

War Memorials/Veteran Memorials

Annotated Bibliography for 2016 NEH Summer Institute on Veterans in Society

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Rationale:

There do not seem to be any sources about veteran memorials, excepting those that have “veteran” in their name, such as the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. Moreover, I could not find any sources discussing the distinction between a various types of war memorials—veteran memorials, battle memorials, military branch memorials, or “Soldier” memorials. Finally, although I didn’t have much time to search for scholarly articles about War on Terror memorials, my initial searches did not lead to any discussion of formal memorials, only memorial art installations or public memorial performance. Thus, what follows emphasizes studies of memory, memorials and war memorials more broadly. However, of great interest to anyone in Veterans Studies is the William Pencak *Encyclopedia of the Veteran in America* (2009). Concerning my interest in the immediacy of twenty-first century memorialization, the Michael Panhorst article is a wonderful find in that he makes note of at least four Civil War memorials dedicated before the end of the war.

There is also a brief list, at the end of the document, of additional “texts” published and produced since 1990 that feature Vietnam veterans.

Bodnar, John E. *Remaking America: Public memory, commemoration, and patriotism in the twentieth century*. Princeton University Press, 1992.

Bodnar frames his study with a discussion of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial as a case-study of the dynamic tensions between official national agendas and local, or vernacular, attitudes as it surfaces in a range of public ceremonies, commemorations and memorials. He claims communities perceive and essentially re-create events through commemoration as a means of responding to and shaping attitudes toward present political issues. For example, official control of commemoration intensifies in times of war. He further argues that the National Park Service—dedicated to the control of national landmarks and commemorative events—serves as the ultimate example of official control of commemoration and public memory. However, he believes the Vietnam Veterans Memorial serves as an indicator of resurrection of the vernacular over the official, of individual mourning and loss over patriotic pride.

Hagopian, Patrick. *The Vietnam War in American memory: Veterans, memorials, and the politics of healing*. Univ of Massachusetts Press, 2009.

Hagopian identifies and examines many of the Vietnam Veteran and Vietnam War memorials in the United States as indicators of the cultural legacy of the war. He claims public memory of Vietnam veterans evolved from alienated individuals, to traumatized victims, and more recently, to honorable warriors. He further emphasizes the role Vietnam veterans played in constructing these images just as they created memorials that frequently overlooked political causes and consequences of the war and its aftermath in favor of emphasizing veterans and “promoting national ‘healing’.” While this study is specific to the Vietnam War and Vietnam veterans, it examines a wide variety of memorials that contribute to the modes of remembrance in the twentieth and twenty-first century and it emphasizes veterans’ roles in forming these memories.

Kammen, Michael G. *Mystic chords of memory: The transformation of tradition in American culture*. New York: Knopf, 1991.

Addressing theories about the connections between collective memory and national identity, important questions of the study include: when and how did the US become a land of the past, a culture with a discernable memory? Have Americans been more or less inclined than others to invent traditions? What are the political implications and cultural consequences of inventing traditions? As he explores these questions, Kammen provides a broad historical scope to address nostalgia and an American emphasis on "heritage" in an age of forgetfulness. As he further considers the changes in the uses of the past over time, Kammen also offers a critique of the "tradition industry," including memorials, museums, and historical buildings that serve to produce a sense of continuity and an allegiance to the past. He further claims that the more recent the memorialization, the more suspicion it garners.

Panhorst, Michael W. "The first of our hundred battle monuments": Civil War battlefield monuments built by active-duty soldiers during the Civil War." *Southern Cultures*. 20. 4 (2014): 22-43.

