Between Remembering and Forgetting:

US Public Memory of the Frontier in Buildings, Objects, and Videogames

by

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines the "remembering-forgetting dialectic," or a common assumption that remembering and forgetting are antithetical acts with opposing values in a public (Blair et al 18). More specifically, it examines this dialectic within the context of settler colonialism, which other scholars have noted is marked by the pervasive "forgetting" (Shotwell 37) and "erasure" (Stuckey 232) of the violent, genocidal acts that enabled a settler-colonial nation to develop. To examine this dialectic's appearance and high stakes in that "forgetting" epistemic context, I analyzed US public memory of the Frontier, a historic space that references the United States' settler-colonial westward expansion and a symbolic space that has lasting ties to hegemonic constructions of American civic identity. To do so, I ask, What does public memory of the Frontier suggest about the remembering-forgetting dialectic? To address this research aim, I analyzed three sites that engage in Frontier memory work: (1) the Foy Proctor Historical Park, an outdoor exhibit focused on ranching history at the National Ranching Heritage Center in Lubbock, Texas; (2) Remembering Our Indian School Days: The Boarding School Experience, an exhibit at the Heard Museum in Phoenix, Arizona that documents the experiences of American Indian students who attended off-reservation boarding schools; and (3) The Oregon Trail, a videogame that simulates a mid-nineteenth century pioneer's journey across the Frontier. In my analysis, I identified the site's public memory narrative, discussed how the site rhetorically builds that narrative, and considered the site's efforts to encourage visitors to identify with the portrayed history. My results show that: (1) the Foy Proctor Historical Park perpetuates a settler-colonial narrative through its rhetorical invention of a Frontier landscape, (2) Remembering Our

Indian School Days challenges the “forgetting” and “erasure” of settler-colonial memory through extensive documentation efforts, and (3) The Oregon Trail reproduces an interactive, settler-colonial narrative by positioning players into role-playing as pioneers. I ultimately argue common assumptions about the functionality of remembering and forgetting in a public do not account for the epistemic complexity shown within these sites; the remembering-forgetting dialectic thus remains a significant topic in public memory studies.

For my family, who has always believed

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INTRODUCTION: RHETORIC, PUBLIC MEMORY, AND THE FRONTIER

Introduction

Rhetorical scholarship has extended beyond the traditional understanding of memory as a mnemonic technique for classical orators to regularly analyze the rhetorical practices of various "memory places[1]" as they establish public memory narratives (Bodnar; Dickinson et al; Weisser;) and to investigate the implications of memory acts following societal atrocities (Olick; Young). Such investigations are tempered by the centrality of the so-called "remembering-forgetting dialectic" (Blair et al 18) or the question of which histories are remembered by the public and why. Some scholars have argued that this dialectic is a misleading understanding of how knowledge circulates within a public, while others have raised concerns about its reductive implications. Blair et al, for example, contend that it is a "stand-in or simplistic restatement of the problem of representation in public memory studies," further explaining that "a failure to represent a particular content publicly is not a necessary, or even provisional, sign of forgetting" (18). In other words, the remembering-forgetting dialectic may be understood as a question of *whose* histories are prioritized in acts of public remembrance, and *which* narratives then circulate within a public's rhetorical ecology[2]. Re-framing this dialectic as a question of representation enables us to better see how identity and positionality affect

[1] Blair et al define a "memory place" as that which "are more closely associated with public memory than others" and name examples like "museums, preservation sites, battlefields, memorials" (24).

[2] Jenny Edbauer argues we should revise our understanding of the static, discrete "rhetorical situation" (Bitzer) as "a mixture of processes and encounters" and instead offers "an ecological, or *affective,* rhetorical model is one that reads rhetoric both as a process of distributed emergence and as an ongoing circulation process" (13).

public memory—even as it raises additional questions about the *functionality* of the two epistemic acts of remembering and forgetting within a public.

This teleological functionality has been further explored by Bradford Vivian and his revisionist reclamation of the productive power of "forgetting." Commonly held as a negative, destructive act that is antithetical to "remembering," "forgetting" in Vivian's hands is recognized as a "an organized public practice that may vitally shape both historical wisdom and the cultures of memory that perpetuate it" (46). That is to say, forgetting may, like remembering, sometimes be good for a community. For scholars of public memory, this insight asks us to further consider what the teleological purpose of public memory *is*, and whether that purpose is better enacted through acts of remembering or forgetting.

However, prominent anxieties about maintaining a societal responsibility to remember may mean that the creation *of* a memory place could actually undermine that goal. Consider James Young's argument regarding the counter-memorial movement within Germany's Holocaust memorialization; as he argues, "[i]t is as if assignment monumental form to memory divests us to some degree of the obligation to remember" (855). In other words, concerns about what practices *actually* support remembering, or the continued circulation of knowledge claims within a public's rhetorical ecology, asks us to reflect on how this dialectic may be further complicated by the recognition that there is something more to memory than the establishment of a space. To extend Young's insights, consider any of the monuments or statues you walk by that are a regular part of your daily routine but which, in their everydayness, are basically invisible and likely have no effect on your understanding of some historical act. What does it mean, that is, for a

place of public memory to become so commonplace that it warrants no active reflection from a surrounding public? Building on this, alternatively, what does it mean if "lived" memory no longer animates the circulation of those public memory narratives within a public's rhetorical ecology?

The varying interpretations of this dialectic suggest that its implications remain a compelling question for rhetorical scholars. That is, while some deride this dialectic as "[n]early an assumptive cliché" in public memory studies (Blair et al 18) and others reclaim its potential value, they do not consider the lasting effect of epistemological worldviews on the formation of public memory. I contend we can re-frame the remembering-forgetting dialectic instead as an epistemological anxiety: What and/or whose knowledge "counts" (and *should* count) in the establishment and circulation of these public memory narratives? Such a question heightens the stakes of this dialectic from representation to recognize the totalizing, broad scope effects of various epistemological worldviews on the formation of public memory narratives.

In this dissertation, I examine the remembering-forgetting dialectic as it is expressed within US public memory of the Frontier. This historical focus is significant for two reasons. In the first case, the Frontier and its associated myths, narratives, and histories has long-standing prominence for American identity. In some ways, the Frontier myth is "America's secular creation story" (Anderson qtd. in Stuckey 231). Additionally, these narratives have been recognized by rhetorical scholars for their role in the constitutive construction of an American people (Carpenter 128). For example, it was evoked in the rhetoric of Theodore Roosevelt to "define the meaning of *American* for the modern era" (Dorsey & Harlow 62), was foundational to democratic practices during the

era of Jacksonian politics (Heale 407), and, as Mary Stuckey argues, appears prominently within the rhetoric of Westward expansion. These narratives continue to circulate in the public in the form of blockbuster movies like James Cameron's *Avatar,* computer games like long-popular *The Oregon Trail,* and books like Laura Ingalls Wilder's *Little House on the Prairie.* Given the long-standing association between public memory and identity, then, analyses of sites of US public memory of the Frontier thus provides us with compelling entry points for discussing the modern-day construction of American civic identity.

This historical focus is significant for a second reason: the erasure of Native and Indigenous[3] cultures, languages, and experiences in a hegemonic settler-colonial context. Throughout this dissertation, settler colonialism refers to a type of permanent settlement establishment that is predicated upon the removal and displacement of Native and Indigenous populations (Jacobs; Simpson and Begelman; Tuck and Yang). The United States of America's founding and growth, as a nation, depended upon the removal of cultures and communities who lived on the land of the North American continent; this removal took many forms, especially throughout the nineteenth-century westward expansion of the Frontier, all for the ultimate purpose of opening up those lands for use by pioneers, ranchers, and settlers. Even though Native and Indigenous populations both lived on that land *and* that the US federal government engaged in extensive actions to remove them from the land, common conceptualizations of the Frontier, Manifest Destiny, and westward expansion do not engage with that history. In other words,

[3] In this dissertation, I use the terms "Native" and "Indigenous" to refer to the many diverse communities who live and have lived on the North American continent. When possible, I include an individual or community's tribal affiliation.

hegemonic public memory of the Frontier "forgets"—a rhetorical phenomenon that has previously been found to be common, if not integral to, the epistemic context of settler colonialism (Jacobs; Shotwell). For public memory scholars, then, the relationship between settler colonialism and public memory is a prime site to examine the epistemic complexity of—and use of—acts of remembering and forgetting within a public. That is, the evidenced "forgetting" (Shotwell 37) nature of settler colonialism further indicates the real-world stakes of the remembering-forgetting dialectic within the context of settler-colonial publics like the United States.

Prior work on Frontier public memory has touched on this "forgetting" phenomena by examining how Frontier public memory sites engage in the continued erasure of Native and Indigenous peoples within those narratives. For example, Dickinson et al's analysis of the Buffalo Bill Museum argues that it "privileges Whiteness and masculinity, and carnivalizes the violent colonization of the West" (87); their analyses note the literally centering of whiteness (96) in the museum's spatial organization, as sections focused on Native and Indigenous histories are not interwoven with the exhibit's primary narrative but rather relegated to a separate museum altogether (96). They also assert that "[t]he relegation of Native Americans to the Wild West exhibit suggests that, for the museum, they are peripheral to the history of the American frontier and constructs them primarily as objects of spectacle and entertainment, as an exoticized ethnic Other" (97). Additionally, Cynthia Culver Prescott's *Pioneer Mother Monuments*, a historical project analyzing 125 years of pioneer monuments within the US, found that "Pioneer commemoration ignores the conquest of indigenous peoples, the meeting of diverse cultures in the region, and women as agents rather than just symbols of white

civilization" (10). Crucially, Prescott also notes that these monuments and their associated iconography "became a common language used to express local pride and national identity" (11). Taken together, then, Dickinson et al and Prescott's prior work indicate both that Frontier public memory is a significant area of inquiry for assessing constructions of hegemonic American civic identity, even as they also identify sustained issues of erasure and forgetting.

This dissertation, then, builds on that work to consider how these evidenced issues with erasure and forgetting in settler-colonial public memory speak to the remembering-forgetting dialectic. That is, this dissertation's primary intervention arises from an investigation into how the epistemic context of settler colonialism, as expressed in public memory of the Frontier, may further inform our understanding of the remembering-forgetting dialectic and its stakes.

Research Aims

This dissertation examines the remembering-forgetting dialectic as it is expressed in settler colonialism and to make the case for its continued relevance within the rhetoric of public memory studies. To do so, I ask, what does public memory of the Frontier suggest about the remembering-forgetting dialectic? In order to answer this question, I first descriptively analyze three sites of public memory focused on the Frontier and consider how their individual public memory work contributes to discussions about remembrance and forgetting within the settler-colonial context. I then answer my overall research question by synthesizing my analysis results and considering what that then suggests about the remembering-forgetting dialectic for public memory scholars. My

findings ultimately indicate that dismissals of the remembering-forgetting dialectic overlook the epistemic complexity of public memory; I argue that additional attention to the "problem of change," as John Muckelbauer describes it, within public memory is needed.

My analysis focuses on the following sites:

(1) *The Foy Proctor Historical Park* at the National Ranching Heritage Center, an outdoor museum park comprised of 50 historic buildings that displays the history and development of the ranching industry.

(2) the exhibit *Remembering Our Indian School Days: The Boarding School Experience* at the Heard Museum, a site that documents the experiences of American Indian students who attended the off-reservation boarding school system.

(3) the videogame *The Oregon Trail,* an edutainment game commonly used in history classrooms that digitally recreates the experiences of a pioneer family traveling westward during the nineteenth century.

These sites were primarily selected for their engagement with the history of the Frontier. *The Foy Proctor Historical Park,* for example, focuses on the development of the ranching industry and portrays the experiences of ranchers and pioneers; it builds a ranching-focused public memory narrative of the Frontier. In contrast to this, *Remembering Our Indian School Days* challenges common narratives about the Frontier; the exhibit's focus on the off-reservation boarding schools, a system founded as part of the federal government's westward expansion efforts, creates a public memory narrative centered on the experiences of Native and Indigenous peoples. *The Oregon Trail*, on the

other hand, articulates common narratives about the Frontier through its game design; the game's procedural rhetorics encourages players to identify with their pioneer-avatars as they digitally cross the western Frontier and thereby replicates the "forgetting" (Shotwell 37) of settler colonialism. *The Foy Proctor Historical Park* and *The Oregon Trail* both articulate hegemonic narratives of the Frontier, while *Remembering Our Indian School Days* disrupts those narratives.

As sites of public memory, the *Foy Proctor Historical Park* and *Remembering Our Indian School Days* fit common rhetorical definitions of places of public memory; Blair et al, for instance, name those sites "memory places" and explain that they "are more closely associated with public memory than others" and include examples like "museums, preservation sites, battlefields, memorials" (24). As two sites that are components of museums, then, the *Foy Proctor Historical Park* and *Remembering Our Indian School Days* are examples of sites commonly featured within the rhetoric of public memory scholarship. *The Oregon Trail,* however, is a videogame—and my rationale for taking it as a site of public memory is two-fold. First, rhetorical scholarship has increasingly expanded its domain to incorporate non-traditional texts within its scope; Aaron Hess' prior work on the public memory built from the World War II videogame *Medal of Honor: Rising Sun,* as well as Joshua Daniel-Wariya's work on the simulation game Decision Points at the George W. Bush Presidential Library and Museum, are two prime examples of this expansion. Hess and Daniel-Wariya's analyses ultimately suggest that increased attention to how digital, pop culture texts may construct memory work is needed. My work on *The Oregon Trail,* then, extends Hess and Daniel-Wariya's prior examinations of how videogames may build public memory. Second, *The Oregon Trail*'s

lasting popularity and sustained, multi-decade use within a classroom setting suggests that, as a text, it has had a large impact on the ways in which American schoolchildren conceptualize the Frontier. By taking this popular, well-circulated text as a site of public memory, then, I am to further establish what hegemonic public memory narratives of the Frontier entail. In sum, then, by associating these three sites together—with their varied historical focuses, purposes, and meaning-making practices— I am to develop a nuanced understanding of how narratives of remembering and forgetting appear within public memory of the Frontier.

In my analysis of each site, I answer the following questions:

(1) What primary public memory narrative is constructed within each site?

(2) What meaning-making practices are used in the construction of each site's narrative?

(3) How is identification encouraged within each site?

My attention to "meaning-making" operates within a cultural rhetorics framework. Powell et al, for example, use "meaning-making" to refer to expansive storytelling practices that make use of a variety of epistemological resources. I focus on meaning-making because of its intentionally broad scope and ability to reference a multiplicity of rhetorical practices, whether it is the use of landscaping in a public memory site, the display of objects, or the constitutive work of procedural rhetorics. I then build on my analysis of each site's meaning-making to consider how the site encourages identification between site visitors and those who experiences are portrayed within the site.

Throughout this dissertation, my understanding of identification is primarily informed by Kenneth Burke's theories, as well as M. Elizabeth Weiser's and Gregory

Clark's expansion of them. Burke famously defined identification as the work of consubstantiality; he argues "[t]o identify A with B is to make A "consubstantial" with B" (21). For Burke, consubstantiality involves the sameness of "substance" across two individuals, even while differences and distinctness between those individuals may also exist (21). For example, he writes:

> While consubstantial with its parents with the "firsts" from which it is derived, the offspring is nonetheless apart from them. In this sense, there is nothing abstruse in the statement that the offspring both is and is not one with its parentage. Similarly, two persons may be identified in terms of some principle they share in common, an "identification" that does not deny their distinctness. (21)

That is, identification, in many aspects, is enabled through the recognition of sameness, or similarity. Within the context of museums and public memory, specifically, Weiser has previously enumerated the different forms that identification—as the demonstration of consubstantiality—can take. She explicitly draws from Burke's theory, arguing that "[i]n order to promote identification, museums promote interaction, a kind of dialogue between visitor and exhibit identities" (107). That is, for Weiser, identification work, and that emphasis on shared substance, are built between museum visitors and those whose experiences are included within the site through "interaction." This "interaction" can involve at least three strategies: 1) "*Share Your Story,"* (107, emphasis original), 2) *"Play a Role,"* (108, emphasis original), and 3) "*Become One of Us,*"*"* (110, emphasis original). Here, Weiser's attention to the interactive dimension of identification prompts us to consider how a site's spatial, textual, and material decisions—that is, its meaning-making practices—contribute to such work. Furthermore, Gregory Clark's discussion of

the spatial dimensions of identification also inform my understanding. Working within a Burkean framework, Clark argues that identification can also be facilitated through *shared* experiences, or what he calls a "public experience" (27)—a concept that is pivotal to this dissertation's overall framework (discussed in greater detail in the theory section).

Within the context of settler colonialism, analyzing identification efforts is especially important because it enables us to consider how a public memory site may position visitors into taking up that site's narrative and historic content. By attending to identification efforts in my site analysis, then, I draw from these theorists in order to consider how each site positions visitors within the broader context of remembering and forgetting within public memory of the Frontier.

Methods

This dissertation makes use of several methods: analysis, close reading, archival research, and rhetorical criticism. Each of these methods enables me to identify and assess the various meaning-making practices utilized within each site; I have adapted this mixed method approach because I recognize that, just as our meaning-making practices vary across contexts, so too must our ways of engagement. In varying my methods, then, I intend to develop a more robust understanding of the *process* of public memory through an attention to these multiple practices, as my scope covers the built environment, materiality, and digital spaces. By layering these methods, I aim to identify and analyze each site's "deep narrative," or what Elizabeth Weiser call an exhibit's central framing that "tells visitors how they should interpret the artifacts, the placards, the supposedly neutral object-based epistemologies they are examining" (58); that is, the deep narrative

can also be understood as the site's overall public memory narrative, one that also articulates an epistemic worldview through its meaning-making. After identifying each site's overall public memory narrative, I then consider how specific meaning-making practices are used within each site to build that public memory narrative and to encourage identification between site visitors and those whose experiences are prioritized within the site.

My site analysis is largely informed by rhetorical scholarship like Dickinson et al's *Places of Public Memory: The Rhetoric of Museums and Memorials,* Elizabeth Weisser's *Museum Rhetoric: Building Civic Identity in National Spaces,* and Dave Tell's *Remembering Emmett Till.* In my analyses of *The Historical Proctor Park* and *Remembering Our Indian School Days,* I attend to the interplay among spatial design, text within the exhibit, and materiality; more specifically, I consider how the exhibit's spatial design, display of each exhibit's respective collection, and use of text interact on each other to build their public memory narrative. My analysis of *The Oregon Trail,* on the other hand, is primarily informed by Ian Bogost's prior work on "procedural rhetoric," or what he defines as "the practice of using processes persuasively" (29), as it appears within videogames.

When possible, I also engage in archival research to further contextualize the public memory site, its stated purpose, and intended audience. My use of archival research is informed by rhetorical historiographic practices; as Susan Jarrat puts forth, one method for historiography should involve "the denial of progressive continuity" (12) and the writing of "narratives distinguished by multiple or open causality, the indeterminacies of which are then resolved through the self-conscious use of probable

arguments" (12). This deliberate resistance to totalizing narratives is even more important when writing about the effects and practices of settler colonialism because such histories are usually already reductive. Ultimately, I use these various methods in order to identify each site's primary public memory narrative, its meaning-making practices, and its identification efforts.

In doing so, however, I am aware of how my positionality affects my ability to conduct this research and engage in these public memory narratives and Frontier history; as a white scholar, my purpose here is not to speak for any community, or to make sweeping comments about how certain histories *should* be represented. Instead, my purpose is to examine the use of certain meaning-making practices within three public memory sites, to attend to the epistemic implications of those strategies, and to consider how that memory work ultimately connects to questions about equity, inclusivity, and justice in public memory practices. In doing so, I hope to better understand the complexity of knowledge formation as it contributes to overarching concerns about remembering and forgetting within this lasting settler-colonial history

Theoretical Framework

This project pivots around the functionality of place in publics and their memories; through case studies, this dissertation examines the meaning-making practices of three sites and considers how such acts may re-frame our understanding of the remembering-forgetting dialectic within the epistemic stakes of settler colonialism. By epistemic stakes, I am referring to questions central to the politics of knowledge building: who gets to make knowledge? Whose knowledge is recognized as such? On what

grounds? And who determines those grounds? The theoretical framework of this dissertation, then, is informed by an interdisciplinary array of scholarship that recognizes the rhetorical construction of knowledge, the constitutive functionality of place, and its role in the narration of identity. In this section, I highlight the theories that enable me to identify the various epistemological frames and resulting meaning-making practices that participate in those frames, as they are articulated within my three case studies.

The primary framework of this dissertation is the rhetoric of space, and the space of rhetoric. This dissertation thus builds on Gregory Clark's *Rhetorical Landscapes in America: Variations on a Theme from Kenneth Burke* in order to consider how three sites of public memory and their meaning-making practices "constitute" identity through the potentiality of their associated "public experiences." In this work, Clark applies Kenneth Burke's paradigm-shifting theories of rhetoric as identification to place and advances a theory of "public experience" as a constitutive act. In his view, a public experience is "a transformation of individual identity in ways that enact a considerable rhetorical power by shaping the attitudes and, whether immediately or eventually, the acts of the people who come to understand themselves as a community" (27). He also describes it as "[t]he common imaginary and shared sense of being at home" (26). These experiences are connected to "civic tourism," which Clark defines as "a fundamentally rhetorical experience that prompts the individuals to make themselves over in the image of a collective identity that they find symbolized in their national landscape" (25). In other words, a public experience is some shared moment of reality that resonates across a multiplicity of individuals, thereby enabling them to position themselves within a broader civic identity. This theory is integral to my project because it rightly recognizes how

place—especially those of public memory—may participate in the construction of identity. Taking this theory of "public experience" as a starting point, then, enables me to then consider (1) what practices are used within those sites to build that public experience, (2) which identities are privileged within those sites, and (3) which meaning-making practices "frame" the reality of that public experience. This dissertation thus extends the implications of Clark's work to consider how the rhetorical acts enable a "public experience" are also acts of epistemological framing (that is, meaning-making).

In doing so, this work also draws from Dana Cloud's astute analysis of "frames" in her book *Reality Bites: Rhetoric and the Circulation of Truth Claims in US Political Culture.* In this work, Cloud argues for a "rhetorical realism," or "the idea that communicators can bring knowledge from particular perspectives and experiences into the domain of common sense, and that we can evaluate truth claims in public culture on the basis of whether they exhibit fidelity to the experience and interests of the people they claim to describe and represent" (15). In other words, Cloud advocates for an epistemological theory that recognizes the always-present shaping, framing, and filtering of language use on knowledge claims; she argues that "there are no facts without interpretation" (5), a claim that immediately resonates with the stakes of public memory, as these narratives frame experiences and create the possibilities for engagement for visitors and audience members with the knowledge communicated within a site. Also of use here is Cloud's take on a long-standing difference between episteme and doxa, where episteme is "ground-level experiential knowledge" and doxa is "commonly held belief" (37), as we should also consider how the "shaping" of knowledge that occurs within public memory sites makes use of episteme and doxa; what is commonly held? What

needs to be established? What kinds of evidence are included? What is the effect of them?

