

Remembering the Buffalo Soldier: Memorials to Black Soldiers of the Indian-War Era

by
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Today I am going to talk about monuments to “Buffalo Soldiers,” black soldiers who served in the American Regular Army between the American Civil War of 1861-1865 and American entry into World War I in 1917. Just over 11% of the Indian-fighting Army was black, and this was very important. In 1866, for the first time, the Regular Army, in recognition of their significant service during the Civil War, made a place for the black soldier. It was a segregated place in which it was almost impossible to become an officer, but it was a place. Blacks had earlier served as volunteer soldiers, but never as members of the Regular Army. From 1866 on, there would always be black soldiers in the United States Army.

They came to be called “Buffalo Soldiers,” apparently because some plains Indians saw a physical resemblance between their brown skins and curly hair and the buffalo. They fought in some of the major wars against Indians, most notably in the brutal campaign against the Apaches Victorio and Nana in 1879-1881. They also did what all soldiers did in the west—protected wagon trains, the mail, and telegraph lines; mapped new and unfamiliar territory; and built roads. Eighteen Buffalo Soldiers received the Medal of Honor, then the only Army decoration for bravery and now its highest, but mainly they represented the involvement of African-Americans in this central drama of 19th-century American history, the expansion of the nation westward and the dispossession of the Native Americans that accompanied it. Important because they were mainstream participants in this national epic, their statues and commemorations are significant for what they show us about America today.

Students of history are accustomed to anomaly. We deal with human behavior so paradox, contradiction,

ambiguity, and perversity are familiar to us. Like other parts of the human story, American history has its share of irrationality and illogic, much of which is driven by the racism that remains a problem in our society.

Consider this. The Civil War, the great sectional conflict that tore the nation apart, was won by the Union with an army of about two million. Roughly 10% of that army (between 180,000 and 200,000) was black. The victory is marked by thousands of public memorials—statues and sculptures in town squares, parks, and cemeteries.¹ Yet during the great era of commemoration in the fifty years after the Civil War, just three of the many hundreds that were erected showed any black military figures, and two of those were obscure single figures surrounded by many white soldiers.² Only the Augustus Saint Gaudens relief in Boston Common that celebrates the heroism of Robert Gould Shaw, the colonel of the black 54th Massachusetts Infantry, has black soldiers in a highly visible, even prominent, position. The St. Gaudens masterpiece, with its realistic black infantrymen, of varying height and appearance, was unveiled in 1897.³

The statuary of the vanquished Confederacy mirrored that of the victors. Both sides adopted the same model, a standing, uniformed, armed white common soldier, the symbolism of which is clear. We are looking at free (standing), legitimate (uniformed), powerful (armed) men. We are also looking at “our boys,” volunteer soldiers from towns all across the nation, who joined locally recruited regiments such as the First Minnesota or the 19th Virginia and whose sacrifice is celebrated in their home towns and counties.

The statue at the National Cemetery near the Antietam battlefield in Maryland, nicknamed “Old Simon,” was completed in 1874, shown at the Philadelphia centennial exhibition in 1876-78, and sent

to Antietam in 1880. Its dimensions are mind-boggling: made of 27 pieces of granite weighing 250 tons; the figure alone is 21.5 feet tall, and weighs 29 tons, and the structure, including the base, is 44 ft, 7 inches, tall. It is inscribed, "Not for themselves but for their country, September 17, 1862."⁴

Erecting local monuments to white soldiers was a big business. The Muldoon Monument Co of Louisville, Kentucky, boasted that it made 90% of all Confederate monuments, and the American Bronze Foundry Company, of staunchly Unionist Chicago, advertised "Confederate Statues in Bronze." Generally speaking, statues were individually made, based on a standard model, which could be altered in small ways to suit a client, and all of the firms that produced them made Union and Confederate statues.⁵

Unlike the Civil War with its huge armies, the Indian wars of the next generation were fought by an army of about 25,000, one to two percent of the Civil War force. The soldiers were regulars, enlisted for specific terms of service, assigned to "U.S." regiments, and recruited nationwide. The "victory" of the small Regular Army over the Indians, about which some Americans now feel pangs of guilt, generated almost no statuary showing black or white soldiers in the century following the final Indian disaster at Wounded Knee, South Dakota, in 1890.⁶

Virtually all of the markers and structures at more than 110 forts and battlefields involved free standing historical markers or plaques on either pyramids of stones or rectangular columns of rock.⁷ Since commemorative statuary is an urban phenomenon, this is not surprising: most of the battlefields are far from cities or even major highways.⁸ Besides, the western battles were not of the epic scale of the Civil War. Also, the soldiers were federal regulars, not local boys. Westerners never developed ties to the small Regular Army that battled the Indians and protected them; so local incentive to celebrate their efforts and lives was lacking. For all of these reasons, the monuments marking forts and battle sites and the roadside markers generally lack human form and personification.⁹ Commemorative displays rarely show individuals, and when they do they show two-dimensional silhouettes or line drawings of modest size. A tradition of statuary like the one that came out of the Civil War never took hold.

