that became its own major news story was the demand for removal of particular monuments from public spaces. This movement began in earnest three years earlier in Charlottesville, Virginia, in the wake of a white supremacist march around the city's Confederate monuments.[2] By the end of June 2020, at least forty monuments had come down.[3] Some were brought down by crowds of protestors, while others were removed by local officials before protestors could knock them down by force. Memorials to Christopher Columbus and to

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[1] Caroline Randall Williams, "You Want a Confederate Monument? My Body is a Confederate Monument," *New York Times*, June 25, 2020, accessed July 27, 2020, https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/26/opinion/confederate-monuments-racism.html.

[2] "A Guide to the Charlottesville Aftermath," *The New York Times*, August 13, 2017, accessed October 20, 2020, https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/13/us/charlottesville-virginia-overview.html.

[3] The actual number, as of this writing (February 13, 2023) is almost to 120 commemorative markers and monuments. Historian Kevin Levin has been keeping track of the 2020 numbers at http://cwmemory.com/recent-confederate-monument-removals/; the news site FiveThirtyEight has a separate tracker that traces the longer history of dedications and removals of Confederate statues: https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/confederate-statues/

Confederate generals and soldiers were the most common targets. The commemorative objects brought down shared a commonality: they evoked a conception of the American past which centered "great men" such as Columbus and the leaders of the Confederacy with the aim of promoting white supremacy. These monuments focused on "heroes" of American individualism and exceptionalism who had elevated their status through the subjugation of Black and Indigenous peoples throughout the history of the United States.

Much like Williams's assertion of her body being an actor in the commemorative process, the tearing down of these monuments were performances of American public memory formation in direct opposition to the original intentions behind the commemorative object. While focused on her lived experience as a Black woman in the United States, Williams's argument allows for broader interpretation of what monuments are and what they do in public space for different audiences over time. Monuments attempt to make tangible truths, rendering for the spectator what institutions and people believe are worthy of commemoration.[4]

By using the major type of commemorations that I actively avoided in this project, Confederate monuments, Williams' piece demonstrates the stakes of this dissertation project.[5] By spotlighting the raising and reification of Confederate monuments and then using her own body as a means of reckoning, Williams demonstrates the recurrent performative process of commemoration. Monuments are built, they are changed, and then they are challenged over what they mean in public memory. In the case of Williams and the Confederate monuments she

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[4] Kirk Savage, *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves: Race, War, and Monument in Nineteenth-Century America* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2018 edition) xiii and John E. Bodnar, *Remaking America: Public Memory, Commemoration, and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1991), 5.

[5] I also avoided military facilities and national parks, leaving such studies to scholars such as Thomas J. Brown, *Civil War Monuments and the Militarization of America* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2019), J. Christian. Spielvogel, *Interpreting Sacred Ground: The Rhetoric of National Civil War Parks and Battlefields* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2013), and Caroline E. Janney, *Remembering the Civil War: Reunion and the Limits of Reconciliation* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2013),

embodies and reckons with, the recurrent performative process of commemoration can create space in which past pain and trauma can be acknowledged, and reconciliation can possibly begin.

This dissertation looked very different when it was first conceived. When I entered Northwestern in 2017, the discourse around public commemoration was almost exclusively around Confederate monuments. In 2015, nine Black churchgoers in Charleston, South Carolina, were murdered by a white supremacist, and in August 2017, a far-right march led to the death of anti-fascist protestor Heather Heyer in Charlottesville, Virginia.[6] The aftermath brought down monuments to the Confederacy in Baltimore and New Orleans, leaving empty pedestals behind and prompting discussion of what to do with these objects of white supremacy.[7] As I was conceptualizing my research questions and beginning my dissertation project, I became interested in monuments built in what was considered the North during and after the Civil War. I wanted to study what the creation of those performative monuments might elucidate about American identity in the aftermath of the Civil War.