To re-frame this within the context of public memory studies and Clark's "public experience, Cloud's arguments about framing are a helpful way to discuss how and why some narratives circulate more than others within a public's rhetorical ecology, and to consider the role of rhetoric in that circulation. That is, just as we must attend to the constitutive functionality of a site, we must also consider how the epistemological framing of that site has a "fidelity" (15) that speaks to an individual or a community. To recognize this partiality, however, is also to ask questions about the construction and inclusivity of that identity; who, that is, has access—both physical or conceptual—to that public identity?

Such questions about the construction of place and space bring us to another term: the somatic norm, as developed by Nirmal Puwar in her work *Space Invaders: Race, Gender, and Bodies Out of Place.* In this book, Puwar analyses the exclusionary dimensions of space, and how there are certain bodies and identities that are seen as the "natural" inhabitants of those places; this "natural" inhabitant is the somatic norm, or the assumed universal body, a body that may walk through physical places like a public building or abstract spaces like our theories of political philosophy or rhetoric. Puwar explains that the somatic norm is an assumed "universal" body/human; these humans are "disembodied" in the sense that "the body is irrelevant to this positionality" (57). Puwar argues that "[t]he capacity to be unmarked by one's body, in terms of race, gender, or for that matter any other social feature, is a key component of what makes a universal body" (57).

The somatic norm is a valuable theory for this dissertation because it provides terminology for analyzing a site to see *who* the assumed universal body is. That is, if we recognize that sites of public memory may function rhetorically to create a "public experience" that positions visitors into some civic identity and that such acts participate in epistemological framing, then we must also attend to the construction *of* that identity, and to ask which bodies are seen, ideally, as inhabitants of that identity and epistemological framework. To reframe this: *who* is the somatic norm of these public memory sites, and *how* does the construction of this identity participate in the remembering-forgetting dialectic as it may be understood within white settler colonialism?

Literature Review: Rhetoric and Public Memory

Rhetoric and memory have long been entwined. Famously immortalized in the often-told tale of poet Simonides of Ceos, who was able to identify the dismembered remains of dinner guests because of his rhetorical training (Blair et al 1; Yates 1-2), this relationship is formally codified in the rhetorical canon, of which memory is one. Scholarship focused on memory—particular that of *public* memory—has flourished in recent decades, a subfield that cuts across disciplines that includes rhetoric, history, philosophy, and sociology. This scholarship, as described by Blair at al, increasingly positions "memory as an activity of collectivity rather than (or in addition to) individuated, cognitive work" (5-6); in doing so, it becomes even more legibly entangled in the art of rhetoric. This literature review focuses on this entanglement and surveys key texts and theoretical contributions in rhetoric of public memory scholarship. Such an

emphasis, however, means that the disciplinary contributions of other fields like philosophy and sociology are not consistently incorporated; when they are, as is the case in analyses on the role of regret, it is for their salience in the analytic work of this project. Such a limitation is not meant to assert the primacy of rhetorical scholarship, but may rather be read as act to prioritize the prior contributions that most immediately inform this project. In this line, this literature review focuses specifically on the role of place, regret, and tourism in public memory.

Once, the rhetorical art of memory referred solely to mnemonic techniques orators in their rhetorical practices, a use that is extensively documented in Frances Yates's foundational 1966 work *The Art of Memory.* Here, memory is defined as a rhetorical art that was "a technique by which the orator could improve his memory, which would enable him to deliver long speeches from memory with unfailing accuracy" (Yates 2). This work speaks to the centrality of memory within the art of rhetoric in the traditional canon, describing it as "the great nerve center of the European tradition" (368). In doing so, and in offering historical arguments for this long-standing centrality, Yates articulates a premise shared across several scholars: that memory is rhetorical.

While our scholarship has since expanded beyond a discussion of mnemonic techniques, this premise remains key. In fact, Yates even anticipates potential expansions to this area, as she ends this work with a forward-looking discussion of memory's interdisciplinary location. She writes:

> The history of the organization of memory touches at vital points on the history of religion and ethics, of philosophy and psychology, of art and literature, of scientific method. The artificial memory as a part of rhetoric belongs into the

> rhetoric tradition; memory as a power of the soul belongs with theology. When we begin to reflect on these profound affiliations of our theme it begins to seem after all not so surprising that the pursuit of it should have opened up new views of some of the greatest manifestations of our culture. (389)

This description, when coupled with her earlier discussion of memory's marginalized status as a "forgotten" art in "comparatively modern times" (2) has lasting effects on the current scope of rhetorical scholarship. The primary contributions of this text, then, concern its historical re-orientation for the value and uses of memory within the canon of rhetoric. Such a historical focus is significant for locating the origins of the memory/rhetoric relationship, even as one limitation here is the restriction to the Western tradition of rhetoric. Nonetheless, this text is foundational, even as our discipline has since moved towards *public* memory, specifically.

What makes memory *public*, though? This shift from the individual mnemonic techniques of orators to the broad stokes, high-stakes sweep of *public* memory deserves additional discussion. In fact, such a discussion has been a focus of many definitional- and disciplinary terrain- driven inquiries, and while many of these inquiries have different inflections, what remains consistent is the attention to constitutive collectivity. Edward Casey's work, for example, provides a four-pronged definitional schema that is useful for understanding the expansion of memory from mnemonic techniques to public memory. In his view, memory can be broken into four forms: individual, social, collective, and public (20). Of importance are the differences and interconnection among social, collective, and public, where social memory is "memory shared by those who are *already* relate to each other" (21), collective memory is "*distributed* over a given

population or set of places" (24), and public memory arises from all forms (24) even as it is unique in its emphasis on "co-reminiscing" (25). Here, this schema is significant for its theorization of the differences across various forms of memory, as it asks us to think about what makes public memory unique—and for Casey, that is the act of collective reminiscing.

This attention to collectivity can also be seen in James Bodnar's definition; he explains that public memory is what "emerges from the intersection of official and vernacular cultural expressions" (13) and that it "is produced from a political discussion" usually focused on "fundamental issues about the entire existence of a society: its organization, structure of power, and the very meaning of its past and present" (14). Bodnar's definition recognizes the dialogic formation of public memory narratives—that is to say, the inherent rhetorical acts of public memory formation. These assertions articulate the rhetorical dimensions of public memory as both process and product, recognizing its "symbolic supports" in various places and its dialogic emergence.

A third important definition can be found in Blair et al's work, which contains the following argument for the use of the modifier "public"; they argue that it "situates shared memory where it is often most salient to collectives, in constituted audiences, positioned in some kind of relationship of mutuality that implicates their common interests, investments, or destinies, with profound implications" (6). Finally, a fourth definition can be found in Jeffrey Olick's proposed use of "collective memory," as it refers to "a sensitizing term for a wide variety of mnemonic processes, practices, and outcomes neurological, personal, aggregated, and collective" and calls for us to refer to such resulting scholarship as "*social memory studies*" (34, emphasis original).

These various definitions recognize the dialogic, rhetorical nature of public memory, and draw our attention to the ways in which publics and memories are constituted through rhetoric. Such attention has been further noted by Kendal Phillips, in his introduction to the 2004 collection *Framing Public Memory,* where he argues that "the study of memory is largely one of the rhetoric of memories" (2), and by Blair et al in their introduction to the 2010 collection *Places of Public Memory: the Rhetoric of Museums and Memorials,* who contend that "[p]ublic memory and public memory places are fundamentally rhetorical" (2). They go on to explain that "we must acknowledge public memory to be "invented," not in the sense of a fabrication, but in the more limited sense that public memories are constructed of rhetorical resources" (13). The "inventive" aspect of public memory is particularly relevant for this project, as it identifies the fact that meaning-making is central to the rhetorical work of public memory.

Blair et al's introduction contains an important summation of the "consensual (or nominally consensual) assumptions" (6) of public memory scholarship. They are:

> (1) memory is activated by present concerns, issues, or anxieties; (2) memory narrates shared identities, constructing senses of communal belonging; (3) memory is animated by affect; (4) memory is partial, partisan, and thus often contested; (4) memory relies on material and/or symbolic supports; (6) memory has a history. (6)

Here, it is important to remember that their identification of these premises is not totalizing, and that various scholars have different takes on each; I quote them here, though, to provide a base from which much rhetoric of public memory scholarship extends from, and because they rightly pivot around the previously established rhetorical

nature of memory. Blair et al's insights are important because they further recognize that while memory and rhetoric are connected, which has long been historically established, public memory is *built from* and *with* rhetoric[4].

Place and memory are intimately connected and, again, the terminology for these varied "sites" varies across scholars. Yates' historical treatment of the memory starts begins its appearance in the *Rhetorica Ad Herenniun,* Cicero's *De Oratore,* and Quintilian's *Institutio oratoria*; in her discussion of the *Ad Herennium,* she notes that one prominent mnemonic technique involved act of cognitively imprinting thoughts on *loci* (6-7). Here, we see that place has long been intimately associated with rhetoric and memory. Notably, Blair et al's "memory places" is a simple, accessible term for a site that is "more closely associated with public memory than others" and it immediately calls to mind their examples of monuments, memorials, battlefields, and museums (24). They also note the functionality of these places, and explain that "memory places may function as the secular oracles for the current moment of a civic culture" (27) and that acts of place-making are "vital to any understanding of the means by which that memory is formed and by which it may be embraced" (25). Here, the specific attention to place-making is important because it asks us to consider *how* such places come into being[5].

[4] These varied definitions of *public* memory help us to see the expansion from an individual act to a collective process, and while this work is, on the whole, valuable for doing so, it could benefit from increased attention to the robust area of public spheres theory, as the theories of the public developed by Jurgen Habermas and Hannah Arendt, and the compelling critiques raised by feminist scholars like Nancy Fraser and Seyla Benhabib, would be a significant addition here. That is, if we are to study "public memory," we must also study what makes a "public," just as we most know what makes a "memory."

[5] My analyses of the *Foy Proctor Historical Park,* in particular, contributes to this area through its attention to how the site's use of meaning-making practices are used to rhetorically invent a symbolic landscape of the Frontier; that is, how the site engages in place-making as a primary component of its memory work.

A greater attention to the broader context of a "memory place" can be found in Dave Tell's theorization about the "ecology of memory." As he defines it, the ecology of memory names the "interanimating force of race, place, and commemoration" (5), particularly within the memoryscape of Emmett Till's murder in the Mississippi Delta. Throughout his project, Tell maintains that

> …Till commemoration bears the imprint of the Delta, that the physical, cultural, and symbolic landscape of the Delta has been permanently altered by the memory of Till's murder, and that racism works most powerfully at those moments in which it is difficult to distinguish racism from the natural environment, when historical revisionism is driven by soils and prejudice at the same time, and when intolerance seems to be a function of a river's path through the Delta. (10)

Tell's term recognizes the geographic complexity of public memory, noting that not only are individual sites of public memory are rhetorical, but also that the broader ideological terrain and natural environment in which they exist have an effect on the establishment and circulation of those narratives.

These various terms rightly locate the primacy of place, and scholarship in this area follows through on this recognition by offering commentary on the functionality of public memory. M. Elizabeth Weiser's extensive analysis of the "genre" of museum rhetorics, for example, identities a number of common strategies across national museums; her focus on the interplay between text, place, object, narrative strategies, and temporal arrangement enables us to better see how a site's "deep narrative," or what she defines as the "implicit narrative" that "tells visitors how they should interpret the artifacts, the placards, the supposedly neutral object-based epistemologies they are

examining" (58) constructs such public memory narratives and positions visitors to identify with those narratives. Here, Weiser's work is valuable for 1) its terminology for conducting spatial analysis, and 2) its connections with the idea of reality framing, especially as it may be understood within Dana Cloud's theory of rhetorical realism.

Such attention to museums, however, must also recognize their problematic historical origins in colonial enterprises that objectified and displayed cultures in unethical ways; Lisa King's 2017 *Legible Sovereignties: Rhetoric, Representations, and Native American Museums* offers a valuable re-orientation in our scholarship for thinking about decolonial memory practices within museums. Her articulation of "legible sovereignties," a term derived from Richard Scott Lyon's idea of "rhetorical sovereignty" and Blair et al's "legibility" holds that it is "a means to approach and think through public declarations of rhetorical sovereignty that acknowledge the communicative needs of all potential audiences but tell the difficult truth and assert positive Native and Indigenous presence" (6). King contends that Native and Indigenous museums are increasingly recognizing that "the act of rhetorical sovereignty must be accessible to a variety of audiences, or the communicative act fails" (3). She goes on to explain that "If museums are colonial institutions at their roots, then utilizing them as a means to rhetorical sovereignty means dealing with the doubled complication of visitors' expectations of museums *and* visitors' expectations of "Indians"" (3). King's work is a highly significant contribution to public memory scholarship because it asks us to both recognize the problematic traditions of museums—often integral to public memory narratives—and to better work to incorporate the decolonial strategies that Native and Indigenous museums may employ as part of their productive reclamation of those spaces.

Here, the interplay across these museum-focused sources draws our attention to a needed area of inquiry: what rhetorical strategies are used by museums, who uses them, and for what purpose? Such questions must be addressed in our analyses of memory places, especially as we must increasingly account for and reflexively contend with the on-going epistemic effects of settler colonialism and we incorporate decolonial methods for responding to them. One productive scholarship strand that provides helpful insights for dealing with the lasting effects of societal atrocities is that which is focused on questions of responsibility and the so-called "politics of regret."

This term, as discussed by sociologist Jeffrey Olick in his work *The Politics of Regret: On Collective Memory and Historical Responsibility,* recognizes the turn towards public, government articulations of regret; as Olick defines it, the "politics of regret" are "a new framework for confronting past misdeeds" (14). Such a turn is significant because it asks us to reflect on the purpose of public admissions, and how such acts create the conditions under which the "tomorrow" of a nation is constructed. Olick recognizes the growth of public apologies, writing that "Mnemonic resistance has become a common strategy in the past few decades" (139) and that "a general willingness to acknowledge collective historical misdeeds has disseminated throughout the word, leading to more and more frequent official and unofficial apologies" (139).

On the other hand, however, we should also be wary of the implications of these public admissions; as James Youngs explains, several artists in Germany were concerned about the ways in which the creation *of* a memory place for Holocaust memorialization may, in some ways, disavow a public of the responsibility to actively remember those actions. There were also concerns about how the placial *form* of the memory would

counter the nuance necessary for responsible memory; Young explains this concern as "[a] monument against fascism, therefore, would have to be a monument against itself; against the traditionally didactic function of monuments, against their tendency to displace the past they would have us contemplate, and finally, against the authoritarian propensity toward monumental spaces to reduce viewers to passive spectators" (857-858). I tie this discussion to my own work because it raises important questions about the functionality of a memory place—both intended and actual—and how that functionality contributes to a community's collectively and future actions. Ultimately, Young's work asks us to consider how the various forms of memory and the various articulations of public regret and/or responsibility also contribute to that public memory; it also implicitly raises questions about the proposed functionality of the remembering-forgetting dialect, as this discussion is an example of anxieties about the "forgetting" that may occur precisely *because* of the establishment of a discrete memory place.

An intriguing counterpart to Young's analysis, however, can be found in the chapter "Shadings of Regret: America and Germany" in *Framing Public Memory,* where scholars Barry Schwartz and Horst-Alfred Heinrich analyze differences in articulations of personal responsibility between Americans and Germans. In this analysis, the researchers ultimately argue that "political exigencies, particularly international and internal political pressures, operate on American and German governments to express regret officially, while cultural values induce individual Germans to take seriously claims that Americans are hard-pressed to understand, namely, that people can be morally responsible for events in which they did not participate" (117). The implications of this argument are, of course, that cultural valuations of responsibility—personal and thus collective—affect public

memory. Returning to Young's argument, then, we can see more broadly that anxieties over public memory are also informed by our ideas about whether we inherit responsibility across generations, and what should be done about it.

The relationship between responsibility and public memory is another significant aspect of this scholarship; here, Alexis Shotwell's definition of responsibility is integral because of its deliberate contextualization within the on-going implications of white settler colonialism and decolonial responses; I draw on her uptake of Sue Campbell's notion of "forward-looking responsibility," which can be understood as a "practice of, repeatedly, making ourselves accountable" (46), because it recognizes a sense of collectivity that is found throughout public memory scholarship. As Shotwell explains, "I am aiming for a kind of settler politics of memory that does not try to stand outside the past in all its horror, that does not individualize the possible response to how we are implicated in that past, and that opens possibilities for collective action" (46). This dissertation takes seriously the notion of responsibility in memory practices, and it extends Shotwell's nuanced analysis of decolonial memory practices to consider how the meaning-making practices used within each site, and the resulting public memory narratives, participate in the (ir)responsible remembering-forgetting dialectic, as it may be understood within the constraints of settler colonialism in US public memory of the Frontier.

An additional, ever-present constraint on public memory, however, arises from the effects of tourism; one sub-field within this area focuses on the role of money, consumerism, and tourism on the establishment, consumption, and circulation of public memory narratives. Places of public memory are often tourist definitions, and as such are

evoked in and constructed by "tourism imaginaries" (Chronis qtd. in Poirot & Shevaun 97) as well as are constrained and/or enabled by funding schemes. To put this another way, money has a lasting effect on the establishment and circulation of public memory narratives; attending to the decisions about which public memory narratives are funded may thus be one interesting site of inquiry to uncover the dialogic formation of these narratives, that is, what the public/funding agency values. The material realities of public memory mean that certain narratives are funded while others are not—and this reality becomes increasingly more high-stakes as we consider the aforementioned issues with coloniality, objectification, and responsibility within memory places. Thus, we should be wary of how the logics of funding distribution for memory places may reify certain problematic paradigms.

Dave Tell's analysis of the memorialization of Emmett Till's murder in the Mississippi Delta is one compelling source that further establishes the nefarious effects of money on public memory. Throughout Tell's extensive case studies, one reality becomes clear: sometimes, public memory sites are funded and built because the narratives that are articulated in support of those sites are deemed fundable. That is, the funding process has a direct role in the creation of public memory; as Tell explains in the case of a Mississippi Civil Rights Historical Sites grant-funded renovation of Ben Roy's Service Station, a site that was not directly involved in the events surrounding the murder of Emmett Till but has since become involved in the subsequent memorialization due to its proximity to the ruins of Bryant's Grocery and Meat Market, the site of the alleged whistle that incited the murder (161-162). Tell argues

> The restored service station is a unqualified evocation of a fictional past in which the infrastructure of American life was unmarked by race. The irony is thick: the murder of Emmett Till made the restoration of Ben Roy's possible, but the restoration itself casts a vision of the Mississippi Delta can only register as an aberration. (166-167)

To re-frame this, Tell's discussion of the funding process for the restoration of certain sites in the memorialization of Emmett Till highlights the ways in which the priorities and worldviews of funding agencies can have a direct effect on *which* memory places become formally established as such. That is, Tell's work is important, here, because it helps better understand the complicated "rhetorical ecology" in which a memory place resides; such an insight becomes even more significant as we consider the ways in which the "fidelity" (Cloud 15) of a narrative aligns with our perspectival experiences and beliefs.

Poirot & Shevaun's analysis of Charleston also draws our attention to the lasting effects of tourism; drawing on Athinodoros Chronis's idea of the "tourism imaginary," they argue that tourism is a valuable "place-making technology" (101), writing that "tourism becomes the diffuse architecture of historical memory in heritage tourist destinations as its practices animate and vivify narratives in ways that contour visiting publics' material experiences of a locale and latent beliefs about our nation's past" (93). They then call on us to attend to these "tourism imaginaries" in our analyses, urging us "to continue to develop ways to read these animations—these diffuse architectures of memory constructed through tourism—in order to broaden our understanding of those features of public culture that constrain and amplify the power to secure a variety of

ideological commitments and economic interests" (112). The key take away here, then, is the methodological urging to attend to the broader context of a place. That is to say, just as we must attend to the narratives articulated *within* and *by* a, as Weiser encourages us with her term "deep narrative," so too must we include the broader symbolic terrain of the place's "tourism imaginary," and its ability to resonate with perspectival experiences and epistemic frameworks as they circulate within a rhetorical ecology. This dissertation thus extends this work by merging such investigations in its attention to meaning-making practices within its three case studies.

Additionality, investigations of the modality of memory have increasingly expanded to recognize the ways in which digital sites, like museum spaces, may function as places of public memory. Notably, Aaron Hess's analysis of the game *Medal of Honor: Rising Sun,* where players virtually experience certain aspects of World War II; Hess argues that "the use of narrative memorializing in interactive space creates an experience of public memory, giving video game players and active but private (in the home) role in memory-making" (341). He also contends that "[t]he use of digital interactive media, then, highlights an exceptional location of public memory, whereby the creation of memory via a public artifact is experienced in private spaces" (341). In other words, Hess's article calls on us to further attend to how interactive modes of public memory—like that of video games—may enable new identification possibilities for visitors/audience members/players. This dissertation builds on Hess's work to consider how the computer game *The Oregon Trail* may have a similar rhetorical functionality, and thus it also contributes to an expansion of the scope of public memory scholarship.

Chapter Overview

This dissertation contributes to rhetoric of public memory scholarship in three significant ways. In the first, it extends the prior Frontier-focused work of Dickinson et al and Prescott by analyzing three memory places and their contributions to/participation in the tension between remembering-forgetting in the US history of the frontier. In the second, it reconsiders scholarly debates on the remembering-forgetting dialectic to consider underlying epistemological anxieties and rights to knowledge. In the third, it attends to a diversity of sites and meaning-making practices in which these narratives are expressed, like museum exhibits and video game. An overview of each chapter can be found below.

In Chapter Two, "Histories of the Frontier," I provide historical context for my upcoming analysis of each public memory site. I first establish a working definition of the Frontier, tracing its development from a literal boundary place into a highly symbolic, mythic space. I do so by discussing Frederick Jackson Turner's 1893 essay "The Significance of the Frontier in American History" and reviewing prior rhetorical scholarship on the Frontier's continued articulation within dominant American public discourse. I then provide an overview of three dimensions of Frontier history; these dimensions arose from each public memory's sites selected historical focus. They include: (1) the ranching industry, (2) the off-reservation boarding school system, and (3) the Oregon Trail.

In Chapter Three "Inventing the Frontier: Land, Settler Colonialism, and Public Memory at the National Ranching Heritage Center," I analyze the *Foy Proctor Historical Park.* In my analysis, I focus on the park's display of historic buildings, landscaping

decisions, and staging of the buildings' interiors; I ultimately argue these meaning-making practices invent a symbolic Frontier landscape within the park, one that then articulates a hegemonic public memory narrative of the Frontier. In making this argument, I build on Gregory Clark's previous theorization of *landscapes.* As Clark argues, land—a physical place—becomes landscape—symbolic space—through rhetorical means (9); I invert his theory to develop an additional dimension, one that recognizes how a symbolic space, like the Frontier, may be rhetorically invented within a specific, physical place, like the *Foy Proctor Historical Park.* That is, I argue that symbolic spaces may be invented within specific places through rhetorical means. By analyzing this site and developing this theory, then, I call for rhetorical scholarship to build on its prior examinations of *place* in public memory to attend to the use of *land* in public memory.