But in 1977 came a new statue of a soldier. He was black, and his name was Emmett. The figure, designed by Rose Murray, showed a gritty trooper, maybe just in from a grueling desert patrol or a hard pursuit of bandits. Like the statues commemorating the Vietnam war that started to appear at the same time, he looked more realistic than heroic. Also like Vietnam statuary, he

reflected a trend away from an all-white image of the armed forces toward "a more pluralistic vision of nationhood and the willingness to accord greater equality of recognition to African Americans and women."¹⁰ This tall, sturdy figure guards the front gate of Fort Huachuca, Arizona. He is the first Buffalo Soldier statue erected in the West.¹¹

Since 1992, four more statues have appeared, all of blacks, all at western forts. What does this mean? Clearly statuary does more than add visual interest to the landscape, make work for designers and sculptors, or lure tourists. It is also more than a resting place for pigeons. As Andre Malraux noted, statuary says things about a society and its culture. And here we are looking specifically at three things: (1) messages about the position of blacks in American society, (2) messages regarding the changing image of the Indian and the Indian wars, and (3) messages about how a society sees itself.

In the 1990s, the period of the dedication of these statues, Buffalo Soldiers became a part of the popular culture. Their images appeared on refrigerator magnets, tee-shirts, coffee mugs, and a postage stamp; and they became the subjects of romance novels, children's books, plays, feature films, and popular songs. Memorial Day ceremonies celebrated their bravery, while re-enactors dressed and paraded in frontier attire, imitating these soldiers. The Buffalo Soldier became a familiar, readily recognized cultural icon.

The rise of the Buffalo Soldier to this prominence began in the 1960s, the period of the civil rights revolution. Many African Americans already knew about their military heritage, but only later did the nation at large become familiar with the Buffalo Soldiers. The process started in 1960, with John Ford's "Sergeant Rutledge," a film of subtlety and insight about a black sergeant accused of rape and murder.¹² The Civil War centennial also helped, joining with the civil rights movement to provoke reconsideration of the Civil War and a new focus on black soldiers. The '60s brought expanded interest in black history in general, the establishment of black studies programs in universities, and an interest in Buffalo Soldiers.¹³ William Leckie's book, *The Buffalo Soldiers: a Narrative of the Negro Cavalry in the West*, appeared in 1967. And a song, "The Buffalo Soldiers," recorded by two rhythm-and-blues groups, the Flamingoes and the Persuasions, recalled the soldiers' heroics on the frontier and in the war against Spain in 1898, and asked plaintively of the Buffalo Soldiers, "Will you survive in this new land?"¹⁴

In the 1990s monuments to Buffalo Soldiers were erected in several places, most notably at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, where several black cavalry units had been organized in 1866 and 1867. There, on July 25,

1992, General Colin Powell dedicated a larger-than-life statue of a mounted trooper by sculptor Eddie Dixon. Powell, a black four-star Army general, serving as chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, was the military advisor to the President of the United States. Deeply interested in the history of black participation in “the descendent of those Buffalo Soldiers...and all the black men and women who have served the nation in uniform.”¹⁵

When he spoke at the dedication in 1992, to an audience in which black veterans of the segregated army and uniformed buffalo-soldier reenactors were clearly visible, major television networks carried the ceremony. Powell reminded the nation of the tradition of black military service. “From the beginning of our nation,” he said, “African Americans answered the call to arms in defense of America whenever that call came.” Moreover, from the establishment of the regiments of black regulars after the Civil War, “African Americans would henceforth always be in uniform, challenging the conscience of the nation, posing the question, ‘How could they be allowed to defend the cause of freedom, to defend the nation, if they, themselves, were to be denied the benefits of being American?’” He acknowledged that he, the highest ranking officer in the armed forces and in the eyes of many a hero of the 1991 war against Iraq, owed a debt to the black soldiers who had gone before him, and he challenged young people not to forget the soldiers’ sacrifice and their service.¹⁶ The well publicized ceremony, the declarations by both houses of Congress that July 28, 1992 was “Buffalo Soldiers Day,”¹⁷ and the imposing permanent presence of the statue itself unleashed what historian James Leiker called “a veritable explosion of Buffalo Soldiers commemorations including museum displays, documentaries, newspaper and journal articles, and reenactment societies.”¹⁸ The anonymity of the Buffalo Soldiers in the United States ended in the summer of 1992.