However, as I began my research in 2020, the global discourse surrounding monuments and how people remember changed dramatically. Monuments to Christopher Columbus and Thomas Jefferson were pulled down by protestors and removed by city governments, and as discussed in Chapter 4, the continued existence of two of the monuments at the center of this study (the Stephen Douglas Tomb and the Emancipation Memorial) was publicly debated. In its

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[6] Debbie Elliott, "5 Years After Charleston Church Massacre, What Have We Learned?," *NPR*, June 17, 2020, accessed November 30, 2022, https://www.npr.org/2020/06/17/878828088/5-years-after-charleston-church-massacre-what-have-we-learned; Joe Heim, "Recounting a day of rage, hate, violence and death," *Washington Post*, August 14, 2017, accessed November 30, 2022, https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2017/local/charlottesville-timeline/.

[7] Daniel Victor, "New Orleans City Council Votes to Remove Confederate Monuments," *New York Times*, December 17, 2015, accessed November 30, 2022, https://www.nytimes.com/2015/12/18/us/new-orleans-city-counil-confederate-monuments-vote.html; Bill Chappell, "Baltimore Removes Confederate Statues One Day After Voting On Issue," *NPR,* August 16, 2017, accessed November 30, 2022, https://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2017/08/16/543851420/baltimore-removes-confederate-statues-one-day-after-voting-on-issue.

early stages, my scholarship was drawn to contend with contemporary events. What followed led to the theoretical reimagining of public commemoration as a recurrent performative process, which I have traced over the past three chapters.

Understanding commemoration as a recurrent performative process allows us to recognize that despite their material consistency, monuments' meanings shift across time. I have named different phases of the commemorative process to explain the phenomena of social, dramaturgical, and scenographic changes as they occur. As I have outlined, monuments are raised (Chapter 2), they are reified and revised (Chapter 3), and they are reckoned with (Chapter 4). The social scripts originally crafted by interactions between individuals and a monument at the time of its dedication inevitably change as time passes and the monument is reconsidered. Recognizing commemoration as a process that has distinct phases allows us to consider how public memory shifts over time as how people engage with the past changes.

The monuments at the center of the study range in size, location, and subject. They are linked by when they were built and their given circumstances. In the case of the Statue of Liberty, the Stephen Douglas Tomb, and the Emancipation Memorial, the ways each monument represented the ideals of America – freedom, emancipation, and liberty through legal documentation – shifted as time progressed and as new communities engaged with them differently. Each of these monuments has been used to celebrate white supremacy, and each has been the site of challenges to white supremacy by minoritarian groups. As literary historian Saidiya Hartman wrote about the interpretation at the Elmina Prison in Ghana and its focus on Black American visitors: "As circumstances changed, so too did the ways we imagined

ourselves."[8] In each of these monuments, what they could offer for American visitors changed with the circumstances, creating new social scripts as time passed.

In studying these monuments, I was interested in how the meaning of each changed over time and how the monuments' social scripts prompted different performances of American public memory creation through the ideals of liberty and freedom. In the case of the Emancipation Memorial, the racist dimensions of the monument to Abraham Lincoln were only amplified over time by people engaging with the statue, leading to questions in public discourse as to whether the monument reflected the ideal of emancipation. The Stephen Douglas Tomb sat ignored for much of its existence, creating performances of neglect which reflected how Stephen Douglas was relegated in public memory while also literally casting a shadow over the Black communities of Douglas and Bronzeville in Chicago. The Statue of Liberty transformed as a commemoration that symbolized American ideals such as freedom and opportunity, even as those concepts held different meanings for different groups of people.

This project has examined commemoration as a subject worthy of study through the theory and methods of theatre and performance. Through performance, one can examine both intentions and reception of monuments, providing critical understandings as to how monuments are built and why they still stand. Performance can be a critical tool for public historians considering the presence of monuments in public space, as the study of performance recognizes the possibilities of ephemerality in historical memory. Understanding that sites of public commemoration are sites of performance offers scholars the opportunity to consider how public memory is a constructed process that changes over time and across contexts.

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[8] Saidiya V. Hartman, *Lose Your Mother: A Journey Along the Atlantic Slave Route*. (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007), 234.