In Chapter Four ""Unforgetting" and Legible Sovereignty: Public Memory in *Remembering Our Indian School Days: The Boarding School Experience,*" I analyze the Heard Museum's exhibit. In my analysis, I focus on the exhibit's display of objects, use of first-person voices, and design of the built environment; I argue these meaning-making practices build an "unforgetting" (Dunbar-Ortiz qtd. in Shotwell 37) public memory narrative, one that documents the experiences of American Indian students who attended the off-reservation boarding school system. The exhibit's "unforgetting" narrative disrupts hegemonic public memory narratives of the Frontier, and provides substantial evidence for the epistemic complexity of the relationship between remembering and forgetting in public memory. By making this argument, I build on prior work examining the decolonization of museums, the articulation of "legible sovereignties" (King), and

previous theorizations about the relationship between public memory and settler colonialism.

In Chapter Five "Historical Simulation and Procedural Rhetorics: Public Memory in *The Oregon Trail,"* I turn towards a videogame as a site of public memory. More specifically, I analyze the procedural rhetorics of *The Oregon Trail,* paying particular attention to how the game's procedural representation of the pioneer experience and narrative framing of westward expansion positions players into identifying with their pioneer-avatars and conceptualizing Frontier history solely within a settler-colonial frame. In doing so, I build on Katherine Slater's prior analysis of *The Oregon Trail* to consider how the game's procedural rhetorics may function as a method of public memory and extend Bogost's work to consider how public memory narratives, and the rhetorical frames that inform them, may have procedural dimensions. I ultimately argue *The Oregon Trail'*s procedural rhetorics encourage players to identify with pioneers, thereby replicating the "forgetting" (Shotwell 37) and "erasure" (Stuckey 232) of settler-colonialism in an interactive site.

My conclusion "Between Remembering and Forgetting" answers my overall research question, What does public memory of the Frontier suggest about the remembering-forgetting dialectic? To do so, I first synthesize the findings of my three site analyses, paying particular attention to what my findings suggest about public memory. I then turn specifically towards the remembering-forgetting dialectic and, drawing on John Muckelbauer's prior work on the problem of change, argue for the continued relevance of the remembering-forgetting dialectic in public memory studies.

CHAPTER 2

HISTORIES OF THE FRONTIER

Introduction

In 1893, Frederick Jackson Turner proclaimed the Frontier was formally closed in his famous essay "The Significance of the Frontier in American History." The Frontier, a then-physical boundary space that demarcated the western edge of the United States, had existed in many iterations, shifting as the nation expanded across the North American continent. Once American settlements had reached the Pacific Ocean, however, the horizon that pulled the Frontier onwards vanished; as a liminal space between civilization and wilderness, the Frontier could no longer exist as a physical area once the continent had been settled by Americans. Turner, a historian, argues as much in his essay, citing an 1890 document from the Superintendent of the Census that states "[u]p to and including 1880 the country had a frontier of settlement, but at present the unsettled areas has been so broken into by isolated bodies of settlement that there can hardly be said to be a frontier line" (qtd. 1). Building on this, Turner goes on to argue that "[t]his brief official statement marks the closing of a great historic movement" (1).

The history of that "great historic movement" is the focus of this chapter. In it, I discuss three aspects of the history of the Frontier in order to provide background information for my upcoming analysis and further explicate the stakes of public remembering and forgetting within the context of the Frontier. In the first case, my discussion of this history is necessarily limited; while the entire arc of Frontier history contains innumerable moments of significance, I have focused this chapter specifically on

three aspects that are emphasized within my selected case studies. These aspects, as they relate specifically to the Frontier, include: (1) the ranching industry, (2) the off-reservation boarding schools, and (3) the Oregon Trail. By discussing these aspects, I aim to provide historical context[6] that supports the upcoming analysis of each site of public memory. In the second case, the history of the Frontier is a history of settler-colonial conquest; the hegemonic, common narrative of the Frontier—represented above, in Turner's essay, and in the many modern representations of the Frontier—frequently represents the land of the North American content as empty. It was not—but the experiences of Native and Indigenous communities, and the actions deliberately undertaken by the US federal government in order to make that land open to westward-bound settlers, are seldom present in these narratives. Mary E. Stuckey, in her astute discussion of the Frontier Myth, further clarifies this aspect when she writes that it "depended first upon the erasure of the continents' indigenous peoples, either by rendering them invisible or by assimilating or exterminating them" (241). By discussing this history within the context of remembering and forgetting, then, I also seek to provide additional evidence of the stakes and consequences of Frontier public memory.

The Frontier and the Frontier Myth: Histories of Physical and Symbolic Spaces

The Frontier refers to both a literal and symbolic space. On the literal, physical level, the Frontier discussed in Turner's essay and subsequently portrayed within Western films and media no longer actually exists; *that* Frontier references the creeping boundary

[6] Crucially, my discussions of these histories are limited to a brief overview; when possible, I have incorporated some primary sources in my discussion of each site, but the majority of this chapter's discussion draws from previous scholarship on these histories.

as the United States expanded throughout the nineteenth century. It was "the outer edge of the wave—the meeting point between savagery and civilization" (Turner 3) and Turner argues that "most significant thing about the American frontier is, that it lies at the hither edge of free land" (3). The Frontier, as a literal boundary, thus moved as the western-most border of the United States moved. Turner's description of the shifting demarcation of the frontier, or the "fall line," is particularly illuminating; he writes:

> In these successive frontiers we find natural boundary lines which have served to mark and to affect the characteristics of the frontiers, namely: the "fall line;" the Alleghany Mountains; the Mississippi; the Missouri where its direction approximates north and south; the line of the arid lands, approximately the ninety-nine meridian; and the Rocky Mountains. The fall line marked the frontier of the seventeenth century; the Alleghanies that of the eighteenth, the Mississippi that of the first quarter of the nineteenth; the Missouri that of the middle of this century (omitting the California movement); and the belt of the Rocky Mountains and the arid tract, the present frontier. Each was won by a series of Indian wars. (9)

Turner's description identifies two key aspects of the Frontier. The first concerns how the Frontier is represented as a moving border that is physically and temporally situated; as time progresses, so do does that boundary line. By naming the Frontier as it is associated with certain time periods (e.g., "the Alleghanies that of the eighteenth"), Turner also represents the history of the Frontier within a linear narrative. The second concerns the description's engagement with the issue of "erasure" that is a foundational aspect of the Frontier (Stuckey 232); Turner's minimal engagement with the warfare that accompanied

the Frontier—writing simply that "Each was won by a series of Indian Wars"—speaks to persistent assumptions about the supposed emptiness of the continent and the lack of engagement with the violence that accompanied westward expansion.

Turner delivered this essay during a meeting of the American Historical Association in Chicago, where the 1893 Columbian World Exposition was also occurring at that time. Here, I would like to briefly emphasize the significance of this essay's surrounding rhetorical, and historical, context as it speaks to the hegemonic ideology that informed, and appears within, Turner's work. The lecture coincided with a now infamous world fair containing several displays that articulated then common-place assumptions about white supremacy, biological racism, and the progress of civilization; Jacqueline Fear-Segal's description of the Exposition explains that "the architecture and layout of the exposition also carried within it a covert message about racial and cultural superiority/inferiority" (44). This can be seen in the Exposition's White City, which focused on "the high achievements and progress of American civilization—technological wonders, industrial might, scientific triumph, and artistic accomplishments" (Fear-Segal 44) and the "villages [that] were arranged in an obvious evolutionary and chromatic hierarchy, with the darker peoples situated at the bottom of the Midway and the lighter peoples at the top, closest to the White City" (45). In other words, the contents of the 1893 Columbian World Exposition demonstrate the problematic ideology that marked the nineteenth century; considering this context, then, provides additional insight into the ideological worldview present in Turner's Frontier lecture.

On the symbolic level, the Frontier, as a space, is still present within the American public through the continued circulation of the Frontier Myth. Like other

rhetorical scholars (Carney & Stuckey; Carpenter; Rushing; Stuckey), I begin with Turner's work for conceptualizations of that mythic, symbolic space. At its core, Turner's essay can be read as an articulation of a hegemonic conceptualization of the Frontier that prioritizes the experiences of American settlers while excluding the experiences of Native and Indigenous communities who were affected by the US' westward expansion. While written primary for an academic audience, Turner's work would go on to have a massive public impact, informing how the American public conceptualized the Frontier and its corresponding Frontier Myth; Ronald Carpenter, for instance, has traced the impact of Turner's Frontier lecture, and argued that, "Whether it was the 1890's or the 1930's or in between, the American mind saw frontier attributes as applicable in a variety of specific situations. As vividly portrayed by Turner, a national hero emerged, one whose mythic character was capable of solving virtually any problem facing Americans, at any time" (125). Carpenter goes on to argue that the continued resonance and use of the Frontier Myth in American discourse led to its constitutive rhetorical functionality; he explains that "the Frontier Thesis helped Americans become what McGee has called a 'people[7]'" and ultimately claims that "[a] statement intended to alter the course of American historiography [the Frontier Thesis] became instead the rhetorical source of a mythic, national self-conception" (128). To put Carpenter's insights another way, Turner's initial scholarly investigation of the Frontier contributed to the rhetorical development of a

[7] Here, Carpenter is referencing McGee's 1975 work on "the people," which McGee ultimately re-defines to be "more *process* than *phenomenon"* (McGee 242, emphasis original). McGee goes on to note that "[the people] are conjured into an objective reality, remains so long as the rhetoric which defined them, and in the end wilt away, becoming once again merely a collection of individuals" (242). Here, what is significant is McGee's consistent attention to how "the people" is brought into being through the use of rhetoric—rhetoric which, in turn, also establishes the terms of "the people's" evoked existence. Crucially, McGee's discussion of "the people" takes Hitler's rhetoric as one example of how this occurs when "the people" are evoked; he explains that this example shows how "'people' exist in objective reality and as social fantasies at the same time" (242).

national civic identity—the American people—one that coalesced around the shared mythic space of the Frontier and its resulting myth.

Recent rhetorical scholarship has investigated the Frontier as it appears within various genres and mediums including television shows (Jones), films (McMullen), and presidential rhetorics (Carney and Stuckey). Janice Hocker Rushing's investigation[8], for instance, continues to inform much scholarship; referring to it as the American Western Myth, Hocker argues "the Western myth is most usefully conceptualized in terms of a dialectical tension between "Individualism" and "Community"" (15). Wayne J McMullen notes a similar definition, writing that "[i]n its most conventional form, the frontier myth depicts the outset of undaunted individuals across unknown frontiers into new and unfamiliar places" (31), while Carney and Stuckey argue that "[t]he frontier myth is shorthand for the story of American progress, expansions, and the conquering of the West" (165). For public memory scholars, these multiple conceptualizations of the Frontier further indicate the stakes of acts of remembering and forgetting in that context because of its continued circulation and use within American discourse.

Some examinations of the Frontier myth have further elaborated on its various dimensions; Mary E. Stuckey, for instance, argues that the Frontier myth has four foundational "cultural fictions," which include "erasure, civilization, community, and

[8] Interestingly, Rushing also notes that "[t]he most obvious fact confronting those curious about today's Western phenomenon is that America has no more frontier. We re-evoke a myth of infinite resources even as we realize that our resources are finite" (22), and later muses that "if we can turn our insatiable appetite for wandering into the conquering of space, as technological achievements in the last two decades suggest, perhaps the myth will evolve in a constantly regenerating form that will define us for the next few centuries. Indeed the *Star Wars* and *Star Trek* series, by transforming our identities from "out of space" to "out in space," promise to capture America's mythic imagination for another generation at least" (32). Perhaps unpredictably, one of the biggest blockbuster movies in recent years, James Cameron's *Avatar*, arguably engages with narratives of settler colonialism and the Frontier myth within a science-fiction setting; future work, then, should investigate the uptake of the Frontier myth within actual and fictional space exploration (like Jones's analysis of the television show *Firefly)*.

democracy" (231). Of particular importance here is Stuckey's discussion of "erasure" as she explains that this aspect of the Frontier myth "allows non-Indians to claim the continent, which is understood as "empty" prior to conquest. The empty continent thus becomes a blank slate onto which "American" history can be written" (232). She goes on to elaborate that:

> "The frontier myth offers two versions of white American relations with indigenous peoples. In the first, American Indians are savages, the foil against which the American character was built and tested. In the other, more benign interpretation of the frontier myth, western expansion depends not on the conquest of over 500 distinct nations of requiring the expenditure of vast resources over an extended period of time, but on a fiction that the continent was empty prior to the arrival of Americans." (Stuckey 238)

Here, Stuckey's insights can be immediately contextualized within the "forgetting" aspect of settler colonialism that is identified by other scholars (e.g., Jacobs, Shotwell). Her discussion provides one key example of *how* that forgetting appears within the histories, narratives, and public memory of the Frontier—through the perception of empty land and stereotypical assumptions about Native and Indigenous peoples. Ultimately, these various rhetorical investigations, coupled with the identification of additional specific dimensions like "erasure," demonstrate both the continued use of the Frontier and the stakes of its sustained circulation in American discourse.

Histories of the Frontier

The Frontier's continued uptake, circulation, and revision within and across various American public(s) indicates the lasting rhetorical power of the Frontier as a constitutive rhetorical space. The following discussion provides an key overview of the three aspects of Frontier history, as the relate to the content focus of each case study within this dissertation: (1) the ranching industry, (2) off-reservation boarding schools, and (3) the Oregon Trail.

The Ranching Industry

The ranching industry refers to a form of livestock management that pivots around the raising, transport, and sale of cattle. First introduced to the Americas in the fifteenth century by Spanish colonizers[9] (Sluyter 4), the ranching industry has since developed into an extensive economic industry. In the United States context, ranching is most commonly associated with the West, such as in the area that would become Texas, although ranching also occurred throughout other areas, such as the Dakotas (Sanderson) and in Southern Florida (Otto, "Traditional" 292). Ranching is grounded in land use, as ranchers, cowboys, and cattle-hunters required extensive areas of grazing lands for their cattle. As such, the success of the ranching industry—like the success of pioneer settlements—depended on the availability of lands[10]. Crucially, the means by which

[9] See Andrew Sluyter's extensive historiographic work *Black Ranching Frontiers: African Cattle Herders of the Atlantic World, 1500-1900* for more information on the global development of this industry.

[10] Tuck and Yang identify the centrality of *land* to the settler colonialism (5)—one aspect that becomes particularly prominent in the memory work built within the *Foy Proctor Historical Park* at the National Ranching Heritage Center.

ranchers acquired those lands is marked by extensive conflict with Native and Indigenous communities and federal legislation that sought to remove them from their land.

As an economic industry dependent on land use, then, ranching is inherently tied to the settlement of the Frontier. Federal acts during nineteenth-century westward expansion subsequently supported the acquisition of lands for cattle-grazing purposes through wars with Native and Indigenous populations who lived on the land, the introduction of the reservation system, and the eventual reduction of reservation lands through the passage of the 1887 General Allotment Act, or the Dawes Act, as it is usually called, after its proponent Senator Henry L. Dawes (Sanderson 65). The Dawes Act drastically reduced the size of reservations, as the land could no longer be owned communally by a tribe; instead, land in a reservation would be divided into personally-owned sections of land for individuals and families in sizes that ranged from "forty and one hundred sixty acres" (Sanderson 65), with any remaining reservation lands then made available for use by settlers. In other words, the Dawes Act contributed to westward expansion and the settling of the Frontier by making lands available for settlement through the removal of Native and Indigenous communities from their lands. Below, I discuss two land-based disputes that illustrate the connection between the Frontier, settlement, and the ranching industry.

The open-range cattle herding in southern Florida, which was annexed from Spain in 1821, involved conflicts over the land in the Seminole Indian Reservation because, as John Solomon Otto explains, "Seminoles accused herders of trespassing in their reservation, while herders blamed Seminoles for stealing their cattle" ("Open-Range" 56). As a result of this conflict, the Treaty of Payne's Landing in 1834 sought to

permanently relocate the Seminoles to Oklahoma; the community's refusal to leave then lead to the Second Seminole War from 1835-42, which eventually ended with the forced removal of most Seminoles to that area ("Open-Range" 56). The now-vacated lands were now open for settlers, an action that was federally supported through the 1842 Armed Occupation Act, legislation that "offer[ed] a 160-acre homestead in Florida to any man fit to bear arms" (Otto "Open Range" 58). In other words, lands that were wanted by ranchers, but which were under a different community's legal control, were eventually opened up for settlement through the use of warfare and federal legislation.

Another example of the relationship between settlement, the ranching industry, and land use during the Frontier can be seen in the Black Hills; as discussed in Nathan B. Sanderson's historical examination, lands in that area were the focal point of many conflicts about ownership and use. Originally under Sioux control through the Treaty of Fort Laramie in 1868, the Black Hills became part of the United States and were made available to settlers after the Great Sioux War of 1876-1877, changing the borders of the Great Sioux Reservation (53). Following this, some[11] livestock companies[12], like D.H. Clark & Company, a subsidiary of the larger Sheidley Company that arrived in the area in 1880 (63), began to illegally graze their livestock on reservation land because of the lack of competition from herds belonging to other livestock companies and less "natural

[11] Sanderson's work primarily focuses on the actions of George Edward Lemmon and Dave Clark while they worked for the D.H. Clark & Company and its parent company Sheidley Company.

[12] It should be noted, too, that livestock companies also manipulated their contributions to the beef rations; Sanderson, explaining how this occurs in an example, writes that "The Pine Ridge Agency in the southwest portion of the Great Sioux Reservation generally purchased about five thousand heard of nine-pound steers each fall to distribute among the Indians. The cattle were issued throughout the year based on each animal's weight at the time of receiving. When the agents distributed the animals during the winter, however, they did not account for the "shrink" (loss of weight during the cold months), which reduced each Indian's ration considerably. By the time the final steers were issued in the spring, most weight one hundred fifty pounds less than when purchased" (61).

competition" as "most of the bison that had once grazed the area had moved to less occupied areas or had been slaughtered" (56). That is, ranchers illegally used the Great Sioux Reservations lands, and they sometimes framed their rationale for doing so within perceived cultural differences[13] about concepts of land ownership and use (59). Their actions were later challenged in 1887, after the passage of the Dawes Act and its eventual reduction of the reservation lands; Sanderson argues that some ranchers opposed the act because of its two-fold effect on their business (65) as it would first limit their ability to use lands almost for free (65) and then second affect their sales (66).

While the two examples discussed should *not* be read as summative representations of the entire history of the ranching industry, they do provide evidence of the relationship between ranching, settlement, and federal land removal actions like warfare and legislation during nineteenth century expansion. As such, the ranching industry can be read as one dimension of Frontier history; moreover, the continued use of ranching, as an economic industry throughout the United States, further speaks to the stakes of the public memory of the Frontier. That is, given the industry's continued prominence, questions about how that industry's history is conceptualized within American historical consciousness indicates the high stakes of remembering and forgetting in a settler-colonial context.

The Off-Reservation Boarding Schools

The off-reservation boarding school system had origins in warfare. Colonel Richard Henry Pratt, the founder of the schools, first began his educational program on a

[13] Sanderson, when explaining the rationale, writes, "The way [the ranchers] saw the situation, the Sioux did not care that non-Indian cattle were grazing on the reservation" (59).

group of Kiowa, Comanche, and Cheyenne prisoners who were held at Fort Marion, in St. Augustine, Florida in 1875 (Adams 39; Jacobs 27). Pratt, working from his beliefs about the necessity and feasibility of assimilating Native and Indigenous peoples into Anglo Christian culture, enacted an educational program that would "turn his prison into a school for teaching civilization to the Indians" (Adams 39). Following the perceived "success" of his prison program, Pratt then brought the students to the Hampton Normal and Industrial Institute, a school for African Americans, in 1868 to continue his program (Adams 44-45). At that time, Hampton was run by Samuel Chapman Armstrong[14], a proponent of "education that combined cultural uplift with moral and manual training" (Adams 45). When Pratt eventually received funding from to start his own school, he left to found Carlisle Indian Industrial School in 1879 in Pennsylvania. More schools soon appeared throughout the United States, like the Santa Fe Indian School, the Phoenix Indian School, and countless others. Crucially, subsequent schools were frequently located in in the West; these locations were established because of the expense of faraway schools that would require students to travel great distances to attend them (Adams 57), some concerns about removing children completely from their homes (57), and arguments regarding the economic benefits of off-reservation boarding schools to a nearby town. Historian David Wallace Adams, for instance, writes that "[a] large Indian school would be a source of employment for local residents, would purchase many supplies on the open market, and through the school's outing program supply a cheap source of labor for local farmers, ranchers, and businessmen" (58). Despite the schools'

[14] Pratt and Armstrong had strong ideological differences; for an extensive discussion of these differences and how they affected their educational philosophies and policies, see Jacqueline Fear-Segal's book *White Man's Club: Schools, Race, and the Struggle of Indian Acculturation.*

extensive geographic spread and continued use into the twentieth century, no complete record of the system exists[15].

The off-reservation boarding school system was explicitly founded with the purpose of cultural assimilation. Adams, for instance, has described the goals of the schools, and education in general, as providing instruction in academics (21), individualization (22), "Christianization" (23), and "citizenship training" (24). Pratt, also speaking about the schools' purpose, wrote that they were intended to "kill the Indian in him, and save the man" (Pratt 261). To achieve that purpose, Pratt designed school practices that deliberately restricted students' ability to express their cultural identity and forced their assimilation into Christian, Anglo culture. For example, students were forbidden from speaking their own languages through English-only rules, were forced to cut their hair short, an act that had great cultural significance, and had to dress in military-inspired uniforms instead of their own clothes. Additionally, Pratt also designed the outing program, which would place the students in family homes within the surrounding community (Fear-Segal 172). Adams argues that Pratt believed that "the ultimate rationale for the off-reservation boarding school lay in its capacity to integrate students into the civilized community beyond the school's walls through the so-called outing system" (54). Pratt intended for the outing program to function as a site of family-setting based cultural assimilation, as the students would be exposed to examples of the Anglo Christian lifestyle within the surrounding community (Adams 54; Fear-Segal 172). The outing program became a site of abuse and mechanism for human trafficking, as it functioned as an exploitive child labor system.