Monuments appeared at other western posts where black soldiers had served. The figure at Fort Bayard, New Mexico, representing Medal of Honor recipient Corporal Clinton Greaves and designed by Gregory Whipple, was also dedicated in the summer of 1992.¹⁹ Another statue, Reynaldo Rivera’s “The Sentinel,” was unveiled in July 1994 at Fort Selden near Las Cruces in southern New Mexico.²⁰ The newest of the group, dedicated in 1999 at Fort Bliss, outside El Paso, Texas, showed a Corporal Ross of the 9th Cavalry, engaged in a running fight with three Mescalero Apache warriors. At least one other, at Francis E. Warren Air Force Base, Wyoming, the Fort D. A. Russell of the Indian war era, was partially designed and remains to be finished.²¹

The new statues, from Emmett to Corporal Ross, carried elements of archetypal Civil War statues, show-

ing standing (or mounted), uniformed, and armed common soldiers—masculine, legitimate, powerful figures.²² Moreover, just as the large number of Civil War monuments gave American nationalism of the time the face of the common white soldier, so the wave of buffalo-soldier statuary at the end of the twentieth century added a face to the picture of the expansion of post civil-War America, that of the common black soldier.

These statues documented the political strength of black America. The new wave of memorial sculptures, highlighting black military contributions, bespoke a new time. The new monuments expressed the significant position of African-Americans in the body politic and particularly in the military services at the end of the 20th century. As Kirk Savage, historian of Civil War memorialization, noted, “Public monuments do not arise as if by natural law to celebrate the deserving; they are built by people with sufficient power to marshal (or impose) public consent for their erection.”²³ The wave of public monuments marked much more than the arrival of the Buffalo Soldier in American culture; it signaled the arrival of African-Americans at a new level of political strength and influence.²⁴

Public statuary provided only the most obvious of the many images of Buffalo Soldiers. Numerous artists responded to the growing demand for paintings and prints. For more than a century, the American west had been a favorite topic of artists, and those who depicted Buffalo Soldiers followed in the footsteps of one of the best known American painters of the end of the nineteenth century, Frederic Remington.

Commemorative ceremonies, with their newspaper and television publicity, reflected the rising interest. These observances sometimes included dedication of new historical markers and plaques. Reminders of buffalo-soldier contributions were installed in many places, including the United States Military Academy in 1996; Fort Robinson, Nebraska, in 1997; Camp Blanding, Florida, in 1998; and Hagerstown, Maryland, in 2000. Other commemorations focused on Medal of Honor recipients, in Nevada, Tennessee, Maryland, Oregon, and Washington, D.C. In addition to programs that typically included prayer, speakers, patriotic music, and uniformed reenactors, such observances left permanent reminders in Medal of Honor grave markers, historical plaques, and streets named for buffalo-soldier heroes.

Before this wave of buffalo-soldier statuary and commemoration, the Indian wars had a face, even if it was rarely chiseled in the stone of public sculpture.²⁵ It was a white face, framed by blonde usually longish hair, and it belonged to George Armstrong Custer, killed by the Cheyenne and Sioux with 225 of his men at the Little Big Horn River, in Montana, on June 26, 1876.

Custer's defeat happened just days before July 4, 1876, the one hundredth anniversary of American independence, celebrated in Philadelphia with a huge exposition, showing the growing wealth, sophistication, and maturity of the nation. Imagine the shock of the news that more than two hundred soldiers of this rich sprawling nation had been killed by people considered to be mere savages. The reports were devastating, and the country needed an uplifting myth. Poets, novelists, and painters promptly fashioned one that turned George Custer into a gallant martyr in the spread of civilization.²⁶

Perhaps Custer will remain the personification of the Indian fighting army. He has been at the center of the American view of the frontier army for so long that he will be very difficult to dislodge. His impact is reflected in a staggering volume of Custeriana, including nearly 2,000 paintings and illustrations and an amazing 46 films.²⁷ Some consider Custer a martyr, who, depending on one's viewpoint, died for the advancement of western civilization or for the sins of that civilization in its treatment of the Indians. Either way, he died for a cause, not just as a demonstration of his stupidity, lack of knowledge of the enemy, or impetuosity.²⁸ In Western Christian culture, martyrdom is a very powerful idea.