Civil War memorialization is typically associated with proliferation, both immediately and over time. However, Panhorst identifies four definitive wartime memorials (two Confederate and two Union) in addition to other memorials likely dedicated before the end of the war. Indeed, the *First Manassas Monument* (1865), constructed by the Fifth Pennsylvania Heavy Artillery, is not the first memorial dedicated at Manassas, nor the first memorial of the war. As early as 1861, soldiers dedicated a memorial at Manassas to Confederate Colonel Francis Bartow of the Seventh Georgia Volunteer Infantry about six weeks after his death. As the title of this article indicates, active-duty soldiers who constructed these monuments desired to commemorate deaths of their fallen comrades. The article is certainly significant for calling attention to wartime memorials that have received little attention and for demonstrating that the immediacy of wartime memorialization is not a twenty-first century phenomenon.

Pencak, William. *Encyclopedia of the veteran in America*. ABC-CLIO, 2009.

Billed as "the first major reference work focused exclusively on an American soldier's view of military life during war and the often difficult return to civilian life and peacetime afterward," this encyclopedia includes over 100 entries ranging from the Revolutionary War through the Wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. It also includes nearly 40 prefaced primary documents consisting of literary representations, presidential letters, and House Veterans Committee testimony. In addition to a bibliography, the work also includes two appendixes. One is a state-by-state list of memorials including bridges, museums, and battlefields; the other lists veterans' organizations that were active as of 2009.

Piehler, G. Kurt. *Remembering war the American way*. Smithsonian Institution, 1995.

Piehler considers commemoration rituals, monuments and organizations dedicated to preserving memories of wars and honoring veterans. Whereas the militia previously served as a commemorative organization for the American Revolution, significant shifts during the nineteenth-century occurred wherein military cemeteries and memorials became the central means of commemorating wars and veterans. Indeed, veterans groups and hereditary organizations claimed central authority over interpreting and remembering war and veterans. Yet at the turn to the twentieth-century the federal government played a significant role in commemoration. Piehler argues that both official and vernacular acts of commemoration reinforced the existing power structure in America and minimized or ignored issues of race, gender and class that we begin to see commemorated in the latter half of the twentieth century.

Young, James E. *The texture of memory: Holocaust memorials and meaning*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993.

Young is well-known for his scholarship about global Holocaust memorials and museums; indeed, many would consider this his seminal text on the subject. In addition to a thorough and conscientious analysis of Holocaust memorials in Europe, the United States and Israel, Young offers a framework for analyzing the material, aesthetic, spatial, cultural and ideological that converge in memorial spaces. He further addresses "public remembrance" and offers a welcome distinction in memory studies between a

preferred terminology of “collected,” often competing and evolving memories, rather than “collective” (unified) memory.

Selective additional representations published and produced since 1990 that feature Vietnam veterans:

Frazier, Sandie. *I Married Vietnam*. New York: George Braziller, 1992.

Going Back. Dir. Sidney Furie. GFT Entertainment, 2001.

Heaven and Earth. Dir. Oliver Stone. Warner Bros., 1993.

Heinemann, Larry. *Black Virgin Mountain: A Return to Vietnam*. New York: Doubleday, 2005.

Herzog, Tobey C. “Managing the Elusive Veteran: Blank Page, Trip Wire, or Interstate Nomad.” *The United States and Vietnam from War to Peace: Papers from an Interdisciplinary Conference on Reconciliation*. Ed. Robert M. Slabey. Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1996. 113–22.

Jarhead. Dir. Sam Mendes. Universal, 2005.

Karlin, Wayne. *Wandering Souls: Journeys with the Dead and Living in Viet Nam*. New York, Nation Books, 2009.

Lam, Andrew. *East Eats West: Writing in Two Hemispheres*. Berkeley, CA: Heyday, 2010.

———. *Perfume Dreams: Reflections of the Vietnamese Diaspora*. Berkeley, CA: Heyday, 2005.

Lembcke, Jerry. *The Spitting Image: Myth, Memory, and the Legacy of Vietnam*. New York: New York UP, 1998.

Moore, Harold G., and Joseph L. Galloway. *We Are Soldiers Still: A Journey Back to the Battlefields of Vietnam*. New York: HarperCollins, 2008.

———. *We Were Soldiers Once . . . and Young*. New York: Random House, 1992.