[15] The incompleteness of the historical record is explicitly addressed towards the end of the Heard Museum's exhibit *Remembering Our Indian School Days: The Boarding School Experience.*

While this educational initiative first grew out of Pratt's personal convictions, there was widespread support for the schools, leading to their eventual establishment as a federal system. In particular, the off-reservation boarding schools—and their purpose of cultural assimilation—were ultimately popular for their economic feasibility. That is, arguments offered in support of the off-reservation boarding schools often emphasized their low cost. Adam's summative description of the various iterations of the economic arguments explains that

> This line of argument took several forms. First, educating Indians promised to relieve the government of the responsibility of feeding and clothing them. Schooling, if it promised to do anything, promised to prepare Indians for economic self-sufficiency. Another argument was that it was less expensive to educate Indians than to kill them. (19-20)

Crucially, these arguments were articulated within a context that also included land removal policies, like the 1887 Dawes Act, and the extensive warfare of the nineteenth century. The economic arguments, then, ultimately indicate that the federal government intended for the schools to function as a cheaper alternative to war that would still accomplish the same end goal: the eradication of North American Native and Indigenous languages and cultures and their removal from lands coveted by Frontier settlers.

As a system, the off-reservation boarding schools were founded towards the end of the formal settlement period of the Frontier; their self-described purpose and associated fiscal arguments, however, indicate that these schools were a deliberate continuation of the federal government's intention to remove Native and Indigenous communities from Frontier lands. Margaret D. Jacobs, for instance, argues that "[i]nstead

of breaking with the past use of violence and force, these new approaches are best seen as part of a continuum of colonizing approaches, all aimed ultimately at extinguishing indigenous people's claims to their remaining land" (25). As such, the history of the off-reservation boarding schools is an integral dimension of the history of the Frontier. More specifically, the history of these schools—and the lack of widespread engagement with this history in dominant American historical consciousness—further indicates the stakes and consequences of remembering and forgetting with public memory of the Frontier.

The Oregon Trail

The Oregon Trail refers to an extremely well-traveled path taken by wagon-laden pioneers from Independence, Missouri, to Willamette Valley, Oregon. Over 2,000 miles in length, the Oregon Trail has been described as "the most remarkable abandoned road in the nation" and images of life on the trail are almost iconographic as "the most familiar symbol of pioneering Americans has become a covered wagon moving westward into the sunset" (Evans 1). As a path that led into the Pacific Northwest region, it was "the most direct feasible route" (Evans 1) and parts of the trail overlapped with two other trails that pioneers followed during their westward journeys: the Santa Fe Trail and the Mormon Trail. The Santa Fe Trail also began in Independence, although it split from the Oregon Trail at the Kansas River (Gregg 144), while the Mormon Trail left the Oregon Trail in the area that is now southern Idaho (Gregg 145). Crucially, travel along the trail was long, difficult, and marked by illness, disease, and injury; during early years, the route of the Oregon Trail was apparently discernable from road-side graves from the Missouri River to the Columbia Basin (Gregg 205).

The first group to cross the entirety of the Oregon Trail in wagons arrived at their destination in 1843; with around one thousand people (Evans 99; Gregg 208), these settlers also brought with them "120 wagons, and around 5,000 horses and cattle" (Evans 99). Estimations of the number of people who traveled on this trail during the next few years continued to be quite high, with the total number increasing to "nearly fifteen hundred persons" in 1844 (Gregg 191) and around 2,500 people in 1845 (Evans 130). A general estimation of the average use of the trail can be found in John B. Evans' historical work; he explains that, "During one twenty-year period, the main trail through Nebraska was used by about three hundred thousand people—together with their baggage, vehicles, and livestock" (1).

Descriptions of the trail itself often emphasize the effect of the volume of travelers on the surrounding landscape. Gregg's historical work, for example, relays that

> The Oregon Trail is said to have been fifty to one hundred feet wide in places, caused by teams traveling two or three more abreast, accompanied by numerous loose stock on either side, as told by Mr. Meeker and others. The trail was worn from three to fifteen feet deep in places. At some places in South Pass wagon tracks were worn a foot deep in solid rock by countless number of wagon wheels drawn by millions of animals. At intervals the wagon tracks were worn so deep that the axles of the wagons actually scraped on the solid rock of the roadbed. (203)

Here, Gregg's report of these geographic alterations speaks to the consistently high volume of pioneers who followed the Oregon Trail during their westward journeys. Along the way, travelers faced issues like broken wagons, dwindling food, conflict with

other pioneer parties, and health issues. In addition to cholera, a common contagious disease that affected multiple travelers (Gregg 201), pioneers also dealt with everyday medical concerns, like pregnancy and giving birth (Evans 221) and accidents, such as broken bones caused by being run over by a wagon wheel (Gregg 122). Additionally, as the volume of pioneers and settlers using the trail increased, so did issues related to crowding. In 1852, for example, when an estimated seventy thousand pioneers emigrated west with ten thousand headed directly to Oregon, the trail was reported to be extremely dirty, crowded, and littered with waste and dead animals; pioneers were often hungry, their livestock lacked regular food supplies due to overgrazing along the road, and it was common to see possessions abandoned on the roadside as the travelers tried to lighten their wagon's load (Evans 189).

The Oregon Trail can be connected to the history of the Frontier for three reasons. First, as a route for settlers, the Oregon Trail literally crossed the physical boundary space of the Frontier, carrying pioneers into new territories for the purpose of establishing permanent settlements. Second, the trail's endpoint in the area that would become Oregon state indicates its functionality within national conversations about westward expansion during the nineteenth century; Evans, for instance, writes that in 1844, the Oregon area was associated with presidential candidate James K. Polk, who was a proponent of westward expansion (129), while Lyon Rathbun notes that Polk's election win was based on his electoral promise to "reannex Texas and reoccupy Oregon" (qtd. 485). Third, narratives about the pioneers who traveled the Oregon Trail can be read as key expressions of both the rhetoric of westward expansion and the Frontier. Stuckey's previous work on the rhetorics surrounding the Donner Party, for example, provides

strong evidence of this phenomenon; she argues that the Donner Party, a group of pioneers who turned towards cannibalism after their food supplies ran out while they were snowed in after leaving the Oregon Trail's established route in 1846, has come to "symbolize the entire western emigration" and that it "is better understood as a complicated narrative of western emigration that captures both the perils and opportunities of expansion" (231). More specifically, Stuckey argues, "The story of the Donner Party is part of a greater morality tale of western expansion" (236). To put this another way, Stuckey's analysis of how the story of one infamous group of pioneers connects to narratives of the Frontier and westward expansion provides additional evidence that the actions of pioneers were integral to the history of the Frontier.

In sum, then, the history of the Oregon Trail is one foundational aspect of the history of the Frontier because (1) its use by pioneers contributed to the settlement *of* the Frontier and (2) narratives about the pioneer and Oregon Trail experience have been previously used to provide insights into the rhetorics of the Frontier. As such, public memory of the Oregon Trail can be read as an additional dimension of public memory of the Frontier.

Conclusion

Like all histories, the history of the Frontier is complex, contested, and shifting, with different narratives emerging depending on whose experiences are prioritized and which community's records are included as evidence. Hegemonic narratives commonly prioritize the experiences of pioneers, ranchers, and settlers while erasing the experiences of Native and Indigenous communities. This chapter has briefly surveyed various

dimensions of the history of the Frontier, examining how the ranching industry, the creation and use of the off-reservation boarding school system, and the Oregon Trail contributed to the settlement of the Frontier. The next three chapters examine how these historical dimensions are represented, and animated for modern-day public consumption, within three public memory sites.

CHAPTER 3

INVENTING THE FRONTIER: LAND, SETTLER COLONIALISM, AND PUBLIC MEMORY AT THE NATIONAL RANCHING HERITAGE CENTER

Introduction

Located in Lubbock, Texas, the *Foy Proctor Historical Park*[16] is a 19-acre outdoor park displaying 50 historic[17] structures related to the history of ranching. It is located within the National Ranching Heritage Center (NRHC), a Texas Tech University-affiliated museum that aims "[t]o preserve and interpret the history of ranching in North America and address contemporary ranching issues" ("Who We Are"). Because the ranching industry was one aspect of the westward expansion that settled the Frontier, the NRHC necessarily engages with the history of the Frontier. A description from the museum's accompanying publication *A Walk Through the National Ranching Heritage Center* clarifies this connection*:*

> How the early rancher and eventually his family adapted to a harsh frontier environment is a story of self-reliance told through the structures he built. That legacy is preserved at the National Ranching Heritage Center, a division of Texas Tech University in Lubbock. The [*Foy Proctor Historical Park*] is more than buildings: it is the people who made lives in the structures and created stories, legends and history in the process. (Pfluger 2)

[16] In 1999, the outdoor historical park was renamed for Foy Proctor, a prominent ranching who received national recognition for his leadership and who owned, among others, the C Ranch and the Proctor Ranch. Evidence of this naming can be seen in an explanatory plaque entitled "Proctor Park" within the park.

[17] "Who We Are" identifies the total number of historic structures at the NRHC as 50.

Here, this description locates ranching within a "harsh frontier environment" and indicates that the museum engages in public memory work through its attention to "legacy." The *Foy Proctor Historical Park* at the NRHC, then, may be read as a site of Frontier public memory.

The outdoor park, specifically, engages in Frontier memory work through its focus on the historical development of ranching, an industry that depended on the extensive acquisition of lands during nineteenth century westward expansion, often through governmental policies that displaced the Native and Indigenous peoples who lived on those lands. The *Proctor Historical Park*'s memory work is built from the site's display of historic structures, landscaping, and staging of the buildings' interiors—three meaning-making practices that pivot around the rhetorical power of place. In using these place-focused meaning-making practices, the *Proctor Historical Park* rhetorically invents a symbolic Frontier landscape. The park's focus on one aspect of the Frontier and its rhetorical use of landscape positions it as a prime site to analyze narratives of remembering and forgetting in public memory of the Frontier, and to consider the role of land in the establishment and circulation of those narratives.

In this chapter, I pursue my dissertation's central inquiry by analyzing the *Foy Proctor Historical Park.* To do so, I answer the following:

(1) What primary public memory narrative is constructed within the *Proctor Historical Park*?

(2) What meaning-making practices are used in the construction of the *Proctor Historical Park's* narrative?

(3) How is identification encouraged within the *Proctor Historical Park*?

My analysis indicates the *Proctor Historical Park'* invention of a Frontier landscape articulates a place-based, settler-colonial public memory narrative, one that encourages visitors to identify with ranchers and pioneers. In making this argument, I develop an additional dimension to Gregory Clark's theory of *rhetorical landscapes,* one that recognizes how symbolic landscapes, like the Frontier, may be invented in specific places through the use of rhetorical resources. By developing this theory, I call for rhetorical scholarship to attend to the role of land—like place—in public memory.

Land, Settler Colonialism, and Public memory

As theoretical and physical sites of inquiry, space and place often as microcosmos of or entry points into public(s) and public discourse. Previous rhetorical research has consistently recognized the significance of place in public memory (Boyle & Rice; Dickinson et al; Poirot & Watson; Tell), used discussions of space and place as a mechanism for re-thinking disciplinary schemas for conceptualizing rhetorical exchange and distribution of texts across publics (Edbauer), posited place as a highly valuable inventional resource in personal writing (Boyle & Rice), and contributed to ongoing academic projects focused on ontological flattening to recognize the effect of the environment (Rickert). Additional research has examined the evocation of space and place in classical rhetorics, often through examinations of Aristotle's *topoi* (McKeon; Miller; Muckelbauer, O'Gorman). Spatial theory, more broadly, also considers the relationship between geography and (in)justice (Soja), the connection between identity, inclusion, and place (Puwar), and the ordering of place through rhythms (Lefebvre). Across these projects one key insight emerges: place matters.

Within the context of settler colonialism, place matters because of the integral significance of *land* to the settler colonial project. In their astute article "Decolonization is not a Metaphor," Tuck and Yang speak to that foundational aspect, writing:

> Within settler colonialism, the most important concern is land/water/air/subterranean earth (land, for shorthand, in this article.) Land is what is most valuable, contested, required. This is both because the settlers make Indigenous land their new home and source of capital, and also because the disruption of Indigenous relationships to land represents a profound epistemic, ontological, cosmological violence (5).

Tuck and Yang go on to argue that "[i]n the process of settler colonialism, land is remade into property and human relationships to land are restricted to the relationship of the owner to his property" (5). To re-state Tuck and Yang's insights, land matters to decolonial projects because its use, possession, and evaluation as property are defining markers of settler colonialism.

Similar ideas have been advanced by Simpson and Bagelman, who recognize the interaction among multiple systems of meaning for valuing and interpreting land and land use within a city. Like Tuck and Yang, Simpson and Bagelman recognize the central role of land in settler colonialism, even as they also emphasize how settler and Indigenous perceptions of land[18] may currently come into conflict within urban greenspace. They argue:

[18] Their analysis focuses specifically on the site "*Meegan,* a place of great cultural importance to the Lekwungen, which is now also Victoria's iconic greenspace known by settlers as Beacon Hill Park" (563). Simpson and Bagelman focus on the different approaches to engaging with that area's land, arguing "Today, tensions between Indigenous and settler sociological logics continue to inform everyday practices that govern, contest, and reproduce the city's ecology" (564).

> [T]he production of the settler colonial city entails the violent imposition of a spatial order on existing Indigenous socionatural systems, both of which become inscribed in the city's political ecologies. This process remains incomplete and ongoing, however, as the spatial formation of settler power must be forcibly maintained and reproduced daily… (559)

Here, Simpson and Bagelman also recognize how the application of "spatial order" within land, particularly as it occurs within cities, reflects broader systems, like settler colonialism. They go on to discuss how the landscaping decisions within an urban greenspace may reflect both settler and Indigenous conceptualizations of nature. This insight identifies an additional implication for public memory scholars—that the use of landscaping to shape and display land is rhetorical. Landscaping is a meaning-making practice, then, one that warrants additional attention in outdoor sites of public memory.

Taken together, these two arguments establish the significance of land—and its "spatial order[ing]"—within settler colonialism. Given the centrality of place in public memory, these articles prompt rhetorical scholarship to consider how land is used by, evoked in, and arranged within "memory places"— particularly those that are implicated within settler colonialism. To state this more strongly: while much public memory scholarship has focused on the role of *place* in memory, less has examined the role of *land* in public memory. Within Frontier public memory, this gap is especially notable given the significance of land to settler colonialism.

My analysis of the *Proctor Historical Park* addresses this gap by examining the intersection among land, settler colonialism, and public memory. To do so, my analysis attends to the ways in which the site uses land and represents land use in its memory

work. The site's meaning-making practices reflect the centrality of land to settler colonialism and to settler-colonial public memory. To account for the use of land in public memory, I expand Gregory Clark's theory of a rhetorical landscapes. Clark's development of this term occurs in *Rhetorical Landscapes in America: Variations on a Theme from Kenneth Burke,* an exploration how Burkean identification occurs in space and place. Clark distinguishes between land and landscape by noting their varied functionalities. He explains:

> *Landscape* is not the same as *land. Land* is material, a particular object, while *landscape* is conceptual. When people act as tourists, they leave the *land* where they make their home to encounter *landscapes. Land* becomes *landscape* when it is assigned the role of symbol, and as a symbol it functions rhetorically. When landscapes are publicized—when they are shared in public discourse or in the nondiscursive form of what I am calling a public experience—they do the rhetorical work of symbolizing a common home and, thus, a common identity. (9)

Clark's definitional distinction hinges on the difference between the localized and the abstract, as he maintains that *land* is specific, that "material, a particular object," while *landscape* is abstract, akin to space, because it is "conceptual." Clark also recognizes that land can be *transformed* into landscape through symbolic, public-oriented work, a large component of which involves touristic consumption. That is, meaning-making practices are the mechanism of that transformation, the rhetorical means by which a specific place becomes a symbolic landscape.

Throughout the chapter, I build on and invert Clark's definition of *landscape.* For Clark, a specific land becomes landscape through rhetorical work that enables it to be "assigned the role of the symbol." However, that appraisal does not reflect the *Proctor Historical Park'*s functionality. Instead, within the park, the Frontier, a symbolic site recognizable in American historical consciousness, is invented, made localized and specific, through that park's display of historic buildings, landscaping, and staging of the structures' interiors. There, landscape is made land; a symbolic space *becomes* a specific place through the use of meaning-making practices. In my analysis, landscape refers to the specific place-based iteration of a larger symbol that evokes multiple places simultaneously. By analyzing the park's invention of a Frontier landscape, I contribute to conversations about the connections among place and land, public memory and publics, and settler colonialism. More specifically, I contextualize previous rhetorical scholarship on place and land within the framework of settler colonialism, descriptively develop an additional dimension to account for the use of landscape within the *Proctor Historical Park,* and examine how the park's place- and land-focused meaning-making practices participate in discoursal patterns of remembering and forgetting.

Site Description

In the *Proctor Historical Park,* a 1.5 mile paved path winding through historic buildings offers a chronological journey of ranching history. The park's arrangement of buildings, landscaping, and interior staging of the buildings creates an immersive built environment, one that ultimately invents a Frontier landscape. One description of the park notes:

> The atmosphere created by the outdoor park may be the greatest attraction of the center. The park makes visitors feel they're in a rural area in another time and place even though the massive Texas Tech campus is just over the hill. ("Proctor Historical Park")

Here, the park "atmosphere" is identified as its largest draw, implying the park's success lies in its ability to transport visitors to a "rural area in another time and place"—a description that also suggests the park's meaning-making practices are effective at creating that transportive functionality. An overview of the park can be seen in the site map[19] below (see Figure 1).

[19] This image, taken in the summer of 2019, does not indicate the location of the newest edition to the Foy Proctor Historical Park. In October 2020, the NRCH formally acquired a 108-year old Episcopal Church, the Spur Ranch Church, transporting the 18-foot tall church from its most-recent prior location in Brownfield (Cantu). The church is intended to depict the role of churches and religion in the history of ranching and life on the Frontier (Cantu). It is located near the Barton House (1909) and "80" John Wallace House (c. 1909).

Figure 1: Image of the map of the *Foy Proctor Historical Park* at the National Ranching Heritage Center in Lubbock, Texas. Image taken by the author; used with permission from the National Ranching Heritage Center.

Visitors first encounter Los Corralitos (c. 1780), the only building replica in the park when they enter the site; all other structures are original historic buildings dissembled from their original location and reassembled at the NRHC; Los Corralitos is a replica because in the original building previous inhabitants were buried beneath the floorboards. After viewing Los Corralitos, visitors have the choice to move through the park—and ranching history—in either chronological or reverse chronological order by taking either the left or right fork, respectively, when the path splits. Turning left, visitors

move through a series of structures, including a small replica of a cemetery featuring real headstones from the Jowell family (1876-1889) alongside their home, houses from multiple decades in varied architectural styles (e.g., batten and board), and an example of a gate from a cow corral. Continuing on, visitors encounter the Barfield Schoolhouse (c. 1890) with a yard bell standing before it, the Queen Anne-style manor Barton House (1909), and ranching structures like the Matador Office (c. 1880), the Renderbrook-Spade Blacksmith shop (1917), and multiple windmills, a water tank, and barns, corrals, and pens. The final stretch of the path winds along, among other structures, the Baldwin Locomotive (1923), the Hoffman Barn (c. 1906), and the 6666 Barn (pronounced "Four Sixes) (1908). Most structures contain staged interiors that reflect the functionality of a room within the building; for example, a table may be set for a meal in a dining area, or a bedroom will contain a bed and dresser. The staged interiors can be viewed from the buildings' doors and windows.

Each major structure is accompanied by an interpretive sign that names and dates the building, provides and informational description in Spanish and English, and marks its original location on a map. The NRHC also has a smartphone app that contains a park map, information about each historical structure, descriptions of current exhibits in the main building, games, and audio. By physically and/or digitally experiencing the site, visitors learn about ranching history, structures associated within ranching, and the architectural aspects of life on the Frontier.

Site Analysis

The *Proctor Historical Park* relies on three place-focused meaning-making practices to present ranching history to site visitors: the display of historic buildings, park landscaping, and the buildings' interior staging. By using those three meaning-making practices, the *Proctor Historical Park* rhetorically invents a Frontier landscape, thereby articulating a land-based public memory narrative of the Frontier that encourages site visitors to identify with ranchers and pioneers.

Public Memory Narrative

The *Proctor Historical Park* presents a settler-colonial narrative of the Frontier that emphasizes the centrality of land to the ranching industry and portrays the resulting pioneer and ranching lifestyle. The attention to land can be seen in two ways: 1) the site's use of land and place in its meaning-making practices, and (2) the emphasis on ranching as an economic industry. First, the park's meaning-making practices invent a Frontier landscape; these practices are discussed in greater depth in the next section. Second, the park structures and interpretive signs emphasize the business aspects of ranching and the necessity of land, as an economic resource, in the success of that industry. In addition to the inclusion of structures that hold an immediate economic purpose—e.g., offices, locomotives for cattle transport—some interpretive signs also explicitly identify that aspect. For example, the sign accompanying the Matador Office (c. 1880) ends with the statement that the building "reflects the fact that ranching was, first and foremost, a business operation" ("Matador Office" sign). Additionally, the interpretive signs identify the original locations of the historic structures, a practice that reflects the geographic

expanse of the industry and emphasizes the oddity of the museum's display of *places* as its primary collection. In addition to the economic emphasis, the *Proctor Historical Park* portrays the resulting ranching and pioneer lifestyle through the display of structures, the buildings' interior staging, and the use of costumed volunteers, the Ranch Hosts[20], who may offer oral histories about some of the park's buildings to visitors.

The site centers the experiences of settlers, pioneers, and ranchers—a narrative focus that results in extensive, notable absences that speak its settler-colonial narrative. The site offers limited to no engagement with the histories, perspectives, and experiences of Native and Indigenous communities who were affected by the ranching industry's development. This absence is textual and spatial. Textually, none of the interpretive contextualize the acquisition of ranching lands within governmental actions that deliberately displaced Native and Indigenous communities from their homes in order to make lands available for settlement during westward expansion. Additionally, the only reference to Native and Indigenous communities that does occur in the park is articulated within a settler-colonial framework; the textual reference, found on the Jowell House's interpretive sign for (1872-73), uses the term "Indians" and portrays them as violent aggressors who threatened pioneer families. Spatially, this absence can be seen in the lack of historic structures from Native and Indigenous communities; the spatial absence, within a site that largely relies on the display of place and land in its memory work, further demonstrates the lack of engagement with the perspectives and experiences of Native and Indigenous communities in its memory work.

[20] The *National Ranching Heritage Center* website describes the responsibilities of Ranch Hosts as those who potentially "serve as building docents and as participants in living history and educational programs, special events and projects, or other volunteer capacities" ("Volunteer").

Furthermore, the park explicitly names the contributions of only one rancher of color, Daniel Webster Wallace, in the interpretive sign for "'80 John' House" (c. 1900), stating that he was "one of Texas' most successful black ranchers" who worked for several other prominent ranchers and built his own ranch. The interpretive sign for El Capote Cabin (c. 1836), speculates the structure may "have served as slave quarters or a kitchen.[21]" Additionally, the site rarely mentions women; when women are included, it is implied through references to "family" or in relation to gender-based decorum rules that prohibited women from riding horses without a saddle[22]. Other than those instances, the park's discussion of ranching history primarily focuses on the experiences of white pioneers and ranchers. The lack of engagement with other perspectives erases them from the site's Frontier public memory narrative—and, as this "erasure" is one dimension of the Frontier myth, further demonstrates it settler-colonial narrative (Stuckey 232).