Today Custer's position is weakening, at least a little. The Indians have been chipping away at his preeminence at the Little Big Horn Battlefield since 1976, the year of the centennial commemoration of his death, with a confrontational presence at the site itself. They achieved a major victory, when the battlefield park, known for many years as Custer National Monument was renamed the Little Big Horn National Monument in 1991. Their argument against Custer emphasized his centrality as the symbol of the white view in which the conquest of the West represented the triumph of civilization over savagery.²⁹ However, these passionate opponents of the Custer myth sustained his central role. The Indians never attacked him as an incompetent commander, one who led his troops to their death out of ignorance, vanity, and stupidity. Such a position would diminish the achievements of their ancestors. As far as the Indians are concerned, when they beat Custer, they rubbed out the Army's best.³⁰ So Custer has gone from the great hero—The Boy General, Bravest of the Brave, Last of the Cavaliers, and so on—to “supreme white anti-hero.”³¹ And Indians, who for many years had little impact on public opinion, are now showing that they too have political clout.

Still, Custer's position as the archetype of the Indian-fighting army is weakening, partly because of Indian attacks on his legacy and the conquest he represented, but also because the Buffalo Soldier is rising as a competing

model. The proliferation of statues, along with other images of the black regular, suggests that one day the face of American nationalism during the Indian war period may turn out to be not Custer's but that of the black common soldier. After all, heroes do not have to endure forever, they can fade away, and there is no reason why Custer's fame should continue undiminished. David Lowenthal wrote more than twenty-five years ago, “Memory not only conserves the past but adjusts recall to current needs. Instead of remembering exactly what was, we make the past intelligible in the light of present circumstances.”³² Sometimes, we improve the past to suit our current interests or needs, and one of the needs today is for non-white heroes.³³ Just as surely as the permanence of Custer's stature is not guaranteed, there is no reason why Custer should not be replaced by a collective entity as the archetypal frontier soldier, The Buffalo Soldier.³⁴

But wait! As the face of this nationalism becomes the face of Buffalo Soldiers fighting Indians, two ironies emerge. First of all, the fact remains that nearly ninety percent of the frontier army was in fact white. Second, the new image is of one non-white group fighting and defeating another in service of white goals. This is not what the promoters of Buffalo Soldier heritage had in mind when they set out to build these new statues in the West. Viewing the world from a “Rainbow Coalition” perspective, which assumes that all people of color share values and interests and have been discriminated against if not oppressed by whites, they are clearly troubled by the problem. Those who promote the preeminence of the Buffalo Soldier have dealt with the issue of black-soldier relations with Indians by asserting a dual myth, that black soldiers contributed disproportionately to the winning of the West, while developing an empathy and mutual respect with the Indians on the basis of their shared non-whiteness.

The notion that black soldiers played exceptionally prominent roles in the conquest is easy to test. We can count combat engagements and compare the numbers to the size of the black presence in the Army. Three slightly different compilations of skirmishes and battles place participation of black troopers at between 11.9 percent and 13.8 percent. So the numbers suggest that Buffalo Soldiers did not in fact carry a disproportionate burden of the fighting. This is not to say that their contribution was not significant or grindingly hard, but it was not out of line with their numbers.³⁵

The other part of the myth, that the soldiers and the Indians shared some sort of bond, has two foundations. One is the notion that the Indians called the soldiers “Buffalo Soldiers” as a sign of respect for their fighting abilities. The buffalo was special, even sacred to the plains tribes, this line of reasoning says. Therefore the

Indians would not have called the troopers Buffalo Soldiers if they had not meant it respectfully. So the phrase must mean more than a reference to brown skin or nappy hair. The other foundation is modern Rainbow-coalition wishful thinking that projects backward into the nineteenth century the feeling that non-whites share a common bond and a common oppressor. Essentially the myth rises from an obvious present problem: rationalizing black participation in white conquest, while deflecting the guilt inherent in that role.

Unfortunately for the myth makers, their effort ignores the reality of the buffalo-soldier reaction to the Indians, which reflected an unbridgeable cultural gap. This is worth elaboration: the soldiers came from a monotheistic English-speaking agrarian-industrial culture; the Indians were semi-nomadic warrior-hunters, who spoke many languages, none of which were English, and whose religious practices--shamanism, supernatural visions, self-mutilation, and even human sacrifice--were unfamiliar, even repellent, to the soldiers. The black soldiers' reactions to the Indians mirrored the prevailing white racism. Black soldiers used the same dismissive epithets--"hostile tribes," "naked savages," and "redskins"; they also indulged in the same racist caricatures employed by whites. Reminiscent of the use among whites of "blackface" to denigrate and stereotype African-Americans, a black private named Robinson went to a masquerade ball at Fort Bayard in 1894 mockingly dressed as "an idiotic Indian squaw."³⁶