My study examines only three monuments, but future scholarship could and ought to consider the many other sites of public commemoration in the United States and around the world. Though this dissertation was concerned with American monuments and American public memory, this discourse is by no means exclusive to the United States. A very recent example from November 2022 is the removal of a 1965 statue to a German colonizer in the capital city of Windhoek, Namibia, after years of protest.[9] Seeing commemoration as a recurrent performative process allows us to see these acts in their full context of time, space, and audience.

Viewing monuments as sites of performance also affords us space to consider what meanings monuments hold for visitors and the power symbols can have, even when visitors encounter simulacra of monuments.[10] Take, for example, the Times Square restaurant Jimmy Buffett's Margaritaville in New York City, which features a massive reproduction of the Statue of Liberty in front of which tourists can pose for souvenir photos (Figure 5.1). While not visible due to the size of the group, the tablet in the recreated Statue's hand says, "No Passport Required." Instead of a torch, the figure holds a giant margarita glass that projects an hourly show, set to Jimmy Buffett music. Despite clearly not being the actual Statue, most visitors to the restaurant take photos in front of the surrogate monument, prompting similar actions as the monument on Liberty Island. The rhetorical power and gesture to the world-famous monument is enough to enact particular actions from those who interact with it.

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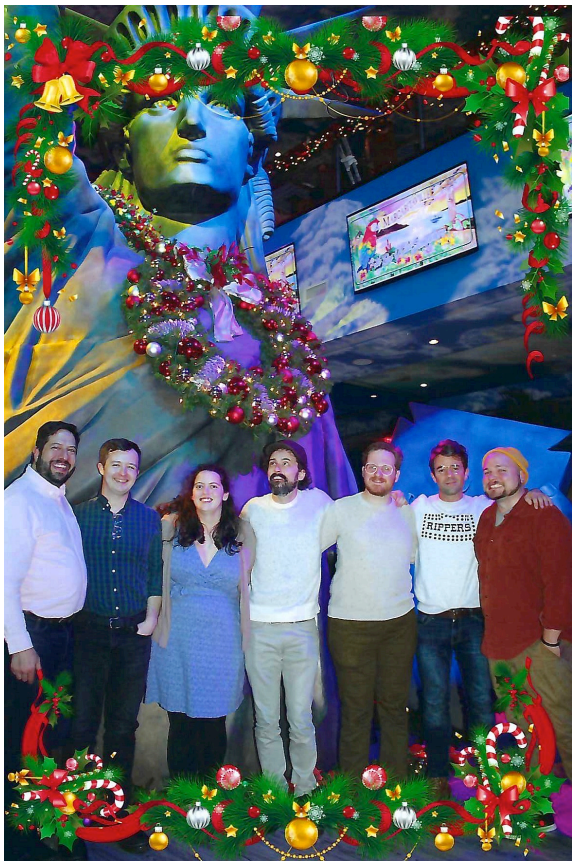
[9] "Removal of German colonial-era statue met with cheers in Namibia," *Reuters*, November 24, 2022, accessed November 30, 2022, https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/removal-german-colonial-era-statue-met-with-cheers-namibia-2022-11-23/.

[10] Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation. The Body, in Theory* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994).



(Figure 5.1: Author [third from left) and friends in front of the large recreation of the Statue of Liberty at Margaritaville Times Square, December 9, 2022, photo courtesy of author)

Monuments and other sites of public commemoration need people to interact with them in order to make meaning. To be remembered in public space is to continue to have relevance in some way to the contemporary moment. One of the central claims of this dissertation is that monuments prompt interaction and performance helps us see how this encounter occurs. Sometimes, as in the case of the Statue of Liberty or the Lincoln Memorial, the monument itself has taken on an iconic meaning that can transcend the physical monument itself. Often, monuments are interacted with in the United States through the tradition of the school field trip, where groups of children, teachers, and chaperones visit monuments in spaces such as the National Mall or Plymouth Rock year after year.

