



Commemoration in America: Essays on Monuments, Memorialization, and Memory

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Commemoration lies at the poetic, historiographic, and social heart of human community. It is how societies define themselves and is central to the institution of the city. Addressing the complex ways that monuments in the United States have been imagined, created, and perceived from the colonial period to the present, *Commemoration in America* is a wide-ranging volume that focuses on the role of remembrance and memorialization in American urban life. The volume's contributors are drawn from a spectrum of disciplines—social and urban history, urban planning, architecture, art history, preservation, and architectural history—and take a broad view of commemoration. In addition to the making of traditional monuments, the essays explore such commemorative acts as building preservation, biography, portraiture, ritual performance, street naming, and the planting of trees.

Providing an overview of American memorialization and the impulses behind it, *Commemoration in America* emphasizes a universal tendency for individuals and groups to use monuments to define their contemporary social identity and to construct historical narratives. The volume shows that while commemorative acts and objects affect the community in fundamental ways, their meaning is always multivalent and conflicted, attesting to both triumphs and tragedies. Constituting a vital part of both individual and national identity, commemoration's contradictions strike at the core of American identity and speak to the importance of remembrance in the construction of our diverse national cultural landscape.

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