The response of black soldiers to Indians should be interpreted with care. Black soldiers in the generation after slavery longed for inclusion in the society at large. That society was certainly racist, and soldier use of bigoted terms and stereotypes may show no more than their acquiescence in the larger cultural order, a phenomenon that Joel Kovel calls "metaracism."³⁷ So, when a black soldier called a plains Indian in 1890 "a voodoo nigger,"³⁸ he not only repeated the voice of a white soldier who called the plains Indians in 1873 "red niggers."³⁹ He also reflected the overall values of the culture in which he struggled to make his place. By such usages, he hoped to ally himself with the dominant group.⁴⁰

Both aspects of the mythical view, that the soldiers were the Army's best and that they uniquely appreciated the Indians' plight, were articulated in the 1997 film "Buffalo Soldiers," directed by the well-known black actor Danny Glover. This film, aired by Turner Network Television and meant to be taken seriously, as evidenced by the "Educator's Guide" that was released with it,⁴¹ portrayed the Buffalo Soldiers as so able that they did something no United States soldiers, black or white, ever managed to do, surprise and capture Victorio and his band of Warm Springs Apaches. Then, with the Apaches under

their control, the troopers did something else that no United States soldiers, black or white, ever did. After sympathetic conversations over coffee, in which soldiers and warriors expressed their mutual understanding of the oppression each experienced at the hands of whites, the troopers let the Apaches go. This fantasy insulted both parties. The Apaches, who were expert trackers and scouts, never allowed themselves to be encircled by American soldiers of any color. The Buffalo Soldiers, had they been adept enough and lucky enough to have bagged Victorio, would never have let him go. The story might have consoled some people but did not reflect reality.⁴²

Native American advocates in the 1990s objected strongly to the attention given to the Buffalo Soldiers, especially the idea that their forebears and the soldiers shared a bond of respect or understanding. The issue of a postage stamp commemorating Buffalo Soldiers in 1994 catalyzed this dissent. United States Postal Service publicity materials asserted that the name "Buffalo Soldiers" had been "bestowed by Native Americans for the courage displayed on the battlefield,"⁴³ and that "the combat prowess, bravery, and courage on the battlefield of these black troopers inspired the Indians to call them Buffalo Soldiers."⁴⁴

The first salvo of dissent came from Vernon Bellecourt of the American Indian Movement. Writing in *Indian Country Today*, a reliable forum for objections to glorification of Buffalo Soldiers, Bellecourt denied that the name reflected any "endearment or respect." As far as he was concerned, plains Indians only applied the term Buffalo Soldier to "these marauding murderous cavalry units" because of "their dark skin and texture of their hair."⁴⁵ Such angry outbursts continued through the 1990s,⁴⁶ as did demonstrations at museum exhibits on Buffalo Soldier history and other public observances. Just as the Leavenworth statue catalyzed public awareness of the Buffalo Soldier, so the stamp provoked substantial Indian resentment of the favorable publicity given the troopers.⁴⁷

So what do we conclude about the statues and Buffalo Soldier commemorations? Beyond the clear evidence of growing black political clout are issues of interaction between multiple racial and ethnic groups. Race is not acted out in the United States on a binary basis, between blacks and whites alone. Many others are involved, including Indians, Latinos, Asian Americans, and, as we have recently become sharply aware, Arab Americans. Interaction takes place among and between these groups as well as between them and whites. In the case we are considering, the increasing media exposure and growing political power of the Indian rights movement that successfully promoted a negative view of Custer has made it a burden for anyone, black or white,

to symbolize the Indian fighter and represent what many now consider to have been an immoral exterminationist policy.⁴⁸ If the man who symbolizes the Indian fighter in history must have been evil, having carried out an immoral policy, then the Buffalo Soldier, whether he overtakes Custer as the symbol or not, also becomes the image of evil. To fend off this possibility, the myth of the Buffalo Soldier tries to co-opt the Indian challenge by asserting mutual respect.

While people confront these issues, the statues—at Forts Huachuca, Leavenworth, Bayard, Selden, and Bliss—remain, silent but permanent reminders of the black presence in the Indian-fighting army, and it is intriguing to speculate about their future as symbols of the frontier force. Given that there is no context of white-soldier statuary in the West to create perspective, is it possible that the face of the black soldier will become the dominant image of the Indian wars? Will these conflicts some day be seen as struggles between blacks and Native Americans? Or will older images, such as the Custer paintings and films, offset this possibility, just as the recent appearance of Buffalo Soldier statues has counterbalanced the traditional image of an all-white frontier army? As historians, maybe we should resist the desire to speculate about these possibilities and stick to what we know. And one thing we do know is that the answer to the question in the song, the one that asked “Buffalo Soldier, will you survive in this new land?” is clear now. The Buffalo Soldier is thoroughly imbedded in American culture, and has become a part of American history, and the reply is a resounding “yes.” As to the rest, we—or our children—shall see.

