

Roosevelt used the USPOD to promote many of his initiatives—from the National Recovery Act (which got its own stamp in 1933) to the beauty of national parks (a series of twenty stamps in 1934 and 1935).

Admittedly, today’s digital landscape means that far fewer people use postage stamps for mailing, or even receive mail that bears anything other than machine-printed postage. Nevertheless, Brennan’s book provides a fascinating look back at a time when mail mattered. One minor complaint is that the illustrations in *Stamping American Memory*’s print version appear as unappealing black-and-white images, which hardly do justice to the intricate art of the stamps themselves, especially when Brennan whets our appetite by praising “the design and intensity of the ink colors” (111). However, the good news is that the University of Michigan Press has also issued an online, open-access version of the book, which beautifully reproduces those designs and colors.

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*Contested Commemoration in U.S. History: Diverging Public Interpretations* edited by Klara Stephanie Szlezák and Melissa M. Bender. New York: Routledge, 2019. xii+227 pp.; illustrations, notes, bibliography, index; clothbound, \$160.00, paperback, \$44.95, eBook, \$40.45.

*Contested Commemoration in U.S. History: Diverging Public Interpretations* offers eleven case studies that demonstrate why commemoration remains a central tool for (re)defining American identity and challenging the established national historical narratives which underpin it. Set against the backdrop of the Donald J. Trump presidency and associated surges in nationalist and populist sentiments of the last decade, this multidisciplinary volume is framed through four primary questions: “Who has the right to interpret and memorialize particular historical events? Whose voices, experiences, and images are included and excluded from historical representations? What is at stake for various constituencies in acts of commemoration? How has the current atmosphere of populist, nationalist, and racist rhetoric intensified public responses to commemoration media?” (9).

The historiographical framing of this volume draws our attention to a plateau in histories of commemoration and the broader study of memory. The field has certainly expanded from its initial “boom” in the 1990s. In the last fifteen years alone we have seen the publication of critical interventions by Erika Doss, Kirk Savage, Michael Rothberg, Tamir Sorek, Tiya Miles, Alison Landsberg, and others. These scholars expanded our understanding of how memory functions and its limitations as well as its relationships to white supremacy, racial hierarchy, and oppression broadly. They show how memory can be mobilized for civic progress; its ties to citizenship, consumerism, and tourism; and the centrality of affect and nationalism. More common to the literature, however, are the flurry of case studies demonstrating that memory and the system of representations that help to

construct it change over time, are contingent on the politics of the present, and are contested on an ongoing basis. *Contested Commemoration* falls firmly into this category. The proliferation of case studies has diversified the field, and while this thesis remains key to the study of memory and commemoration, it is increasingly static and redundant.

Yet *Contested Commemoration in U.S. History's* chapters do make an essential contribution to the study of history, memory, and nationalism. The case studies of this volume demonstrate how American institutions, political and economic elites, and ordinary citizens have used commemorative media to cultivate an imagined community defined by white supremacy, racial hierarchy, American exceptionalism, traditional notions of gender hierarchy, and heteronormativity. We see this in Alex Harmon's chapter on so-called "abandoned" settlements in Shenandoah National Park, constructed as a part of natural history and embedded in the larger framework of American "progress." Adrienne Chudzinski's chapter likewise shows why the murder of Black Panther Chairman Fred Hampton and others by the Chicago Police in 1969 has been left out of civil rights memory because it conflicts with exceptionalist civil rights narratives that celebrate America's mythic commitment to freedom and equality. Alyssa Kreikermeier's study of US history books similarly analyzes how textbook authors have crafted portrayals of Mexico and people of Mexican descent as inferior—both as historical actors and shapers of US history—to aid the narrative of American exceptionalism. Further demonstrating how national histories of racial injustice are marginalized and manifest locally, Amy J. Lueck's study of high school yearbooks shows how Japanese American students were erased from their communities during internment. As these and others chapters demonstrate, this was not and is not a misuse of history and memory in the name of the nation, but an intentional construction of history and memory indicative of the national community white Americans and American institutions sought to create.

Simultaneously, these case studies highlight how activists, organizations, communities, and individuals resist and challenge prevailing historical interpretations and representations. Amy Bowman-McElhone and Jeanne M. Pursuit show how activists and residents of Pittsburgh's historically Black Hill District transformed the controversial Civic Arena into an "unintentional" monument with a double meaning for city residents (189). Ingrid Gessner examines how women veterans of the Vietnam War used literature and life writing to problematize inadequate and limited inclusions of military nurses in Vietnam War memorialization. Jodie Childers details how Pete Seeger and Woody Guthrie used folk music as a dynamic site to preserve, commemorate, and entice participation in counter-histories, typically misrepresented or forgotten in national narratives. Together, the texts in this collection foreground history and memory's centrality to national renewal. They demonstrate why this is a turbulent, impassioned, and prolonged process which some Americans vehemently resist to preserve their privilege and power, and others fervently pursue in the name of justice, civil rights, and inclusivity.

A point of criticism for this volume is the choice and use of terms throughout the collection. Several chapters utilize the term “blacks” as a monolithic and homogenous collectivity. Although no author uses the term pejoratively, scholars and activists have commonly retired the term, which has historically carried racist connotations. Alternative terms more appropriately employed include Black people or Black communities as a way to emphasize heterogeneity and people-first language. Other chapters would similarly benefit from the definition of terms to better understand their use in context. Authors and editors of the volume should look to newly published inclusive language guides for reference.

Despite this shortcoming, the central questions the chapters in this volume examine are instructive for teaching and interpreting the memorial landscape in the United States and beyond. Taking an inclusive approach to the notion of commemoration which encompasses a variety of physical and media forms, individual case studies will prove useful both in the classroom and for communities, activists, scholars, organizations, and institutions undertaking public projects that reframe American history.

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*Monument Culture: International Perspectives on the Future of Monuments in a Changing World* edited by Laura A. Macaluso. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2019. xxii + 277 pp.; illustrations, index; clothbound, \$89.00; paperback, \$39.00; eBook, \$37.00.

As Laura A. Macaluso outlines in the preface, this book was conceived as a response to the events in Charlottesville, Virginia, in August 2017, during which a vehicle was purposefully driven into a crowd protesting a “Unite the Right” rally. The rally itself was a protest against the removal of a Confederate monument. Macaluso is a public historian based in Virginia, whose work engages with public art and monument culture. But rather than draw on her own, in-depth knowledge of the history of that particular place to explain those events, Macaluso turned outwards, asking other scholars and practitioners to help her make sense of them. Those included in the book, she says, “were selected for their potential contribution to a global story” (xiv).

Given the thousands of articles, blog posts, and opinion pieces generated each time the subject of historic monuments re-surfaces in the media, it can sometimes seem as if there is little more to say and I must admit that I approached *Monument Culture* with a certain amount of scepticism. However, Macaluso’s years of experience engaging with this challenging topic shines through in the editorial choices she has made. The resulting collection offers a sense of the breadth of the ways monuments are made, mobilized, imagined and re-imagined around the world. It offers thought-provoking case studies for public historians grappling with either