At times, however, engagement with a monument in the United States can come from the presence of who it commemorates in media and popular culture, such as the rise in visits to

Alexander Hamilton's grave in Lower Manhattan after the success of the musical *Hamilton*.[11] An example of this that, in some ways, prompted this entire study is in Jamestown, Virginia, the first established English settlement in North America. In the historic town there is a 1922 bronze statue of Pocahontas, the famous Powhatan woman. The monument was conceived to mark the 300th anniversary of the Jamestown settlement in 1907, but its erection was delayed due to lack of funding.[12] Like many other statues of Indigenous people produced in this period, the monument perpetuated the idea that Indigenous people are no longer present in the United States, but from a mythic past which erases the horrors of colonization in the Americas.[13]

A longstanding tale in the American storytelling canon, the myth of Pocahontas as a tragic figure in American history had begun shortly after her death in 1624. The figure of Pocahontas and her presence in American public memory led to adaptations of her story in stage plays during the nineteenth century.[14] Her mythology continued to endure in the United States through the twentieth century, leading to both this statue in Jamestown and a Disney animated film in 1995.[15] This movie ultimately led a family from Maine to bring a three-year-old obsessed with this historical figure turned American myth to this monument (Figure 5.2).

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[11] Melissa Block, "'Hamilton' Fans Pilgrimage To Founding Father's Once-Forgotten Grave," *NPR*, June 3, 2016, accessed June 5, 2023, https://www.npr.org/2016/06/03/480642073/hamilton-fans-pilgrimage-to-founding-fathers-once-forgotten-grave.
[12] "Pocahontas Statue," *Historic Jamestowne*, accessed December 1, 2022, https://historicjamestowne.org/visit/plan-your-visit/monuments-pocahontas/.
[13] Philip Joseph Deloria, *Playing Indian* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1998).
[14] Jeffrey H. Richards, *Drama, Theatre, and Identity in the American New Republic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).
[15] Robert S. Tilton, *Pocahontas: The Evolution of an American Narrative* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

(Figure 5.2: The author at the age of three, posing in front of the Pocahontas statue in Jamestown, Virginia, ca. 1995, photo courtesy of author)

In Figure 5.2, I am sporting a bold bowl-cut and wearing a shirt that features the Disney cartoon version of Pocahontas. My hands and head are like the statue behind me. What is unknown from the photo is who prompted me into this pose; it may have been my own decision, or it is very possible that my family told me to stand like this for a photograph. What is clear, however, is that they (and I) were prompted by the monument to pose like this, to place my body like the statue. In the image it is also clear that people taller than a three-year-old would grab the hands of Pocahontas, physically interacting with the monument, as the statue's hands are burnished from being touched. The monument provided a social script and cultural contexts, which meant that a three-year-old child wearing a shirt emblazoned with a cartoon version of the

same figure wanted to pose in front of it. At the time I did not know that this monument did not truly represent the real woman who suffered at the hands of colonization and disease—I only knew that I was as close as I could get to the historical figure that fascinated me from a Disney film, a mythical figure I attached to because of the way Pocahontas's story had been embedded in American public memory. The monument prompted a three-year-old to engage with the past, even though the individual the monument represented had taken on new meanings in the seventy-three years since the monument's dedication.

I end with this image of myself at age three to highlight what understanding a monument as a site of performance can offer in understanding the use of monuments and the incredible power that they can hold in public memory. What monuments are in public space and what actions they prompt can forge understandings of the past that are generational and can take hold from an early age, as evidenced by this photograph. Monuments abound in the United States. We should consider what it means to have them in public spaces, and what their presence says about our values. In the recurrent performative process of commemoration, monuments are raised, then reified and revised to fit the commemorative needs of society and reckoned with as they age. This process is not perfect, but it can allow for stakeholders to ask what purpose monuments serve and how they construct public memory. If we consider the power of monuments and other sites of public commemoration as places where American public memory is shaped, then we are given the opportunity to challenge how monuments such as those at the center of this study reflect the past and future of the United States.

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