Notes:

¹ Kirk Savage, *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves: Race, War, and Monument in Nineteenth-Century America* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1997), p. 3.

² Black troops were almost completely ignored in public statuary, and not just because they were black. With few exceptions blacks fought in units called “United States Colored Troops,” such as, for example, the 4th United States Colored Infantry and the 1st United States Colored Cavalry. So they owed their allegiance more to the nation than to a particular locality, making local memorialization committees less likely to consider celebrating their service. Savage, *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves*, pp. 184–185, 187, 207.

³ On the design of the Shaw memorial, see *The Shaw Memorial: A Celebration of an American Masterpiece* (Conshohocken, Pennsylvania: Eastern

National, 1997). Also see Savage, *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves*, pp. 198–204; Martin H. Blatt, Thomas J. Brown & Donald Yacavone, eds., *Hope & Glory: Essays on the Legacy of the 54th Massachusetts Regiment* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2001).

⁴ Ted Alexander, “Old Simon,” *Blue & Gray Magazine* 13 (October 1995), pp. 59–60.

⁵ Susan Cooke Soderberg, “Lest We Forget” *A Guide to Civil War Monuments in Maryland*, (Shippensburg, PA: White Mane Publishing Co., Inc., 1995), pp. xxiv–xxv.

⁶ Kenneth E. Foote, *Shadowed Ground: America’s Landscapes of Violence and Tragedy* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1997), p. 322.

⁷ As far as I know, there is only one statue in the Civil War tradition, at Fort McPherson, Nebraska, where a standing, uniformed, armed soldier, very much a smaller version of “Old Simon,” celebrated the role of the 7th Iowa Volunteer Cavalry in bringing white settlement to Lincoln County, Nebraska. Herbert M. Hart, *Old Forts of the Northwest* (Seattle: Superior Publishing Company, 1963), p. 75.

⁸ James M. Mayo, *War Memorials as Political Landscape: American Experience and Beyond*. (New York: Praeger, 1988, p. 148).

⁹ There is no comprehensive compilation of images of Indian war commemoration. This summary is based on personal travel and the following works: Herbert Hart, *Old Forts of the Northwest* (Seattle: Superior Publishing Company, 1963); Hart, *Old Forts of the Southwest* (Seattle: Superior Publishing Company, 1964); Hart, *Old Forts of the Far West* (New York: Bonanza Books, 1965); Paul L. Hedren, *Traveler’s Guide to the Great Sioux War* (Helena: Montana Historical society Press, 1996); Steve Rajtar, *Indian War Sites: A Guidebook to Battlefields, Monuments, and Memorials* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1999); *Soldier and Brave: Historic Places Associated with Indian Affairs and the Indian Wars in the Trans-Mississippi West* (Washington, DC: National Park Service, 1971). Also see Mayo, *War Memorials as Political Landscape*; Foote, *Shadowed Ground*; Andrew Hogarth, and Kim Vaughn, *Battlefields, Monuments and Markers: A guide to Native American & United States Army Engagements from 1854–1890*. Sydney, Australia: Andrew Hogarth Publishing, 1993. The Fort McPherson monument is shown in Hart, *Old Forts of the Northwest*, p. 75. Mayo notes two monuments that belong in neither the standard Indian War category or the Civil War style, one to Rough Rider Bucky O’Neill and another to the Mormon Battalion (pp. 141, 158). Hedren also cites two with the faces of major frontier

personages, an obelisk with Sitting Bull's visage at the Huncpapa chief's grave and a bas relief of General George Crook conferring with the Apache chief Geronimo (pp, 119, 120).

¹⁰ G. Kurt Piehler, *Remembering War the American Way* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995), p. 7.

¹¹ Frank N. Schubert, *Black Valor: Buffalo Soldiers and the Medal of Honor, 1870-1898* (Wilmington, Delaware: Scholarly Resources, 1997), p. 169.