Additional evidence of the park's settler-colonial narrative can be seen in a description from *A Walk Through the National Ranching Heritage Center.* The text states:

> The *real* West was built by uncommon people facing immense hardship and dangers. At the National Ranching Heritage Center, pathways lead back through time to those authentic ranch homes and structures, preserved to help visitors know this significant era of Texas and American history. (Pfluger 3, emphasis original)

[21] From the interpretive sign accompanying El Capote Cabin.

[22] The interpretive sign for the U Lazy S Carriage House (1906) explains that carriage houses were an architectural sign of wealth and family because "most dignified ladies did not ride long distances horseback."

This quotation contextualizes the site's focus. First, the quotation differentiates between the geographic direction "west" and the highly symbolic, romanticized *West* through the italicized emphasis on the world "real." The stylization is telling because it aligns the park with hegemonic public memory narratives of the Frontier and associates the symbolic West with both Texas and America. Second, the quotation identifies the centrality of place to its public memory work by emphasizing the site's displayed collection of *places*—"those authentic ranch homes and structures." Third, the quotation articulates a narrative common to Frontier discourse: pioneers, ranchers, and settlers were resilient survivors who faced untold difficulties. In sum, the quotation indicates the site's purpose: to represent how the "*real* West" was built through the actions of those pioneers and ranchers who settled on that land.

The *Proctor Historical Park* achieves that purpose through the use of its place- and land- focused meaning-making practices, thereby inventing a Frontier landscape that represents "the *real* West[23]." In doing so, the *Proctor Historical Park* articulates a public memory narrative that centers the experiences of pioneers and ranchers and views land as an economic resource necessary to the success of the ranching industry—two defining aspects of settler colonialism. Within the broader context of US Frontier public memory, the *Proctor Historical Park* thus offers a hegemonic narrative that remembers the experiences of ranchers and pioneers, emphasizes the role of land in an economic

[23] Interestingly, explicit references to "the West" occur twice within the park, each articulated within an economic context. One reference occurs on the interpretive sign for the Renderbrook-Spade Blacksmith Shop (1917), stating "[t]he structure represents the time when a man worried as a farrier, mechanic, repairman and artist, creating tools such as branding irons and horseshoes that ranch people needed to survive in the Old West." The other can be found on the 6666 Barn's interpretive sign, which explains that "[the structure] housed expensive horses admired by some of the wealthiest men and women in the West." In the first sign, "the West" is connected with narratives about resilience and economics and, in the second sign, one indicator of social capital and economic prosperity within "the West" identified.

industry, and erases the voices and experiences of Native and Indigenous communities who are affected by settler actions.

Meaning-Making Practices

In building its settler-colonial memory narrative, the *Proctor Historical Park* primarily relies on meaning-making practices centered around place and land: 1) the collection and display of historic structures, 2) the spatial arrangement of those structures, and 3) the park landscaping. Combined, these meaning-making practices invent a Frontier landscape. The place-focused meaning-making practices and implicit evaluation of land as an economic resource suggest the centrality of land to settler colonialism and settler-colonial memory. The following analysis discusses these meaning-making practices, provides key examples, and explains their contributions to the park's invention of a Frontier landscape.

The *Proctor Historical Park'*s display of buildings, as the museum's collection and primary method for encouraging visitors to engage with ranching history, speaks to the significance of land in settler-colonial memory. The structures were disassembled from their original location, moved to the *Proctor Historical Park,* and reassembled for the purpose of display[24]. As a curatorial decision, the trifold acts of disassembly, reassembly, and display raises questions about the use of place and land, as artifacts that

[24] Despite the site's display of historic buildings, however, the site itself should not be read as a historic landmark. Jerry Rogers, a previous director for the Ranching Heritage Center, for example, emphasized that one of the defining aspects of the National Ranching Heritage Center arose from the uniqueness of its display collection—those historic, disassembled and reassembled buildings. In a 2005 interview with Robert Spude in *The Public Historian*, Rogers explains that "[f]rom the beginning, I have always insisted that the Ranching Heritage Center was not a historic place but rather an outdoor exhibit. Philosophically, we were using buildings the same way you use objects in a museum exhibit case" (124). In other words, the NRHC, as a museum, collects historic buildings the way other museums collect material artifacts like coins, historic clothing, and tools

can be *collected*, in public memory. For example, are the buildings still "original," and can they still be defined as historic structures, if they have been taken apart and rebuilt in a new geographic location? Furthermore, what does this practice suggest for the definition of place—are the building still places, or has the act of moving them transformed them into objects? Additionally, the park's demarcation of each structure's origins in the interpretive signs emphasizes the buildings' geographic provenance and demonstrates the spatial expanse of the ranching industry.

As a meaning-making practice, the park's display of historic structures encourages visitors to view the site as a Frontier landscape. For example, the site provides a temporal timeline for Frontier life by opening with its display of the earliest Los Corralitos (c. 1780) and ending with industrialized structures that indicate the modernization of the ranching industry, like the Baldwin Locomotive (1923). The site also includes structures that resonate with Frontier iconography. For example, the Barfield Schoolhouse (c. 1890), a white-washed one room building with chalkboards and a metal bell in the yard, is a recognizable structure commonly featured in stories about pioneers. Overall, the display of the structures provides visitors with multiple, place-based entry points into ranching history.

The park also demonstrates how ranchers and pioneers used land. Several structures can be immediately connected to livestock management. For example, the park displays a portion of the Old Block Drift Fence (1880s), which "ran 80 miles from the west end of the Capitan Mountains to Vaughn, N.M" and "kept livestock from drifting into unprotected areas[25]", the Wild Cow Corral (Early 20th Century), which was "used for

[25] From the interpretive sign for the "Old Block Drift Fence."

catching unbranded, free-roaming cattle in mountainous regions[26]", and the Pitchfork Loading Chute and Corral, which speaks to the effect of industrialization on the ranching industry because "[l]oading chutes with corral facilities became part of ranching after the trail drive era ended and cattle were shipped by train to meat-packing centers.[27]" Overall, the display of these historic structures contributes to the park's invention of a Frontier landscape by providing examples of Frontier settlement buildings and material evidence of how pioneers and ranchers used the land. As a meaning-making practice, the display of historic structures contributes to the park's invention of a Frontier landscape through literal place-making. That is, the act of collecting, arranging, and displaying literal places, ones used for different purposes and from different geographic areas, results in the establishment of an additional place—a *landscape*— one built from the contextual associations established across the disparate buildings.

The spatial arrangement of historic structures contributes to the park's invention of a Frontier landscape. Arranged in loose chronological order along the park's path, the buildings' placement near other structures encourages visitors to associate them together. By displaying multiple structures within the same site, the park builds key associations across buildings and structures that previously held no immediate relationship with each other, barring their thematic connection to the ranching industry. While the *Proctor Historical Park* is *not* a replica of a Frontier town, the placement of several structures close together within areas of the park does evoke the sense of a settlement. By placing these historic structures—ones that represent a variety of time periods, come from different geographic locations, and which were used for different purposes—in close

[26] From the interpretive sign for the "Wild Cow Corral."
[27] From the interpretive sign for the "Pitchfork Loading Chute and Corral."

proximity, the *Proctor Historical Park* encourages visitors to view the structures as historically, temporally, and thematically linked. That is, as visitors move through the park, they experience each structure individually—but the park's concurrent textual framing and emphasis on how the buildings connect to the ranching industry encourages visitors to view each displayed place as one part of a broader historical moment: the Frontier. The buildings' spatial arrangement thus contributes to the establishment of the park's Frontier landscape because it approximates a Frontier settlement and supports the park's evocation of a distinctive, transportive atmosphere.

One example of this can be seen in the final stretch of the park. The section features the Baldwin Locomotive (1923), King Ranch Pens (c. 1910, 1934), the Aermoter Windmill (after 1933), and the Ropes Depot (1918). Within the area, the spatial arrangement and display of structures builds an industrialized Frontier landscape, one that encourages visitors to reflect on how the Frontier and the ranching industry evolved with technological change. Within the area, the approximated Frontier settlement is largely oriented towards the business aspects of livestock transport. In particular, the thematic cohesion across the structures supports the invention of a Frontier landscape by providing material, spatial evidence of an implied scene of livestock transport. While there are no live cattle on display within the park, the association built across these structures encourages visitors to imagine how cattle would appear within the area.

Figure 2: Image of the Baldwin Locomotive (1923) at the *Foy Proctor Historical Park* at the National Ranching Heritage Center. Image taken by the author; used with permission from the National Ranching Heritage Center.

This section is also notable because of its emphasis on land use and economics. While the structures materially suggest this emphasis, the interpretive signs further clarify that focus. For example, the interpretive sign for the Ropes Depot (1918) states the structure "represents the importance of the railroad to the growth of the ranching industry" and the interpretive sign for Fort Worth Spudder (c. 1935-1945) explains that "the discovery of oil on ranchland allowed ranchers to continue operations and assured their survival for several generations." Furthermore, the sign for the Baldwin Locomotive

(1923) states "[t]his train represents those used for shipping livestock in the 1920s and '30s." Throughout these descriptions and structures, land is implicitly and explicitly referenced as an economic resource; like the success of the ranching industry, railroads and the oil industry also depend on the control and possession of land as a material good. The inclusion of these structures and their contextualization within changes in an industrialized ranching industry speaks to the site's engagement with ranching history from a settler colonial perspective, as the emphasis on land reflects Tuck and Yang's insights. Despite the centrality of land to those multiple industries, however, the *Proctor Historical Park* avoids engagement with the practices that enabled the acquisition of lands for those very purposes; there is no discussion about how ranchers came to own those lands, nor is there any kind of historical information that identifies and explores the experiences of the Native and Indigenous communities who were affected by those settler actions.

In sum, the display and spatial arrangement of the historic structures contributes to the park's invention of a Frontier landscape. By building associations across multiple structures, some of which are recognizable for the resonance with common Frontier iconography, the *Proctor Historic Park* provides a localized, linear sketch of ranching history that is rooted in the display of place, land, and land use. The meaning-making practices used in the park support the invention of a symbolic landscape—the Frontier—within a specific place.

The *Proctor Historical Park* also relies on landscaping as a meaning-making practice. It does so through the display of plant life from the Southern Great Plains, a geographic area that extends from the lower part of Texas through a central corridor of

the United States and where the *National Ranching Heritage Center* is located, and the inclusion of berms, or human-made landforms that resemble hills. These landscaping decisions indicate that the land, *itself*, is on display within the park. The display of land, alongside the display of park's historic structures, further demonstrates the significance of land in settler colonialism and contributes to the site's invention of a Frontier landscape.

The display of plant life contributes to the site's emphasis on the economics of the ranching industry. The significance of that plant life is described near the park's entrance in an interpretive sign, which also establishes the curatorial purpose of the landscaping: "in addition to historic ranch structures, our park features a diverse array of plant life, much of it native to the Southern Great Plains. These plants tell another part of the ranching story and life in the rural West" ("Landscape of the National Ranching Heritage Center"). The sign also notes the specific contributions of plants, stating:

> Native grasses gave rise to the livestock industry in North America. Most of the native grasses associated with the shortgrass prairie evolved with grazing by larger animals and are suited to survive their enormous appetites. The average cow eats a total of 36 lbs. of grass per day!!! ("Landscape of the National Ranching Heritage Center")

The significant of the Shortgrass Prairie, in particular, is also emphasized:

> The shortgrass prairie is one of the most important western range types for livestock production. This area provides a food source for livestock that in turn provides beef for you and me. The shortgrass prairie has a long history of grazing,

> dating back thousands of years to ancient bison. ("Landscape of the National Ranching Heritage Center")

These descriptions emphasize the centrality of land and land use within the ranching industry and the park itself. The interpretive sign's identification of the necessity of "native grasses" and "shortgrass prairie" to the livestock industry speaks to the environmental, land-based aspects of ranching. The sign also connects the display of that native plant life with the site's authenticity as a ranching history site; by telling "another part of the ranching story and life in the rural West" through the display of land, the *Proctor Historical Park* further establishes itself as a credible, authentic site.

The park's provided information about its landscaping provides additional evidence of the importance of place and land to both the ranching industry and site's memory work. While at first glance it may appear to be common sense to maintain the plant life of the surrounding geographic region within an outdoor park, the park's curatorial purpose doing so suggests the land itself is also meant to be on display and consumed by park visitors. The *Proctor Historical Park*'s display of the plant life thus functions as a key meaning-making practice that contributes to its ability to display ranching history.

The *Proctor Historical Park*'s use of berms (see Figure 3) also reflects the use of landscaping as a meaning-making practice. An interpretive sign near the park's entrance (also discussed above), explains the berms were added to the park's landscaping in 1970, when the city of Lubbock, Texas Tech University, and the United States Army Reserve collaborated to re-purpose debris from a recent tornado into the foundation for those human-made hills. The sign describes the purpose of the structures: "The berms are tall to

enhance and protect the historical structures in our park." The berms, however, are an unstable landform not safe for visitors to walk on; multiple signs around the park reminds visitors not to climb on them. The potential safety hazard of the berms further suggests berms experienced by visitors are part of the park's displayed collection, rather than as a landform to be used as a potential additional, elevated vantage point.

Figure 3: Image of a berm in the *Foy Proctor Historical Park* at the National Ranching Heritage Center. Image taken by the author; used with permission from the National Ranching Heritage Center.

As a meaning-making practice, the berms contribute to the park's invention of a Frontier landscape through their ability to differentiate the park from the surrounding geography. As discussed previously, the National Ranching Heritage Center is located

within the Southern Great Plains, an area that is superbly, spectacularly flat. The presence of berms within the site introduces small hills—a geographic form that is not found in the Southern Great Plains. The berms create a key difference between the park and the surrounding area. They establish boundaries, demarcating the *Proctor Historical Park* as a different place—metaphorically, historically, and geographically—from its immediate physical context. The berms thus function as a meaning-making practice by creating a boundary between park and not-park. For public memory scholars, this further indicates that the display of land—like the display of historic structures or material artifacts—can function as an integral component of a site's memory work. In this case, the use of berms contributes to the sense that the *Proctor Historical Park* is a site "in another time and place" ("Proctor Historical Park") because of its geographic divergence from the surrounding area. Like the park's structures, the berms function as part of the site's displayed collection[28]. They establish place through their aesthetic contributions and build boundaries—an important demarcation *of* place—through their ability to differentiate the park from the surrounding geography. The use of landscaping as a meaning-making practice enables the *Proctor Historical Park* to further establish the importance of *land* to the ranching industry and to create an evocative built environment that appears authentic to visitors.

The *Proctor Historical Park* portrays ranching history through the display and spatial arrangement of historic structures and landscaping decisions that emphasize the

[28] Like the re-assembled historic structure's, the berms were assembled specifically for the park. While there are obvious differences between the berms and the buildings—namely, the berms had no prior use in a previous location—their stated purposes of enhancing the park's aesthetic appeal and protecting the buildings indicates they are seen as a crucial part of the park's work. Additionally, the instability of the landform and repeating warnings throughout the park to not play on them, suggests the berms are meant only to be seen.

contributions of the land's geography and botanical features to the industry and differentiate the park from the surrounding area. Taken together, these meaning-making practices ultimately invent a Frontier landscape in three ways: (1) through the inclusion of recognizable architectural features that bring to mind familiar images associated with the Frontier in hegemonic American historical consciousness, (2) through the establishment of the park as a distinct location that is removed from space and time, and (3) through the consistent thematic, historic, and material emphasis on land. In the first case, consider the Barfield Schoolhouse (c. 1890) and the 6666 Barn (1908) as key examples of Frontier iconography, as the one-room schoolhouse is frequently emphasized in pioneer narratives and the architectural features of a barn are immediately recognizable. In the second case, the interaction between the park's displayed historic structures and landscaping decisions contributes to the sense that the park, as a location, is a site from a different time and space with a distinct atmosphere. In the third case, the park's display of an atypical museum collection comprised of buildings, plant life, and berms speaks to the centrality of land and place within ranching history, the Frontier, and settler colonialism. These meaning-making practices invent a Frontier landscape, one that contains recognizable structures, emphasizes the natural geography of the land, and depends on the use of land.

Identification

The *Proctor Historical Park* encourages visitors to identify with Frontier ranchers and pioneers. Here, I draw on Kenneth Burke's theory of identification in my analysis, where identification is formed through the work of consubstantiality (20); Burke writes,

for example, that "A is not identical with his colleague, B. But insofar as their interests are joined, A is *identified* with B. Or he may *identify himself* with B even when their interests are not joined, if he assumes that they are, or is persuaded to believe so" (20). He goes on to clarify that "two persons may be identified in terms of some principle they share in common, an 'identification' that does not deny their distinctness" (21). For the purposes of my analysis, then, Burke's theory informs my attention to how the park portray pioneers, ranchers, and settlers sympathetically. The following analysis discusses examples of the site's identification efforts: (1) the Jowell Cemetery (1876-1889), featured in Figure 4, and (2) Harrell House (1883, 1900, 1917), featured in Figure 5. These identification efforts contribute to the park's invention of a Frontier landscape by encouraging visitors to empathize with ranchers and pioneers.

Figure 4: Image of the Jowell Cemetery at the *Foy Proctor Historical Park* at the National Ranching Heritage Center. Image taken by the author; used with permission from the National Ranching Heritage Center.

The Jowell Cemetery (1876-1889) is one example of how the park's spatial arrangement of structures contributes to its identification efforts. The cemetery is located after Jowell House (1872-73), a stone structure, on the park's path. Both structures are associated with the same family, and they are located near the beginning of the park. The cemetery, a replica featuring original headstones, is enclosed by a scalloped gate and shaded by nearby trees. Four headstones are arranged in a line along the back, and the

fifth is placed perpendicular to the row at the front right of the plot. Its interpretive sign explains:

> Frontier life was hard on young children, and many lived only a short time. Such common, present-day illnesses as colds, fever and measles could be deadly to children of the 19th century. The ornate stone tablets note the births and deaths of five such children. The lamb on each stone symbolized innocence. Wrought iron fencing around the plot was a common Victorian feature of family burial plots. These headstones of Jowell family descendants were given to the National Ranching Heritage Center when the children's worn grave markers were replaced with new ones.

The material evidence of childhood mortality, spatially located *after* visitors were introduced to the family in the immediately previous Jowell House, encourages visitors to empathize—and thus identify—with the Jowell family, specifically, and pioneer families, broadly. That is, by encountering the two structures, visitors are positioned into acknowledging the reality of childhood mortality during Frontier times. By including this cemetery replica, the park encourages visitors to identify with pioneers.

That identification work, however, is articulated within the context of a common aspect of Frontier discourse. The interpretive sign for the nearby Jowell House provides the following description:

> This fortress-style home was built in Palo Pinto County, Texas, to protect a pioneer family from dangers in the wilderness. After George Jowell's wood cabin was burned by Indians, he designed a home of cut limestone and sandstone with rifle slits above the door. The family could find safety by climbing a ladder to the

second floor and entering through a trap door, pulling the ladder in behind them. Exterior stairs were added after Indian attacks ceased. A well, cistern and springhouse nearby provided water and cool storage during the summer heat.

Rhetorically, the description signals the park's narrative emphasis by representing the pioneer family as a vulnerable unit in need of protection—protection provided by the building's unique design and protection that is stated to be needed *from* the Native and Indigenous populations who also lived in the area. Importantly, the sign suggests all violence experienced by the pioneer family was solely perpetrated by Native and Indigenous peoples—a rhetorical maneuver that connects to common narratives within the Frontier myth that establishes the pioneer family as both victims/survivors and Native and Indigenous communities as violent aggressors. This narrative framing is problematic and its presence within the site further demonstrates the park's articulation of a hegemonic public memory narrative of the Frontier.

The location of the cemetery replica in the *Proctor Historical Park,* more broadly, also supports identification work. Located near the park's beginning, the Jowell Cemetery is one of the first structures visitors experience if they move through the site chronologically. Previously, visitors would have encountered Los Corralitos (c. 1780), El Capote Cabin (c. 1836), and Hedwig's Hill Dogtrot House (1855-1856), a structure that functioned as "post office, store, tavern, boarding house, church, and polling place[29]." Interpretive signs for the park's first structures stress the material composition and construction of the buildings—a trend continued throughout the park. Across these structures, the experiences of pioneers and ranchers are alluded to through references to

[29] From the interpretive sign accompanying Hedwig's Hill Dogtrot House.

the need for protection and discussions of how each building's design fulfilled those needs. For example, the interpretive sign for Los Corralitos focuses on how the building's design was protection-oriented, explaining it was a "fortified home" featuring "one door, no windows and six small gun ports for defense against enemies" and walls of "33 inches." The interpretive sign for El Capote Cabin emphasizes the materials used in the construction of the building, and the description of Hedwig's Hill Dogtrot House concentrates on its expansive, multi-functional use. The cemetery replica, alongside Jowell House, and its interpretive sign depart from the pattern previously established in the park. That is, the shift away from the focus on architectural decision makes the Jowell section's explicit focus on human lives more noticeable.

Visitors are encouraged to identify with the pioneers and ranchers who once lived in and used those historic buildings through the spatial placement of and interaction between the Jowell House and Jowell Cemetery; this identification work is articulated within the settler-colonial discourse of the Frontier. In particular, the two structures' textual discussion of the family's experiences and spatial arrangement within the park presents a familiar pioneer narrative, one that articulates a problematic settler-colonial trope and emphasizes the difficulty of Frontier life. As meaning-making practices, the spatial arrangement of structures and accompanying historical context in the interpretive signs support the *Proctor Historical Park's* invention of a Frontier landscape by encouraging visitors to imagine and empathize with the pioneers and ranchers who may have lived in and used the buildings.

The *Proctor Historical Park* also relies on the staging of the buildings' interiors to encourage identification. Present in multiple buildings, the interior staging involves the

display of objects in rooms or sections of the structures, often with an explicit thematic focus reflecting the area's functionality. A kitchen may contain pots, pans, and other dishes while a bedroom may hold beds decorated with quilts and pillows. Like the spatial arrangement of the structures, the object displays creates the effect of a settlement; as visitors move through the site and experience each structure, they are invited to imagine and reflect on the lives of those who may have previously used the buildings. As a meaning-making practice, the interior staging contributes to the invention of the Frontier landscape through the material animation of the lives that may have played out within the walls of certain structures. In particular, the inclusion of these objects further encourages visitors to imagine each building as a lived-in place that participated in a broader historical moment.