¹² In the year before the appearance of Ford's film, *Buffalo Soldiers* appeared on television and in another film. In mid-November, 1959, a segment of NBC's *Zane Grey Western* series featured Sammy Davis, Jr., as a black corporal in command of a small unit ordered to bring an Indian chief to a treaty signing. "The Wonderful Country," a movie that was described by Leonard Maltin as a "brooding Western involving [Robert] Mitchum running guns along Mexico-Texas line, romancing [Julie] London..." also had Leroy "Satchell" Page in a small role as a cavalry sergeant. "Major Dundee," a 1965 Charlton Heston film included black soldiers, and was followed by a few others, including the deservedly obscure "Soul Soldier" from 1970, Mario Van Peebles' "The Posse," in 1993, and the 1997 Danny Glover effort, "Buffalo Soldiers." *TV Guide* 7, No. 45 (November 7, 1959), p. A59; Leonard Maltin *Movie and Video Guide*, 1996 (New York: Signet Books, 1995) pp. 808-809, 1030, 1477; Buck O'Neil, with Steve Wulf and David Conrads, *I Was Right On Time* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996), p. 214; Darius James, *That's Blaxploitation: Roots of the Baadasssss Tude* (Rated X by an All-Whyte Jury) (New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 1995), p. 43. On "Sergeant Rutledge," see Scott Eyman, *Print the Legend: the Life and Times of John Ford* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1999), p. 475.

¹³ Ludwig Lauerhass, "A Commemoration: The Shaw Memorial in American Culture," *The Shaw Memorial: A Celebration of a Masterpiece* (Conshohocken, PA: Eastern National, 1997), pp. 61-62.

¹⁴ D. Barnes, M. Smith, and M. Lewis, "The Buffalo Soldiers," c. 1969

¹⁵ Henry Louis Gates, Jr., "Powell and the Black Élite," *New Yorker*, September 25, 1995, p. 64; *New York Times*, Sunday, May 15, 1994. On the connection between Powell and the Buffalo Soldiers, also see Walter Hill, "Exploring the Life and History of the 'Buffalo Soldiers,'" *The Record* 4 (March 1998), p. 12.

¹⁶ 9th and 10th (Horse) Cavalry Association, *The Buffalo Soldier Monument Dedication* (Topeka, Kansas: Mainline Printing, 1992); Anthony Williams,

"The Buffalo Soldier Monument," *Army* 47 (February 1997), pp. 61-63; Colin L. Powell with Joseph E. Persico, *My American Journey* (New York: Random House, 1995), pp. 554-557. Powell's speech is quoted from Charlotte Raub, "Buffalo Soldiers—a 'first' in American Military History," *INSCOM Journal* 22 (January-march 1999), p. 29.

¹⁷ U.S. Senate, 102d Congress, 2d session, Joint Resolution 92, January 3, 1992; U.S. House of Representatives, 102d Congress, 1st Session, Joint Resolution 237, April 25, 1991.

¹⁸ James N. Leiker, "Black Soldiers at Fort Hays, Kansas, 1867-1869: A Study in Civilian and Military Violence," *Great Plains Quarterly* 17 (Winter 1997), p. 3.

¹⁹ Patricia Erickson, "Buffalo Soldier Monument Planned," *Public History News* 12 (Fall 1991), p. 1; Sandra Griffin, "Silver City paying tribute to Buffalo Soldier," *New Mexico Magazine* July 1992, p. 31.

²⁰ "The Sentinel," *Albuquerque Journal*, Sunday, July 24, 1994.

²¹ *El Paso Times*, Wednesday, June 17, 1998; Schubert, *Black Valor*, p. 169; Patrick McKenna, "Forgotten heroes: On the Trail of the Buffalo Soldier," *Airman*, July 1995, pp. 38-43.

²² Savage, *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves*, p. 98.

²³ Kirk Savage, "The Politics of Memory: Black Emancipation and the Civil War Monument," *Commemorations: the Politics of National Identity*, John R. Gillis, ed. (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1997), p. 135; Piehler, *Remembering War the American Way*, pp. 7, 182.

²⁴ Other manifestations of this political clout also concerned historical interpretation. The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 1999, which provided funding for the national park system, required the Secretary of the Interior to encourage park managers of Civil War battle sites to "recognize and include in all of their public displays and multi-media educational presentations the unique role the institution of slavery played in causing the Civil War and its role, if any, at the individual battle sites." The measure had been introduced by Congressman Jesse Jackson, Jr., Democrat of Chicago. Conference Report for H.R. 3194, *Congressional Record* 145, no. 163, part II (November 17, 1999), pp. H12367; "Interpretation said shifting at National battlefield parks," *Headquarters Heliogram*, no. 280 (September-October 2000), p. 5.