The consistent use of interior staging across most structures in the *Proctor Historical Park* indicates it is a key meaning-making practice. My analysis focuses on the staging within Harrell House (1883, 1900, 1917) because it contains identifying information about the artifacts contained within it—an anomaly in the park. The image included below (Figure 5) represents a room in Harrell House:

Figure 5: Image of a room in Harrell House (1883, 1900, 1917) in the *Foy Proctor Historical Park* at the National Ranching Heritage Center. Image taken by the author; used with permission from the National Ranching Heritage Center.

Here, the room's arrangement and display of materiality implies it is currently occupied, lived-in, and used as a bedroom. Consider the placement of a suitcase—half-open with various compartments pulled out—suggests the room's inhabitant is in the middle of packing for a trip, and that they have stepped out of the room for a brief moment. The room's interior staging creates a sense of temporal pause. When viewing the room, visitors peer into a paused scene of living and are prompted to imagine the lives of those lived in the room. Here, the material display is foundational to that imaginative work. The interior staging contributes to the park's identification work by encouraging site

visitors to imagine the people who lived in those structures and consider how those individuals' *use* of the structures occurred during the Frontier.

While the interior staging is a key meaning-making practice in the site, the artifacts, objects, and materiality used to do so are not individually identified within the buildings. The park does not provide any context or historical information about the included objects, barring the exception of Harrell House[30]; unlike usual material displays in museums, items used to stage the interiors in *Proctor Historical Park* are not dated or described in terms of their material composition (e.g., wood, oil paint, steel), nor is the provenance disclosed. For visitors, it is unclear if the objects are historical artifacts, current-day recreations, or re-purposed items—a curatorial decision that further heightens the significance of the historic structures, as that collection *is* consistently dated, contextualized, and described. Additionally, the lack of identifying materials further contributes to the sense that the rooms reflect a paused moment in a lived-in[31] structure, as it is unlikely that most currently occupied homes contain identifying tags for each object or furnishing used within them.

One exception can be seen in Harrell House because its interpretive sign does identify the provenance of some displayed objects. The sign explains:

[30] On a related note, there is a small exhibit, "A Significant American Invention: Barbed Wire," located within the 6666 Barn; this exhibit displays and identifies different examples of barbed wire and contains an opening statement that provides important historical information about the significance of barbed wire to the ranching industry.

[31] This sense of *lived-in-ness* can also be constructed through the site's use of Ranch Hosts, costumed volunteers who occasionally deliver oral histories of the structures, those who lived in the buildings, or ranching history. This practice—akin to historical role-play—suggests there may be additional performative aspect to public memory with the use of human actors. While this aspect prompts additional inquiry into the use of *living history museums* and their functionality as a public memory site, the contributions of Ranch Hosts lay outside the parameters of this dissertation. Future research should investigate how human actors—like costumed volunteers—contribute to a site's public memory work.

> The Harrell House represents the expansion of a dwelling as the family grew and fortunes increased. This house began as a single stacked-rock room in 1883. Next, two box and strip rooms were added to the east side of the stone house. Last, the other rooms and porches were added. Over the years, the building fell into disrepair until Fay and Myrtle Harrel of Scurry County, Texas, found it and made it their project to restore. In 1961-1962, the sisters provided most of the somewhat eclectic furnishings to represent early West Texas.

As indicated on the sign, some displayed objects had a pre-existing relationship to the building; which *specific* furnishings and their exact dating, however, remains unclear as no artifacts are labeled. This may lead visitors to mistakenly assume that all included materiality is original and/or authentic from the specified time period. The non-identified use of materiality thus contributes to the park's invention of a Frontier landscape. The material displays set the scene within the historic buildings, encouraging park visitors to imagine the people who had previously lived, slept, and eaten within those walls. In doing so, the staged interiors prompt visitors to view the buildings as *lived in places*, rather than static artifacts on display.

The interior staging contributes to the park's identification work because it evokes the sense of previous lives lived within the structures, builds the perception of authenticity within the site, and encourages visitors to imagine how each structure was used by ranchers and pioneers. The lack of identifying information for the displayed objects supports these functions because it is a departure from a common museum practice; by *not* identifying the materials used, the park implicitly suggests it is not a static museum exhibit, but a collection of currently-lived in places. The meaning-making

of the interior staging contributes to the *Foy Proctor Historical Park'*s invention of a Frontier landscape through its ability to animate the historic structures, to materially imply the lives of those who may have used the buildings, and to encourage identification between visitors and ranchers/pioneers.

The *Proctor Historical Park*'s identification efforts occur through the spatial arrangement of structures, textual information in the structure's interpretive signs, and the buildings' interior staging. By employing these meaning-making practices, the park portrays ranchers and pioneers in a sympathetic light, emphasizing the hardships they may have faced and their resilience in overcoming those difficulties. These identification strategies contribute to the *Proctor Historical Park*'s memory work because they build a settler colonial narrative that centers the experiences of pioneers and ranchers. They also support the park's invention of a Frontier landscape by providing opportunities for visitors to imagine how pioneers and ranchers may have lived in and used the historic structures.

Conclusion

The *Proctor Historical Park* builds a public memory narrative of the Frontier by focusing on ranching—an industry intertwined with settler-colonial settlement. In doing so, the park articulates a hegemonic Frontier public memory narrative, one that selectively *remembers* the experiences of pioneers, ranchers, and settlers and *forgets* the government actions that enabled the acquisition of land for settlement. Crucially, the site's "erasure" (Stuckey 232) and "forgetting" (Shotwell 37) occur through the use of land- and place- based meaning-making practices that emphasize the economics of the

ranching industry. This usage thus suggests the "erasure" and "forgetting" of settler colonialism may continue to circulate in the form of economic-focused narratives. To further asses the implications of this finding, consider the NRHC's mission statement, which also specifies that the museum aims to "address contemporary ranching issues" ("Who We Are"). Reading this aim alongside the memory work advanced in the *Proctor Historical Park* raises at least three additional questions. Namely, in what ways does the current discourse about the ranching industry participate in settler-colonial acts of "erasure" and "forgetting"? Additionally, what aspects of Frontier discourse, and the land-based Frontier public memory practices seen in the *Proctor Historical Park,* appear in the rhetorics surrounding ranching, land use, and industrial development? And, given how the "erasure" and "forgetting" aspects of settler colonialism are communicated through a site-wide emphasis on economics[32] and industry development, in what *other* public memory sites may this rhetorical shaping occur? Such questions are even more pressing when we consider the temporal dimensions of public memory; as Edward Casey writes, public memory looks both backwards and forward as it is "Janus plus the present" (41). Within the context of Frontier public memory and its connections to a prominent, contemporary food industry, the *Proctor Historical Park* further indicates the high stakes of Frontier memory because it is articulated within a site that is explicitly connected to an industry that is currently in use.

The *Proctor Historical Park* demonstrates the "erasure" (Stuckey 232) and "forgetting" (Shotwell 37) that occurs within setter-colonial memory, acts that are

[32] Here, I hope to prompt additional inquiry into how economic-focused narratives may engage in the *displacement* of responsibility. The economic dimension of the "forgetting" (Shotwell 37) that occurs within the *Proctor Historical Park* cannot be overlooked, and it indicates that additional attention to the use of economic discourse in public memory is needed.

predicated upon selective *remembering.* Crucially, these two acts occur *concurrently* within the *Proctor Historical Park*—and this concurrence further demonstrates the epistemic complexity of remembering and forgetting in public memory. More specifically, this concurrence indicates that additional attention to the *how* of memory—that is, the methods, the meaning-making practices—is needed. These findings prompt inquiry in two additional avenues. First, the park's invention of a Frontier landscape provides evidence that a symbolic landscape may become actualized within a particular place—indicating there is an additional dimension to Clark's rhetorical landscape theory. Future research should investigate this dimension. What other symbolic landscapes are made land within public memory sites? What meaning-making practices are used to do so? Second, the centrality of place and land to the memory work within the park cannot be overlooked; the site's literal collection and display of places and land suggests the existence of *land*-focused public memory practices. Additional investigations into the use of *land* in public memory sites are needed. How is land used and displayed? How is landscaping used within the site? How are land and land use conceptualized in public memory work? Ultimately, the *Proctor Historical Park'*s invention of a Frontier landscape reveals both that additional attention to land-based memory practices is needed and demonstrates that the remembering-forgetting dialectic remains a significant topic in public memory studies.

CHAPTER 4

"UNFORGETTING" AND LEGIBLE SOVEREIGNTY: PUBLIC MEMORY IN REMEMBERING OUR INDIAN SCHOOL DAYS: THE BOARDING SCHOOL EXPERIENCE

Introduction[33]

Located at the Heard Museum in Phoenix, Arizona, the exhibit *Remembering Our Indian School Days: The Boarding School Experience*[34] is a highly significant "memory place.[35]" documenting the history of the United States Bureau of Indian Affairs off-reservation boarding school system. The exhibit traces their 1879 origins as institutions of cultural assimilation to the sustained advocacy efforts that transformed some aspects of the schools into sites of solidarity and resistance. Addressed to both Native and non-Native audiences, *Remembering Our Indian School Days* centers Native and Indigenous voices, memorializes a significant intergenerational and intercultural history, and educates visitors about an often-overlooked aspect of the US's settler colonial history. In doing so, the exhibit achieves two important tasks: 1) the affirmation of Native and

[33] This chapter is derived in part from an article published in *Rhetoric Society Quarterly*, April 5 2021, "Objects, Documentation, and Identification: Materiality and Memory of American Indian Boarding Schools at the Heard Museum," available online at https://doi.org/10.1080/02773945.2021.1877799.

[34] A note of clarification: *Remembering Our Indian School Days* was so successful that the Heard Museum opened a renovated update entitled *Away from Home: American Indian Boarding School Stories* in 2019 after the original exhibit closed in 2018. The 2019 update reflects more than twenty years of scholarship and includes additional archival materials, art, and oral histories ("Away from Home"). While both iterations of the exhibit are rich sites of inquiry, I focus specifically on *Remembering Our Indian School Days: The Boarding School Experience* because this version 1) was open to the public when I began this research trajectory, and 2) has curatorial records available for researchers in the Heard Museum's archive and library. Claims made about this exhibit, and the relationship between memory and materiality, pertain only to the *Remembering Our Indian School Days* version; future research may extend this project by attending to this relationship in *Away from Home*, or by comparing key similarities and differences in the public memory strategies used within each site.

[35] I draw on Blair et al's definition as those sites that "are more closely associated with public memory than others, for example, museums, preservation sites, battlefields, memorials, and so forth" (24).

Indigenous experiences, and 2) the disruption of their systemic erasure in hegemonic, settler-colonial histories of the US.

As such, *Remembering Our Indian School Days* engages in needed memory work that challenges hegemonic assumptions about the Frontier by offering a highly significant public memory narrative that centers the experiences of Native and Indigenous communities as they responded to the United States' settler-colonial actions during its nineteenth-century westward expansion. That is, this "memory place" engages with and deliberately counters issues of erasure, silencing, and forgetting within the context of settler colonialism. In this chapter, I analyze *Remembering Our Indian School Days: The Boarding School Experience* and consider how its highly valuable memory work speaks to the overlooked epistemic complexity of acts of remembering and forgetting in public memory; in doing so, the chapter differs from the other case studies in this dissertation because it focuses on a site that revises common, settler-colonial narratives about the Frontier, while the other sites included in this dissertation articulate that "forgetting" (Shotwell 37) memory work. In my analysis, I consider the following questions:

(1) What primary public memory narrative is constructed within *Remembering Our Indian School Days: The Boarding School Experience?*

(2) What meaning-making practices are used in the construction of *Remembering Our Indian School Days: The Boarding School Experience's* primary narrative?

(3) Given the centrality of identity to public memory (Blair et al 6; Casey 37), which identities are constituted and narrated within the *Remembering Our Indian School Days: The Boarding School Experience*?

In answering these questions, I ultimately argue that *Remembering Our Indian School Days* builds an "unforgetting" (Dunbar-Ortiz qtd in Shotwell 37) public memory narrative that documents one shared experience among Native and Indigenous peoples in response to the US federal government's settler-colonial policies during the Frontier era. More specifically, *Remembering Our Indian School Days* "unforgets" the history of off-reservation boarding schools through its use of objects, the inclusion of first-person voices, and the built environment. In doing so, the exhibit's highly successful memory work prompts rhetorical scholars to further examine the epistemic complexity of acts of remembering and forgetting in the context of settler colonial and decolonizing public memory work.

Public Memory, Legible Sovereignties, and "Unforgetting"

Museum exhibits are frequently featured in scholarship focused on the rhetoric of public memory. Whether analyzing the evocation of civic identity in national museums (Aden; Weisser), comparing conflicting representations of the same historic event (Tell; Young), or considering the pedagogical work of exhibits (Greer and Grobman; Obermark), rhetorical scholarship has increasingly turned towards these sites as valuable spaces—ones that, like other public memory sites, provide keen insights into a public's values. Museums, however, are troubled by a long-lasting historical connection with colonialism (Edwards et al 1; King 2-3). Amy Lonetree, for example, has argued that "[m]useums can be very painful sites for Native peoples, as they are intimately tied to the colonization process" (19). The resulting calls for the decolonization of museums (e.g., Lonetree) have resulted in needed shifts in the research, collaboration, and display

practices within museum exhibits. For public memory scholars, these calls ultimately push us to consider how the memory work advanced within an exhibit may either participate in or challenge that colonial tradition.

One key rhetorical response to these calls can be found in Lisa King's work on legible sovereignties. Bridging the work of Richard Scott Lyons on rhetorical sovereignty and Blair et al on rhetorical legibility, King explains the theory of legible sovereignty "is a means to approach and think through public declarations of rhetorical sovereignty that acknowledge the communicative needs of all potential audiences but tell the difficult truth and assert positive Native and Indigenous presence" (6). A framework that recognizes the complex rhetorical work occurring within "Native museum sites" (3), legible sovereignties affirms that "Native peoples have the inherent right to choose and claim public discourses such as museums to self-represent" (2) and recognizes that "the act of rhetorical sovereignty must be accessible to a variety of audiences, or the communicative act fails" (3). In other words, legible sovereignties speaks to the necessity of not only affirming the epistemic right to self-representation within museum spaces, but also to ensure that the value of that right and the significance of its articulation within a museum setting is made "legible" across an exhibit's multiple audiences. Crucially, however, this rhetorical act occurs within an expansive context that is affected by an audience's potential assumptions; King argues that "If museums are colonial institutions at their roots, then utilizing them as a means to rhetorical sovereignty means dealing with the doubled complications of visitors' expectations of museums *and* visitors' expectations of "Indians"" (3). These insights ultimately reveal the complex, multi-faceted rhetorical situation that museum exhibits may face.

Furthermore, the consequences of the colonial tradition of museums and the necessity of decolonizing those spaces can be heightened with the recognition of the "forgetting" aspects of settler colonialism (Jacobs; Shotwell). As discussed previously, settler colonialism is a form of colonialism that involved the deliberate displacement of Native and Indigenous population as part of colonizers' establishment of a permanent settlement (Jacobs 2-3). The epistemic dimension of settler colonialism continues that displacement in its public memory practices through acts of "forgetting" that involve a lack of engagement with or knowledge of the violent, genocidal acts that enabled the establishment of those permanent settlements (Shotwell 37). Crucially, activist responses to this pervasive "forgetting" have focused on ways in which to disrupt and revise that systemic erasure; Alexis Shotwell, for instance, writes about "the question of decolonization as a challenge to forgetting, which implies that this collective *loss* of memory could perhaps be understood as a theft of memory, a dispossession as integral to the colonial process" (37). In particular, Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz's work on "unforgetting" is one framework for engaging with that needed rhetorical work (Shotwell 37); here, I build on Shotwell's previous discussion of Dunbar-Ortiz's work to consider how it appears within a museum setting.

"Unforgetting" may be understood as a decolonial memory practice. As Dunbar-Ortiz writes, "But in Greek the opposite of truth is forgetting. This is a very subtle thing. What is the action you take the tell the truth? It is un-forgetting" (qtd. in Shotwell 37). To put this another way, Dunbar-Ortiz's theorization of "unforgetting" asks us to examine the connection between systemic historic erasure and lies, and how the act of telling the truth in response to persistent lies enacts "unforgetting." For public memory scholars,

Dunbar-Ortiz's "unforgetting" is a highly significant theory that identifies the documentation work that is necessary in response to settler colonialism. That is, "unforgetting" aids an additional dimension to common assumptions about the relationship between remembering and forgetting— or the "remembering and forgetting dialectic" (Blair et al 18)—that deliberately engages with issues of truth, lies, legibility, and affirmation. Shotwell, working with Dunbar-Ortiz's theory, also speaks to this dimension when she writes that "taking up an unforgetting approach, revisiting the question of what and how we remember, we can understand ourselves as relationally constituting power-saturated relationships of differential but forward-looking responsibility" (54).Within the context of *Remembering Our Indian School Days,* then, Dunbar-Ortiz's work on "unforgetting" prompts us to consider how a museum exhibit—as a site in which public memory narratives are articulated—may participate in that work. That is, how might a site "tell the truth?" What methods does it use to do so?

Attending to such rhetorical work also requires an engagement with King's work on legible sovereignties; here, the potential congruence between these two theories asks rhetorical scholars to consider not only how "truth telling" and "unforgetting" may occur within museum exhibits, but also how those sites affirm the epistemic right of Native and Indigenous communities to self-representation and how those sites make the significance of that self-representation legible across multiple audiences. Taken together, then, these theories prompt scholars of public memory to attend to not only *what* a site's overall public memory narrative may be, but also *which* rhetorical resources are used to build that narrative, and how that narrative is communicated across multiple audiences. That is, prior work on decolonizing memory ultimately prompts us to contextualize sites of public

memory within the broader epistemic ecology of other sites focused on similar, if not the same, historical events. By analyzing *Remembering Our Indian School Days* and considering how this site's memory work contributes to the broader "ecology of memory[36]" that surrounds the Frontier, then, this chapter contributes to ongoing conversations in museum studies, public memory, and decolonization.

Institutional Context and Exhibit Intentions: Audience, Documentation, and Identification

As a "memory place," *Remembering Our Indian School Days* has an institutional context and several stated intentions that further indicate the complexity of its meaning-making practices and significance of its overall memory work. Institutionally, the exhibit is located within The Heard Museum, a Phoenix-area museum focused on the arts, histories, and cultures of Native and Indigenous peoples. Founded in 1929 by Dwight and Maie Bartlett Heard, the Heard Museum features art- and culture-focused exhibits, hosts community cultural events, and collaborates with Native and Indigenous communities ("History"). As an institution, the Heard Museum's focus and commitments can be seen in its mission, which states that it aims "to be the world's preeminent museum for the presentation, interpretation and advancement of American Indian art, emphasizing its

[36] Dave Tell develops the term "ecology of memory" in his book *Remembering Emmett Till;* he defines it as "the interanimating force of race, place, and commemoration" (5). Here, what I would like to emphasize is that Tell's work identifies the vast, interconnected nature of public memory that is focused on a shared topic, and how that interconnected nature and the social, institutional forces animating that public memory are also reflected in the physical geography of the surrounding land. Within public memory of the Frontier, then, Tell's work on the "ecology of memory" asks us to reflect on what is considered "natural" and how our assumptions about the spatial ordering of land and place in memory are reflective of settler colonialism and decolonization.

intersection with broader artistic and cultural themes" ("History"). Additional clarification of the institution's broad goals can be seen in the following description:

> Dedicated to the advancement of American Indian art, the Heard successfully presents the stories of American Indian people from a first-person perspective, as well as exhibitions that showcase the beauty and vitality of traditional and contemporary art.
>
> The Heard Museum sets the standard for collaborating with American Indian artists and tribal communities to provide visitors with a distinctive perspective about the art of Native people, especially those from the Southwest. ("History")

Taken together, these statements are notable for their commitment to collaboration with Native and Indigenous peoples and to the affirmation of the communicative right to self-representation through an emphasis on the "first-person perspective"—two aspects that reflect aspects of King's theory of legible sovereignties. Within *Remembering Our Indian School Days,* in particular, the commitment to first-person voices was foregrounded in the exhibit's planning, as indicated in curatorial records and an article that describes the exhibit's development states that it "was among the first nationwide to focus attention on Native experiences within, and perspectives on, the boarding and residential schools as colonial schooling institutions" (Lomawaima and Cantley 22). Within the exhibit, itself, this commitment was achieved through the consistent inclusion of first-person narratives and testimonies—those "first-person voices of Native people" (22-23)—about students' time at those schools. Crucially, this institutional emphasis on the use of the "first-person perspective" demonstrates a key awareness of the importance of not only including the

histories, cultures, and arts of Native and Indigenous peoples within a museum setting, but doing so in a way that recognizes and affirms those communities right to self-representation.

The institutional exigence for *Remembering Our Indian School Days* also speaks to its significant memory work. *Remembering Our Indian School Days* was prompted, in part, by the results of a 1993 National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) Self-Study Grant. In the study, the Heard Museum sought to uncover "opportunities and tensions within the Museum's interpretive mission" (Archival Records RC125 (1): 1.1.1)[8]. Notable results included the identification of "intercultural history" (Archival Records RC125 (1): 1.1.1)[9] as a future thematic focus and a "discussion" of "the context in which objects were displayed and interpreted" (Archival Records RC125 (1): 1.1.1)[10] Additionally, one document also explains that "this exhibit is a departure for the Museum, in that it is not an object-based exhibition. Personal and community experiences will be a primary theme of the exhibit[37]" (Archival Records RC125 (1):1.1.1), a commitment which again recognizes the significance of centering Native and Indigenous voices within the site.

Within the site, itself, *Remembering Our Indian School Days* had several stated intentions that further indicate the complexity of its meaning-making practices and overall memory work. These intentions include: 1) the address to multiple intended audiences, 2) the documentation of the history of the schools, and 3) the encouragement of identification. These intentions were identified through archival research and analysis of grant applications that were submitted by the Heard Museum; by discussing these

[37] From a 1993 draft of a proposal submitted to the Flinn Foundation.

intentions, I provide additional institutional context that heightens the significance of the memory work advanced within the exhibit.

Remembering Our Indian School Days has multiple intended audiences. Curatorial records indicate at least three audiences were evoked during the exhibit's development, design, and implementation: 1) American Indians, 2) walk-in museum visitors, and 3) middle grade students. For American Indian visitors, the exhibit was intended to actively involve the community in its development, and to raise the profile of the Heard Museum as "an accessible community resource center" (Archival Records RC125 (1): 1.1.2)[38]. For the average museum visitor, the exhibit works "to provide information about the socialization and acculturation of Native Americans into the 20th century by encouraging identification with familiar, remembered aspects of institutional education" (Archival Records RC125 (1): 1.1.2)[39]. The exhibit also addresses middle-grade students because, in addition to being "an under-served population," they are "the age group most likely to be able to find identification with aspects of student life in the boarding schools that range from day-to-day occupations to the need for individuation, the emotional struggles of dawning adulthood, and ambivalence about family" (Archival Records RC125 (1): 1.1.2)[40]. Additionally, the Heard made use of a front-end evaluation of two audience demographics—the general museum visitor and middle grade students—to gage "general knowledge about Indian boarding schools, misconceptions about the boarding school experience, experience with persons who have attended boarding

[38] From a 2000 letter submitted with a grant application to the Arizona Community Foundation.