²⁵ In 1921 a small stone marker with a bas-relief bust of Custer was unveiled at Custer Park, in Hardin, Montana, about 15 miles from the Little Big Horn battlefield, before about 15,000 people, during the 45th anniversary commemoration. The historical marker at

the Washita battlefield, where Custer surprised and destroyed a peaceful Cheyenne village in 1868, has portraits of Custer and the Cheyenne Dull Knife. Custer also stands, saber in hand, on a monument in Custer City, Colorado, and of course a headstone in the cemetery at the Little Big Horn Battlefield National Monument bears his name. Other Custer monuments are at the United States Military Academy, West Point, New York, in Custer's hometown of Monroe, Michigan, and in Detroit, Michigan. Also a statue at Gettysburg National Military Park commemorates the contribution of his Michigan Brigade of cavalry. Custer's portrait on a bronze plaque adorns the base of the granite Gettysburg monument. Brian W. Dippie, *Custer's Last Stand: the Anatomy of an American Myth* (Lincoln: University Of Nebraska Press, 1994), p. 92; Linenthal, *Sacred Ground*, p. 135, 138; Robert M. Utley, *Custer: Cavalier in Buckskin* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2001), pp. 72, 163; Smithsonian Institution Research Information System, "Inventories of American Painting and Sculpture," <http://www.siris.si.edu/webpac-bin/wgbroker>, 31 August 2001.

²⁶ Dippie, *Custer's Last Stand*, pp. 132-133.

²⁷ Paul Andrew Hutton, "From Little Big Horn to Little Big Man: the Changing Image of a Western Hero in Popular Culture," Hutton, ed., *The Custer Reader* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1992), p. 524; Bruce A. Rosenberg, "Custer: The Legend of the Martyred hero in America," Hutton, *The Custer Reader*, p. 525.

²⁸ Hutton, "The Custer Myth," Hutton, *The Custer Reader*, p. 395.

²⁹ Dippie, *Custer's Last Stand*, p. 135; Linenthal, *Changing Images of the Warrior Hero in America*, pp. 28-29.

³⁰ See, for example, James Welch with Paul Stekler, *Killing Custer: the Battle of the Little Big Horn and the Fate of the Plains Indians* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1994), pp. 61, 127, 170.

³¹ (Dippie, *Custer's Last Stand*, pp. 4, 110)

³² "Past Time, Present Place: Landscape and Memory," *Geographical Review*, 65 (1975); quoted in Foote, *Shadowed Ground: America's Landscapes of Violence and Tragedy*, p. 5.

³³ Lowenthal, *Possessed By the Past*, p. 142.

³⁴ Hutton, *The Custer Myth*, p. 395.

³⁵ Adjutant General's Office, *Chronological List of Actions, &c., With Indians, From January 1, 1866, to January, 1891*; Francis E. Heitman, *Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army, from its Organization, September 29, 1789, to March 2, 1903*, vol. 2 (Washington: Government Printing Office,

1903), pp. 426-449; George W. Webb, *Chronological List of Engagements Between the Regular Army of the United States and Various Tribes of Hostile Indians Which Occurred During the years 1790 to 1898, Inclusive* (St. Joseph, MO: National Indian War Veterans, 1939).

³⁶ Frank N. Schubert, *Black Valor*, pp. 128-129. On the social significance of the use of blackface, see David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion: the Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2001), pp. 222-31, 286.

³⁷ Joel Kovel, *White Racism: A Psychohistory* (London: Free Association Books, 1988), pp. 211-212.

³⁸ Quoted in Edward A. Johnson, *History of Negro Soldiers in the Spanish-American War* (Raleigh, NC: Capital Printing Co., 1899), p. 34.

³⁹ Quoted in Utley, *Custer: Cavalier in Buckskin*, p. 92.

⁴⁰ Kovel, *White Racism*, p. 216.

⁴¹ Karen Needles, "Educator's Guide," <http://learning.turner.com/Bufalo/index/html>, December 1997.

⁴² On "the strangeness of the past," see Simon Schama, "Clio at the Multiplex," *New Yorker* (January 19, 1998), pp. 38-43.

⁴³ "U.S. issues Buffalo Soldiers April 22," *Stamp Collector* March 26, 1994, p. 3.

⁴⁴ United States Postal Service, "American Commemoratives: Buffalo Soldiers," *American Commemorative Panel No. 436*, 1994.

⁴⁵ Vernon Bellecourt, "The glorification of Buffalo Soldiers raises racial divisions between blacks, Indians," *Indian Country Today*, May 4, 1994.

⁴⁶ See, for example, Cornel Pewewardy, "Buffalo Soldiers were federal hired guns," *Indian Country Today*, June 23-30, 1997.

⁴⁷ Stamp Collector, June 4 and June 25, 1994; E-mail message, NATIVE-L <NATIVE-L@TAMVM1.TAMU.EDU>, subject: USPS \$.50 [sic] stamps," June 8, 1995, copy in author's files; *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, August 20, 1996; *Los Angeles Times*, February 6, 1997.

⁴⁸ Hutton, *The Custer Reader*, p. 416.