[39] From the grant application submitted to the Arizona Community Foundation.

[40] From the grant application submitted to the Arizona Community Foundation.

schools, and views about boarding schools" (Archival Records RC125 (1): 1.1.1)[41]. The goals behind the multiple intended audiences suggest *Remembering Our Indian School Days: The Boarding School Experience* was intended to have a dual functionality as a memorial and educational space that spoke to both Native and non-Native audiences. This goal can be immediately connected to King's insights about the importance of an exhibition addressing multiple intended audiences in its memory work. More specifically, the discussions of the exhibit's intended audiences within these curatorial records suggest that questions of the accessibility and legibility of the portrayed histories and experiences were foregrounded in the exhibit's planning and development.

Remembering Our Indian School Days also sought to engage in documentation efforts throughout its development and implementation. Research in preparation for the exhibit included archival research at some BIA boarding schools, the collection of oral histories, consultation with respected Native scholars who specialize in the area, and the subsequent creation of additional historical records for future use by researchers. The extensive research addresses long-standing historical erasures; as one document explains, "[r]esearch for this exhibit has revealed deficiencies in the historic record" (Archival Records RC125 (1): 1.1.2). In creating the exhibit, the Heard Museum helped make the history of the schools legible and accessible to researchers and exhibit visitors; in short, development for the exhibit documented the history. One curatorial record also explicitly engages with this goal when it writes that "the exhibit will do more than present—it will

[41] From a draft of the 1994 grant application submitted to the National Endowment for the Humanities.

collect information that can become a part of the Museum's archives and a future source for researchers" (Archival Records RC 125 (1). 1.1.1).[42]

The exhibit also engaged in documentation work with its consistent inclusion of first-person voices. As one funding document explains, "[t]hrough its use of oral histories and other first-person narratives, the exhibit will put the human experience back into the federal government's records and documents—and inform the visitors' future judgements of public policies and private attitudes" (Archival Records RC125 (1): 1.1.2).[43] The goal is also explicitly stated in the exhibit's first text panel; entitled "Assimilate, Acculturate, and Americanize…" the text explains "[t]his exhibit explores these changes and experiences through the voices of the students, teachers, and administrators, government officials, social reformers and tribes who participated in the boarding schools' evolution." In doing so, the exhibit enables a layered, nuanced history to emerge from the perspectives of those who experienced it. Here, I would like to emphasize the significance of the documentation-oriented research that went into the planning and development of this exhibit as it further speaks to the "unforgetting" work of the resulting exhibit. As discussed previously, the "forgetting" dimensions of settler colonialism have far-reaching effects, as both the initial creation of historical records and current dominant historical consciousness are affected by it; "unforgetting," as a memory practice that involves the act of "tell[ing] the truth" (Dunbar-Ortiz qtd. in Shotwell 37), is necessarily entwined with documentation efforts. So, it is highly notable that this exhibit—in its planning, development, and eventual display—consistently engaged in documentation work, work that then supports the site's ability to build an "unforgetting narrative."

[42] From a 1994 grant application submitted to the National Endowment for the Humanities.
[43] From a document addressed to the W.K. Kellogg Foundation in 2000.

Remembering Our Indian School Days was also intended to encourage identification opportunities across its multiple intended audiences. A grant application submitted to the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) in 1998, for example, states the exhibit intends to "engender feelings of recognition and identification in visitors, and seeks to do so by offering a range of intellectual or emotional points of entry" (Archival Records RC125 (1): 1.1.3)[44]. Another indication of that intention can be seen in a 1994 grant submitted to the NEH; the document states "[t]he exhibit will allow Museum visitors to "experience" aspects of Indian boarding school" (Archival Records RC125 (1): 1.1.1)[45]. Additionally, a draft of a proposal for the Flinn Foundation in 1993 states that "The visitor will participate in the boarding school experience. The recreated environments will be balanced with negative and positive experiences to provide a more realistic representation of history" (RC125 (1): 1.1.1)[46]. Further evidence of the goal can be found on the exhibit's website: it states"[e]ach of the exhibition's 10 sections is constructed to emulate different boarding school experiences and environments, from the arrival to classrooms and dorm rooms" ("Remembering Our Indian School Days"). In other words, the exhibit's built environment was intended to encourage identification; in practice, the exhibit's design goal translate to the spatial arrangement of information to evoke the experience of a student. While exhibit records are likely not evoking identification in Burkean terms, the additional emphasis on "recognition" suggests that likening is reasonable. Here, this attention to identification speaks to the work of both

[44] From a proposal application submitted to the National Endowment for the Humanities in 1998.

[45] From a 1994 grant submitted to the National Endowment for the Humanities.

[46] From a 1993 draft of a proposal to be submitted to the Flinn Foundation.

legible sovereignties and "unforgetting." More specifically, the exhibit's efforts to encourage identification between its various intended audiences and the students whose experiences are portrayed within site also supports the accessibility aspect of King's legible sovereignties; that is, this intention may also be read as evidence of the exhibit's efforts to make the significance of its portrayed history accessible across multiple intended audiences. Additionally, the work of identification may also prompt the site's many visitors into reflecting on how they can take collaborative, public action.

Taken together, the site's institutional context within the Heard Museum and curatorial intentions as a museum exhibit indicate the exhibit was positioned to offer needed memory work that challenged common assumptions by centering the voices and experiences of Native and Indigenous communities within its portrayal of the history of the off-reservation boarding school system. The upcoming analysis discusses specific examples of the exhibit's overall public memory narrative, its varied meaning-making practices, and its identification work.

Site Analysis

Remembering Our Indian School Days: The Boarding School Experience exists at a critical rhetorical intersection: one that seeks to affirm the diverse experiences of Native and Indigenous students who attended the schools while also educating museum visitors who were previously unaware of or have a limited understanding of the schools' history. The Heard Museum's description of *Remembering Our Indian School Days* further highlights its dual functionality when it explains the exhibit both *"*celebrates the spirit of survival" and "breaks down the walls of misunderstanding by presenting the common

experiences of the American education system" ("Remembering Our Indian School Days"). The exhibit achieves its stated functions through a thematic exploration of the boarding school history based in the incorporation of oral histories, archival materials, and objects. After establishing the historic origins of the schools, the exhibit examines different aspects of the experience like that of arriving at school, the living conditions in dormitories, the curriculum, music, art, and athletics. One section recognizes the reality of student death, and the exhibit's final room addresses the prevalent gap in the historical records of the schools. The exhibit ends with the recognition that additional documentation work is needed; visitors are provided with information to potentially contribute memories of their time at a BIA boarding school by recording an oral history at the Heard Museum.

Remembering Our Indian School Days builds an "unforgetting" public memory narrative through its documentation work and identification efforts. In doing so, this exhibit negotiates the articulation of what King calls "legible sovereignties," as the memory work advanced within the exhibit affirms the varied experiences of Native and Indigenous students while also working to ensure that affirmation is accessible to the exhibit's multiple groups of intended audiences. The upcoming analysis discusses the use and contributions of various meaning-making practices in the site's articulation of its public memory narrative, documentation work, and identification efforts. I ultimately argue the interplay among these multiple meaning-making practices articulates an "unforgetting" public memory narrative of the United States' actions to settle the Frontier.

Public Memory Narrative

Remembering Our Indian School Days: The Boarding School Experience builds an "unforgetting" narrative that challenges hegemonic assumptions about the Frontier and westward expansion by documenting the experiences of American Indian students who attended the Bureau of Indian Affairs off-reservation boarding school system. While the exhibit does not explicitly name the Frontier—nor does it position itself as a site of Frontier public memory as it affirms the experiences of Native and Indigenous communities rather than focusing solely on the experiences of pioneers and settlers—its planned documentation work ultimately does challenge hegemonic assumptions about that symbolic space. That is, even though the exhibit does *not* explicitly position itself as a Frontier public memory site, its resulting "unforgetting" narrative ultimately challenges, disrupts, and revises dominant narratives about the US' westward expansion. As such, the exhibit can be read as participating within a larger context of US public memory of the Frontier by "unforgetting" some actions the federal government undertook in order to enable westward expansion.

The exhibit builds an "unforgetting" narrative through the use of multiple meaning-making practices that provide evidence of the historical establishment of such schools as institutions of forced cultural assimilation, the variety of student experiences and community responses to the schools, and the ways in which some dimensions of the schools—like their English-only rules—were ultimately transformed through community advocacy efforts. In doing so, the exhibit documents the history of educational institutions—and, more importantly, student experiences within those institutions—that were deliberately used by the federal government as part of its westward expansion

policies but which are not currently acknowledged within dominant American historical consciousness.

One example of the exhibit's overall "unforgetting" narrative can be seen in its introductory text panels. These text panels, located in the exhibit's opening hallway, establish the historical origins and context for the establishment of the schools. In doing so, the text panels ground visitors in a familiar historical context—the Frontier, Manifest Destiny, and westward expansion—that is immediately repositioned to emphasize the experiences of Native and Indigenous communities, rather than the experiences of pioneers that are commonly prioritized in histories of that time period. For instance, one text panel articulates the connection between the schools and westward expansion by explaining how the schools were initially developed as a solution to the "Indian Problem." Entitled "Manifest Destiny, Removal and Relocation…", the text panel explains:

> The 19th century brought extreme and radical changes to Indian peoples in the United States. Tribes were confined to smaller and smaller areas of land. The intent was to remove the tribes far away from their traditional land and to restrain their political presence and power. The federal policy of assimilation focused on converting the Indians to Christian farmers. By the mid-1800s, western tribes began to stand in the way of westward settlement […] As cities began to feel the effects of this population explosion people looked West, to Indian lands and the valuable resources on them. The doctrine of Manifest Destiny provided justification for the movement onto Indian land.

The text panel then goes on to state:

> The question of what to do with the growing "Indian problem" became a topic for national debate. A group of reformed minded men and women, who referred to themselves as the "Friends of the Indians," set about to resolve the Indian problem by ridding the Indian of his culture. The Indian problem would no longer exist because there would be no more "Indians." Education would be the tool to "civilize" the "savage."

The text panel's discussion of this history makes rhetorical moves that are central to the exhibit's overarching "unforgetting" narrative. First, the panel immediately indicates that the history portrayed within the exhibit will be told from the perspective of Native and Indigenous peoples—a perspective selection that is highly notable given the long-standing historical erasure of those communities and the aforementioned issues concerning the right to self-representation within museum spaces. Second, the text panel explains the "Indian Problem" and how the off-reservation boarding school system was a legislated, institutionalized response to the so-called problem that held up assimilation-oriented education as a solution. The exhibit, then, makes immediately legible the effect of westward expansion on Native and Indigenous communities, thereby providing a needed counter-narrative to common assumptions about Frontier settlement.

By building this "unforgetting" narrative, *Remembering Our Indian School Days* rightly centers the experiences and voices of Native and Indigenous peoples in its portrayal of the history of the schools. More specifically, the exhibit's extensive incorporation of first-hand accounts, testimony, and oral histories enables a multi-vocal history of the off-reservation boarding schools to emerge from the portrayal of student life. By doing so, the exhibit constructs a significant public memory that not only

challenges hegemonic assumptions about the Frontier and westward expansion, but also shifts the locus of those assumptions to prioritize the experiences, perspectives, and voices of the Native and Indigenous communities who were affected by the US' federal westward expansion policies. In sum, then, *Remembering Our Indian School Days* builds an "unforgetting" narrative that challenges and revises common assumptions about the history of the US' westward expansion by engaging in extensive documentation efforts that affirm the experiences of Native and Indigenous communities.

Meaning-Making Practices

Remembering Our Indian School Days relies on the interplay among the meaning-making of objects, the inclusion of first-person voices, and the built environment in order to build its "unforgetting" public memory narrative. The effective use of these various meaning-making practice point towards the epistemic complexity of making memory, especially when that memory work is positioned to challenge common public memory narratives—those of the Frontier—by affirming the experiences of Native and Indigenous communities. The upcoming analysis discusses examples of each meaning-making practice and considers how they participate within the exhibit's overall memory work.

Throughout the exhibit, objects are deliberately arranged and displayed in order to provide material evidence of students' experiences at the off-reservation boarding schools. In doing so, objects offer vital contributions to the exhibit's documentation work and supports its articulation of an "unforgetting" public memory narrative. One compelling example of the meaning-making of objects can be seen in the barber chair display. Located at the end of the exhibition's opening hallway, the barber chair display

is included in an exhibit section referred to as "Arrival."[47] It portrays the experiences of students entering school during the schools' initial years[48]; for many, the transition involved school actions that restricted the expression of their cultural identities, like hair cutting and wearing military-esque uniforms. Hair cutting—common during the nineteenth century—is perhaps the most infamous aspect of the schools' history, as many individuals who are unfamiliar with the schools may not know about the haircuts. Evidence of the consequences of the haircuts can be seen in the Heard Museum's description of the exhibit: "Traditionally an act associated with special ceremonies, hair cutting became one of the most immediate and devastating experiences of boarding school life for American Indians" ("Remembering Our Indian School Days"). The barber chair and surrounding exhibit context (shown in Figure 6 and 7) document the hair cutting experience.

[47] This naming practice can be seen in RC125 (1): 3.1.1 "Conceptual Planning and Design Materials."

[48] A clarification on the timeline: the "Arrival" section focuses on experiences common during the nineteenth century, but students did arrive at and attend the boarding schools throughout the twentieth century after those practices were reportedly stopped following reform efforts. For more information about the reform efforts, see the report *The Problem of Indian Administration* (also known as the Meriam Report), which criticizes and challenges the schools' cultural assimilation-oriented practices.

Figure 6: Exhibit installation image of the barber chair display at *Remembering Our Indian School Days: The Boarding School Experience* at the Heard Museum, Phoenix, Arizona.

Figure 7: Exhibit installation image of the barber chair display at *Remembering Our Indian School Days: The Boarding School Experience* at the Heard Museum, Phoenix, Arizona.

"Arrival" is centered around a display case containing a barber chair with blue leather cushions, steel supports, and black hair clippings fanning around the chair's circular base. As the first object visitors encounter, the barber chair holds great weight in the exhibit; visitors are positioned to highly value the chair because it suggests there is something about *this* aspect of the schools' history that necessitates material documentation. To extend the significance, here, the display of the barber chair also begins the exhibit's regular use of objects as a meaning-making practice and it marks a transition in the exhibit's narrative focus. Before the chair display, the exhibit highlights the school's historical origins and students' experiences when leaving for school. After the chair display, the exhibit moves into the exploration of student life while attending

the schools. The barber chair marks an important transitional moment in the exhibit's exploration of the schools' history and in student experiences.

The barber chair is a key component of the section's memory work; the interplay among the object, the surrounding exhibit context, and other meaning-making practices documents the trauma and violence of the haircutting experience. In particular, the inclusion of three perspectives alongside the barber chair creates valuable emotional and cultural context to aid visitors in understanding the significance and effects of the haircutting act. The perspectives are conveyed through large printed quotes located in close spatial proximity to the barber chair. The first quote, printed directly above the chair, vocalizes one student's experience. From Asa Duklugie, Chirachua Apache, in 1886, it reads

> The next day the torture began. The first thing they did was cut our hair… while we were bathing our breechlouts were taken, and we were ordered to put on trousers. We'd lost our hair and we'd lost our clothes; with the two we'd lost our identity as Indians.

Duklugie' quote makes legible the trauma and implications of haircutting to exhibit visitors; it likens the haircutting to "torture" and explains that it was a theft of students' "identity as Indians." By including it, the exhibit documents the violence of the haircutting act. Its location above the chair is important because the close proximity immediately establishes the connection between the object and the act. As the quote is visible to visitors as they work towards the display, it is thus a key contribution to the object's meaning-making in the exhibit.

A second quote, included to the right of the chair, establishes the lasting cultural impact of the boarding schools. From Rosemary Christiansen on Minnesota Public Radio, it reads:

> I don't believe that we can talk too harshly about what we have suffered, we Indian people have suffered from that particular point in our history, I call it… the Hiroshima, of Indian Education, because it basically destroyed the fiber of our family life.

Christiansen's words reveal the effects of the boarding school system; while it does not specifically name the haircutting experience, the quotation's reference to a well-known wartime atrocity further indicates the effects of the schooling experiences on Native and Indigenous peoples. Its inclusion here aids museum visitors in conceptualizing the schools' lasting impact.

A third quote, printed in a photographic collage located on a nearby wall, articulates the cultural implications of the haircutting experience for students**.** From prominent Pan-Indian activist Zitkála-Šá (also known as Gertrude Bonnin), it reads:

> Since the day I was taken from my mother I had suffered extreme indignities. People had stared at me. I had been tossed about in the air like a wooden puppet. And now my long hair was shingled like a coward's! In my anguish I moaned for my mother, but no one came to comfort me. Not a soul reasoned quietly with me, as my one mother used to do; for now I was only one of many little animals driven by a herder.

The descriptions and comparison in the quote provide additional evidence of how students may have felt about the experience. In particular, the language evokes a sense of

terror, loss and anger, and Zitkála-Šá exclamation that her hair was now "shingled like a coward's!" speaks to the cultural implications of the haircuts. The quote's spatial location further heightens the barber chair's meaning-making; located on a photographic collage featuring well-known "before" and "after" images of students upon their arrival at school, Zitkála-Šá's narration identifies the fear and anger of students' responses to and memories of the experiences. In sum, the barber chair's meaning-making arises from the interplay between its materiality and the surrounding exhibit context.

The barber chair thus supports the exhibit's documentation. Crucially, that functionality is even more significant when we consider the barber chair's provenance; it is not original to a BIA off-reservation boarding school and instead comes from a collection from the Arizona Historical Society (AHS). It was initially used at the second Hotel Adams, a high-class hotel in downtown Phoenix, Arizona with a potential date range between 1912-1973 (Samoriski). An article discussing the history of the exhibit explains that "[s]ome pieces from Arizona Historical Society (AHS) are generic, but provide context, such as the turn-of-the-century classroom," and further remarks that

> One of the most iconic and powerful artifacts from AHS is a 20th-century barber chair—with hanks of hair strewn at the base, quotations from students about the stripping of their identity, and the sound of hair clippers—all of which change this ordinary chair into a weapon of assimilationist purpose. (Lomawaima and Cantley 25)

The display importantly communicates a key student experience even though the chair itself was not used in a school. Here, what is especially important is how the object is *changed*. While the chair does perform needed documentation work, it is only able to do

so when placed within a specific context that re-positions it into such a role. The inclusion of quotes—Zitkála-Šá's description, Asa Duklugie's statement and Rosemary Christiansen's words—are crucial to the meaning-making of the chair, and to the story it is therefore able to express. The subsequent transformation of the barber chair into a "iconic and powerful [artifact]" representing the violent boarding school practice thus suggests that the representation of history, even with a-contextual objects, can perform important documentation work. To state the claim more strongly: the *representation* of a history may be read as a radical act of documentation.

The use of the barber chair—its repurposing *into* a rhetorically powerful illustration within the exhibit—thus indicates that public memory practices and the resulting narratives may be more dependent upon the context constructed with the surrounding built environment than on the object's original or previous use in the world. So, public memory may emerge from the interplay among various meaning-making practices—i.e., the display of objects, the inclusion of firsthand accounts—in a site. Additionally, the use here suggests that the repurposing may be necessary due to the epistemological worldviews that affected the establishment of the historical record through judgements on what should, or should not, be preserved. This also speaks to the powerful ability of objects to document history—even when or especially if that history is difficult to document due to absences in the historical record. Furthermore, the evocative display may speak to the exhibit's various intended audiences differently, as it may remind American Indian visitors of personal or familial memories, or further educate other visitors about the boarding school experience. The meaning-making of the barber chair is an essential component to the invention of the exhibit's responsible public

memory narrative; it indicates objects are a powerful resource for the making of public memory. By including the powerful barber chair display, *Remembering Our Indian School Days* thus "unforgets" one aspect of the complex history of the Bureau of Indian Affairs off-reservation boarding school system through the meaning-making of objects.

The exhibit's consistent inclusion of first-person voices as a meaning-making practice also contributes to its documentation work. Examples of this curatorial practice can be seen throughout the exhibit[49]; my analysis here takes the section portraying the experiences of students as they left for school as a key example. This section, located at the beginning of the exhibit, features first-person accounts of students and family members that speak to the complexity of the boarding school experiences and represent a range of responses. One quotation, from a San Juan Pueblo Boarding School Student, 1915, states: "I still picture my folks to this day, just standing there crying, and I was missing them. My grandfather, tears coming out of his eyes. I got on the train and I don't even know who was in the train because my mind was so full of unhappiness and sadness…". Another first-hand account[50], from a San Juan schoolgirl, c. 1915, states: " I remember it was in October they came to get me. My mother started to cry, Her? She's

[49] In fact, much of the analysis of the exhibit's other meaning-making practices also incorporates references to the inclusion and effect of first-person voices on the display of materiality and the built environment; here, what is important is the recognition that these meaning-making practices are not used in isolation, and that their rhetorical abilities are heightened through the meaning that emerges when each practice occurs alongside the others. That is, the complexity of the meaning-making within the exhibit speaks to the nuances present in various methods of memory.

[50] An additional text panels provides clarifying information about the identity of the speaker of this account, after the information was learned. This text panel, located beneath the initial quote, states that "The Heard Museum has learned that the San Juan schoolgirl quoted above is Juanita (Cruz) Blue Spruce, mother of Heard Museum Trustee Dr. George Blue Spruce, Jr. Juanita (Cruz) Blue Spruce attended the Santa Fe Indian School and the quote was taken from a 1987 interview that was conducted to celebrate the school's 100-year anniversary." The inclusion of this clarifying information further reflects the exhibit's curatorial commitment to telling the history of these schools from student perspectives, as well as further signifies the importance of the exhibit's documentation work.

just a little girl! You can't take her. My mother put her best shawl on me." Both quotations speak to the lasting emotional consequences of children leaving for the off-reservation boarding schools, highlighting the sadness of family members being parted from each other. That is, this account documents how some students and their family members felt about being separated as a part of the boarding school experience. As a meaning-making practice, the inclusion of the first-person voices is emphasized through their display as printed quotations, ones that highly visible due to their large size and placement on the walls. The surrounding exhibit context then heightens the effect of the quotations, and the emotions they both convey and evoke, through the inclusion of photographs arranged in a collage style that portray students at school.

Crucially, the experiences of Native and Indigenous children and their families are also spatially located alongside other first-person voices that provide historical evidence of the problematic ideologies and racist beliefs that led to the founding of the schools. That is, the use of first-hand accounts within the exhibit also provides evidence of the violent ideologies that lead to the establishment of the school system. In the same exhibit area, quotations from government officials speaking about the purpose and use of the off-reservation boarding school system are also included. For example, a line from Chancellor Lipincot of University of Kansas at Haskell Dedication, Sept. 17, 1884 states: "When one Indian boy or girl leaves this school with an education, the 'Indian Problem' will forever be solved for him and his children." The inclusion of this quotation provides additional evidence that connects the use of educational institutions with the "Indian Problem" and, implicitly, westward expansion. Another statement, from Captain Richard H. Pratt, the founder of the schools, in 1879, reads: "Transfer the savage born infant to

the surroundings of civilization and he will grow to possess a civilized language and habit." Like the other quotation, this one also establishes the cultural assimilation-oriented purpose of the schools. Including these perspectives performs additional, needed documentation work as the quotations provide visitors with evidence of the violent origins of the schools. The juxtaposition between these contextualizing quotations and the records of student and familial responses to the schools thus provides visitors with contextual information that may challenge their assumptions about the value and use of educational institutions. More specifically, the sharp contrast between these quotes makes legible the potential use of schools for violent ends—even as the exhibit's consistent incorporation of the voices and experiences of Native and Indigenous peoples focuses the history of the schools on *student* and *community* experiences, rather than solely on government actions. In doing so, the exhibit thus uses first-person voices to build an "unforgetting" narrative.

As a curatorial practice, the consistent inclusion of and emphasis on first-person voices is highly significant because of issues regarding the right to rhetorical and epistemic self-representation within museum settings; here, this curatorial practice immediately connects to King's work on legible sovereignties, and its functionality within the exhibit speaks to the ongoing, needed shift within museum practices that recognizes each community's right to speak *for* and *by* themselves, rather than be spoken about. Given the patterns of "erasure" (Stuckey 232) and "forgetting" (Shotwell 37) in settler colonialism, then, it is highly significant that this exhibit's "unforgetting" narrative emerges, in part, from the inclusion of Native and Indigenous voices in an institutional context that has historically excluded them. That is, within *Remembering Our Indian*

School Days, the inclusion of first-person voices is one key component of the exhibit's ability to affirm and negotiate a legible sovereignty.

The exhibit also relies on the meaning-making of the built environment as a documentation practice. An example of this can be seen in the exhibit's themed room section, which begins after the barber chair display. Like the rest of the exhibit, the rooms contain explanatory text panels, photographs and historic images, oral histories and first-person accounts, and material objects. Crucially, the design of these rooms and the arrangement of their material displays—that is, the overall built environment—also evoke the room's narrative focus. For a representative example[51], consider the room that documents the school's dormitories, living conditions, and students' lives. The room's primary material display contains a set of bunk beds set against a photographic collage backdrop that contains images of school life. One image, for example, shows a teenaged-student writing at her desk. The bunk beds have a mass-issued feel to them, with metal frames and non-descript sheets; crucially, though, the beds are then modified through the inclusion of additional materiality to evoke the sense of lived-in-ness. The top bunk contains a small stuffed animal, and the bottom bunk is decorated with a bright pink pillow. The interplay among these objects is key to the room's documentation work; as recognizable artifacts, the bunk beds provide a key entry point into the room's narrative focus, even as the exhibit's contextualizing information then positions those artifacts into material evidence of student's lives. In particular, the inclusion of decorative objects on the bed indicates the young age of some students—a material representation of a reality of the boarding school experience that may shock some of the exhibit's visitors. The

[51] The contributions of the themed rooms to the exhibit's identification work are discussed in detail in the next section.

room's built environment—namely, its evocation of a dormitory scene—thus provides material evidence of the schools' living conditions and further documents student life.

Within the dormitory room, the text panel recognizes both the intended functionality of the living conditions, as they related to the school's founding purpose of cultural assimilation, and how the students transform those spaces. The text panel, located beside the bunk beds and entitled "Friends, Family and Finances…" states:

> Boarding school dormitories were another means of reconditioning the Indian child through the removal of all things familiar, including siblings who may also have traveled to the school. Age-graded classrooms and gender-segregated rooms meant that brothers were separated from sisters and older children from younger children.
>
> Children from all across the United States were brought together at the boarding schools. Separated from their families, the students' friends became their "new" families. Many life-long friendships were established among the students at the schools. Students met, made friends and sometimes even fell in love. "Boarding school romances" brought together students from tribes that historically may not have had contact with one another.

Notably, the text panel emphasizes how the dormitories and living conditions contributed to the school's founding purpose, even as it also recognizes the ways in which the students transformed those spaces; by speaking to the establishment of friendships and romances, the text panel rightly recognizes how students created lives at the schools. By including this text panel, alongside the material display in the room as well as its built

environment, the room contributes to the exhibit's overall documentation of the boarding school experience.

Multiple meaning-making practices thus contribute to the significant documentation work present in *Remembering Our Indian School Days: The Boarding School Experience.* The multiple forms of meaning-making and documentation work support site's articulation of its "unforgetting" narrative, as the exhibit evidences the complex experiences of American Indian students who attended off-reservation boarding schools as the schools evolved from their founding to their use in the twentieth century.

Identity and Identification

Throughout *Remembering Our Indian School Days,* identification efforts—like its documentation work—are built through the display of objects, the use of first-person voices, and the materiality of the built environment. Crucially, these identification efforts are addressed to the exhibit's multiple intended audiences; as discussed previously, *Remembering Our Indian School Days* sought to address Native and Indigenous peoples, middle-school aged children, and walk-in visitors who may have little or no prior knowledge of the history of the boarding schools. The exhibit's intended address to multiple intended audiences is a key component of its articulation and negotiation of legible sovereignties (King 3). My attention to identification, then, aims to extend King's insights by considering how the exhibit's identification efforts supports that rhetorical work.

While examples of this effective address can be seen throughout the exhibit, I take the section focused specifically on classrooms and the boarding schools' curriculum as a central example (shown in Figure 8).

Figure 8: Exhibit installation image of the classroom display at *Remembering Our Indian School Days: The Boarding School Experience* at the Heard Museum in Phoenix, Arizona.

This section, like the area focused on the school's dormitories, is located within the themed room area of the exhibit. Through the inclusion of a globe, an American flag, and rows of desks that previously frequented schools, the room clearly evokes a classroom setting, one likely recognizable to any museum visitor who has prior or current schooling experience. In other words, the classroom setting is familiar—and in that very familiarity, the exhibit creates an opportunity for identification across its multiple intended audiences. For Native and American Indian visitors, the room provides an important moment of intergenerational, intercultural recognition because the room may evoke memories of their experiences at the school or that a family member's. For other visitors,

the historical information and first-hand accounts may make the school experience unfamiliar. The room thus invites reflection on the similarities and differences between the visitor's schooling experiences and those of the students whose voices are centered in the exhibit.

As in previous displays, the interplay among the various meaning-making practices in the room—the display of objects, the inclusion of first-person voices, the use of explanatory texts panels and photographs, etc.—is key to the room's memory work. Here, the interplay provides evidence of how the schools are both similar to and different from others in the US. For example, the historical information and firsthand accounts subvert the room's potential familiarity by discussing the connection between the schools' curriculum and founding purpose of cultural assimilation. The room builds on information introduced during the exhibit's discussion of the schools' origins and the student experiences documented in the barber chair display. In doing so, the room locates the schools' cultural assimilation practices within a new location—the classroom. The text panel explains how the cultural assimilation purpose of the schools affected school practices, curriculum, and student behavior. For example, one text panel writes that

> Beginning with Carlisle and until the reform movement of the 1930s, students were prohibited from speaking their languages, wearing Native dress, or participating in any practice of cultural traditions including singing, praying, dancing, or creating tribal art. For breaking these rules, they were subject to severe punishments. Corporal punishment was a common practice in the American education system until the 1970s. Although corporal punishment was the norm, it was the infraction of trying to retain their culture that differed.

The text panel ends by stating that "[w]hen tribal control of schools began, one of the first programs initiated was the reintroduction of tribal languages." The text panel makes three significant moves. First, it recognizes the changing scope of the schools' cultural assimilation practices by providing specific examples and identifying when the practices were stopped through reform efforts. Second, the text panel identifies a key similarity in the twentieth century American school experience—the use of corporal punishment—while simultaneously recognizing the motivation behind the punishment had a different purpose in the BIA schools. Third, the text panel recognizes the significance of language to identity and culture. Additional text panels and historical information in the room also emphasize the similarities between the US's segregated schooling systems for African Americans and American Indians, and discuss the curriculum's focus on vocational training.

Throughout *Remembering Our Indian School Days,* identification efforts contribute to the exhibit's effort to address its multiple intended audiences and to support visitor engagement with the documented history.

Conclusion

Remembering Our Indian School Days builds an "unforgetting" public memory narrative of Frontier history within the United States through its documentation and identification work. More specifically, the exhibit's effective use of multiple meaning-making practices—the use of objects, the emphasis on first-person voices, the design of the built environment—supports the complex, nuanced rhetorical work that is necessary in response to historic issues of erasure, silencing, and forgetting in a settler-colonial

context. In doing so, *Remembering Our Indian School Days* indicates that common assumptions about the relationship between remembering and forgetting within public memory do not adequately reflect the complexity of those acts; these familiar assumptions frequently hold that remembering and forgetting are antithetical acts, where remembering means *not* forgetting, and forgetting means *not* remembering. The exhibit's "unforgetting" memory work suggests there is more to this relationship than has been commonly understood. Namely, this exhibit's success and positioning within the broader terrain of US public memory of the Frontier indicates that additional attention to the effect of settler colonialism on public memory is needed. In doing so, this exhibit thus provides additional evidence for the epistemic complexity of acts of public memory.

Ultimately, *Remembering Our Indian School Days'* significant and effective memory work prompts rhetorical scholars to consider what *other* epistemic acts are possible within the realm of public memory. That is, this site's long-standing success and significance thus asks us to further interrogate the remembering-forgetting dialectic. What are the benefits and boundaries of remembering? Of forgetting? What values may be ascribed to these acts, and what other possibilities exist? I take up such possibilities of my discussion of the space *between* remembering and forgetting in my conclusion.

CHAPTER 5

HISTORICAL SIMULATION AND PROCEDURAL RHETORICS: PUBLIC MEMORY IN THE OREGON TRAIL

Introduction

The Oregon Trail is a historical simulation game, one that allows players to digitally participate in the settlement of the Frontier by acting as their pioneer-avatars during a journey from Independence, Missouri to Willamette Valley, Oregon in 1848. The game was explicitly designed for educational purposes, with school children as its intended audience and since its 1971 origins it has been re-released and updated in multiple iterations across the decades. The game has ultimately led to the development of other travel-based educational games and the propagation of edutainment technologies. *The Oregon* Trail's long-time popularity, however, has lasting consequences due to its problematic historical representation; Katherine Slater, for example, has argued in her analyses of the 1985, 1992, and 2002 versions that the game "reinforces its colonialist worldview through representations of place, space, and time" (375) and that it "played a major role in shaping and spatializing how two generations of US children viewed the projects of nineteenth-century settler colonialism" (Slater 375). The game's intended pedagogical functionality, historical content, and lasting effect on popular conceptualizations of the Frontier, then, indicates it is a prime site to analyze acts of remembering and forgetting in a settler-colonial context.

In this chapter, I analyze the 1990 version of *The Oregon Trail.* That is, I take this iteration of the game as a digital site of public memory of Frontier. To do so, I ask:

(1) What primary public memory narrative is constructed within *The Oregon Trail*?

(2) What meaning-making practices are used in the construction of *The Oregon Trail'*s public memory narrative?

(3) How is identification encouraged within *The Oregon Trail*?

My analysis indicates that *The Oregon Trail's* procedural rhetorics, or what Ian Bogost defines as "the art of persuasion through rule-based representations and interactions rather than the spoken word, writing, images, or moving pictures (*Persuasive Games* ix), constructs an interactive public memory narrative of the Frontier, one that positions players into acting as and thus identifying with their pioneer-avatars. In doing so, *The Oregon Trail* articulates a settler-colonial public memory narrative, one that engages in the "forgetting" (Shotwell 37) of the experiences of Native and Indigenous communities who were affected by Frontier settlement and encourages players to actively identify with pioneers in their conceptualizations of Frontier history.

To make this argument, I first establish the theoretical precedent for taking a videogame as a site of public memory by reviewing previous rhetorical scholarship on videogames. I then turn towards *The Oregon Trail*, describing its origins and intentions as a pedagogical tool and analyzing the game itself. I end by discussing the implications of *The Oregon Trail'*s memory work for public memory, broadly, and the remembering-forgetting dialectic, specifically. My results indicate that forgetting, like remembering, is a complex rhetorical act that is *made* through certain rhetorical resources; that is, *The Oregon Trail'*s procedural rhetorics ultimately *generate* forgetting.

Videogames, Procedural Rhetorics, and Public Memory

In this chapter, I take *The Oregon Trail* videogame as a site of public memory. In doing so, I build on recent rhetorical scholarship that has turned towards videogames. Previous research has largely focused on the use of videogames in the writing classroom, offering arguments for the value of student-produced games as course projects (Colby; Lavaque-Manty), considerations of how videogames may offer fruitful metaphors for the writing process (Miller), and discussions of how games can support learning (Gee & Gee). Additional work has discussed the media classification of video games as either narrative or ludic and analyzed public discourse surrounding the presence and portrayal of violence in videogames (Brown). Scholars have also engaged in rhetorical criticism of videogames (e.g., Grimwood), theorized non-persuasive videogame rhetorics (Matheson), and identified the negative effects of gamification with the more apt name "exploitationware" (Bogost "Exploitationware"). While the popularity of videogame scholarship varies from year to year (Johnson and Colby), it is clear that videogames are increasingly seen as productive, valuable, and significant to rhetorical studies. As Bogost writes, "[w]hile not everyone agrees that games are culture, or media, or art, everyone seeks to agree that games are powerful" ("Exploitationware" 141). The scope of work focused on videogames, whether theoretical or pedagogical, indicates an additional domain of rhetorical activity, and the growing recognition that digital texts, processes, and procedures are *rhetorical*, just as other decidedly public speeches, writings, and visual texts are.

Ian Bogost's foundational work on procedural rhetorics is one compelling framework to assess the rhetoric of videogames and to consider how videogames, as

texts, may enact public-oriented persuasive work. In *Persuasive Games,* Bogost argues that *"procedural rhetoric* is the practice of using processes persuasively, just as verbal rhetoric is the practice of using oratory persuasively and visual rhetoric is the practice of using images persuasively" (28, emphasis original). He goes on to note that "procedural rhetoric is a general name for the practice of authoring arguments through processes" (28-29). As a rhetorical theory, then, procedural rhetorics entail the acknowledgement of how processes and procedural representations function rhetorically.

To more fully assess the persuasive potential of procedural rhetorics, consider Dana Cloud's work on rhetorical realism, which she defines as "the idea that there is a reality—but none of us can know it except through frames of mediation, or interpretation by politicians, activists, pundits, and the mass media" (2). In other words, our understanding of reality is always mediated by and through some *thing*—and for Cloud, the work of mediation is immediately rhetorical, as it "takes 'facts' and turns them into beliefs and, ultimately, common sense" (2). Moreover, mediation, as a rhetorical act, has high-stakes within public discourse because of its ability to affect the formation and circulation of knowledge claims. For public memory scholars, in particular, Cloud's work on rhetorical realism prompts us to consider how public memory sites may *mediate* a community's understanding of their shared past and how public memory *is mediated by* a site's use of meaning-making practices. More specifically, Cloud's insights prompt us to consider how settler colonialism, as one of those "frames of mediation," affects the formation, circulation, and uptake of knowledge claims, especially within public memory sites. Evidence of this, for instance, can be seen in the previous discussion of "erasure" (Stuckey 232) and "forgetting" (Shotwell 37) in settler colonialism. Crucially, Bogost

also notes the mediation aspect of procedural rhetorics, writing expansively that "[h]idden procedural systems that drive social, political, or cultural behavior are often called ideology" (*Persuasive Games* 72).

Like other rhetorical forms, procedural rhetorics involves the framing, filtering, and interpreting of reality—albeit through the use of processes. To put this another way, procedural rhetorics mediate reality through the act of "authoring arguments through processes" (*Persuasive Games* 28-29). That is, Bogost's theory rightly identifies how processes, procedures, and procedural rhetorics mediate reality. The mediation functionality of procedural rhetorical is particularly identifiable in videogames. In videogames, procedural rhetorics quite literally *build* a reality in that game world through the presentation of sets of limited choices that players must navigate through. In doing so, videogames and their procedural rhetorics can enact both explicit and implicit persuasive work. Explicitly, the intentionally persuasive use of procedural rhetorics can be seen in what Bogost calls "serious games," an example of which includes *The McDonalds Game,* which Bogost argues *"*mounts a procedural rhetoric about the necessity of corruption in the global fast food business, and the overwhelming temptation of greed, which leads to more corruption" (31). Bogost's titular "persuasive games," then, are those videogames "that mount procedural rhetorics effectively" (46). On the other hand, the implicit persuasive use of procedural rhetorics can be seen in commercial games—ones that, through their use of procedural rhetorics, construct a reality that frames player's experience of the world, even if the intended outcome of the game is not necessarily connected to political advocacy or other public-facing actions.

Crucially, Bogost emphasizes the expansive nature of procedural rhetorics; many of his examples are videogames, but he also urges us "to see *procedural rhetoric* as a domain much broader than that of videogames, encompassing any medium—computational or not—that accomplishes its inscription via processes" (46, emphasis original). So, other media, genres, and non-digital or non-computational settings may also employ processes for persuasive ends. An example of non-computational processes can be found in Bogost's discussion of historical representations; his analysis of Jared Diamond's book *Guns, Germs, and Steel* notes that "Diamond attempts to expose the underlying patterns to determine why history plays out in the way it does" and that "By writing an account of history as a procedural system, Diamond gives us access to a system for making sense of individual historical moments and personalities" (134). In other words, histories—and historiographies—may, in their discussion of patterns and processes, be a valuable vantage point from which to assess global "procedures." Here, Bogost's insight into the procedurality of historical representations is particularly salient for public memory—that is, as public memory sites often engage in the material representation of a community's shared history, this theory suggests that public memory sites, like histories, may contain procedural rhetorics.

So while Bogost does not explicitly focus on public memory in *Persuasive Games*, his theory of procedural rhetorics does ultimately pose a number of questions for public memory scholars—namely, how might procedural rhetorics appear in a public memory site? And, in what ways might public memory narratives entail procedural rhetorics? Preliminary answers to such questions can be gleaned from Bogost's discussion of commercial historical simulation games. He writes:

> One popular genre of commercial videogames offers procedural representations of history, a field founded in similar material and social conditions as politics. These games create representations of causal factors that shaped either particular historical events or the general progression of human history. Some of these games serve as explicit political commentaries while others do so implicitly. (125)

He goes on to explain that "[g]ames like *Civilization* and *Empire Earth* focus on the progress of history from era to era. As software systems, these games can be seen as historiographies, representing history with rules of interaction rather than patterns of writing" (125). Here, Bogost likens a historical simulation game to a historiographic narrative, one that involves the use of procedural rhetorics to mediate the game's select historic content. That is, a historical simulation game—through its use of procedural narrative—builds an interactive historiographic narrative. For *The Oregon Trail,* specifically, then, Bogost's discussion provides evidence that the game—in its procedural representation of the history of Frontier settlement—builds an interactive, historiographic narrative. This insight further speaks to the potential congruence between procedural rhetorics and public memory—especially when we consider how a historical simulation game may be read as a site of public memory.

Prior work on the intersection between public memory and videogames has indicated such a reading is theoretically sound. For example, Aaron Hess's extensive analysis of *Medal of Honor: Rising Sun* takes a commercial World War II game as a site of WWII public memory. He explains,

> The use of digital interactive media, then, highlights an exceptional location of public memory, whereby the creation of memory via a public artifact is

> experienced in private spaces. Users are invited to take part in history from their living rooms, replicating the museum from a videogame console. New questions of digital memory should be asked: What happens to *public* memory when it is experienced away from public spaces in and in *private* homes? How do uses of digital memory draw from traditional uses of memory? What medium specific strategies do users of digital technologies employ? (341)

Here, Hess rightly prompts public memory scholars to consider not only how non-traditional texts, like videogames, may function as sites of public memory, but also how the unique, interactivity of videogames, as a medium, may affect how public memory works. Hess ultimately concludes, "The game becomes a type of interactive public memory, where gamers not only see history, but partake in its selective (re)making" (353). While this argument refers to a commercial game played within private homes, and *The Oregon Trail* is an educational game primarily used in schools, Hess's analysis and resulting argument ultimately indicates the potential of videogames to function as public memory sites.

The intersection between videogames and public memory has also been demonstrated in Joshua Daniel-Wariya's analysis of Decision Points, an interactive section at the George W. Bush Presidential Library and Museum that makes use of videogames. In this analysis, Daniel-Wariya examines Decision Points, which simulates key decision moments in Bush's presidency; drawing on M. Elizabeth Weiser's prior work on Burkean rhetorical identification in museum spaces, Daniel-Wariya notes that "Decision Points allows for an emotional identification between players and George W. Bush" (395). He ultimately argues that, in doing so, Decision Points indicates additional

possibilities "for building identification through gamic features" (396). Here, Daniel-Wariya's prior work, like Hess's, indicates that not only can videogames function as a public memory site, but that the uniqueness of their medium—those "gamic features"—hold great potential for acts of identification in public memory. For *The Oregon Trail,* then, Daniel-Wariya's work raises questions about how the game's procedural rhetorics—as those "gamic features"—contribute to the simulation's identification work.

Ultimately, by taking *The Oregon Trail* as a site of Frontier public memory, I extend Bogost's, Hess's, and Daniel-Wariya's research. More specifically, I build on Bogost's prior work on procedural rhetorics as they relate to historical simulation, Hess's work on individualized public memory built in videogames, and Daniel-Wariya's insights about identification to consider how *The Oregon Trail* builds a public memory narrative through its procedural simulation of a pioneer group's westward journey. In doing so, I ultimately argue that game's procedural rhetorics generate the "forgetting" (Shotwell 37) and "erasure" (Stuckey 232) of settler colonialism, thereby indicating the forgetting, like remembering, is a rhetorically invented act of public memory.

The Oregon Trail: Origins, Intentions, and Learning Outcomes

The origin story of *The Oregon Trail*[52] is likely familiar to scholars who study and use edutainment technologies. In broad strokes, the first instance of the game was a computerized version of a board game developed in 1971 by Don Rawitsch, Bill Heineman, and Paul Dillenberger, three student teachers who attended Carleton College

[52] The *Oregon Trail's* development, production, and mass distribution across classrooms should be not separated from broader shifts in technology and education unfolding at the time. For an in-depth discussion of this broader context, see Joy Lisi Rankin's *A People's History of Computing in the United States*.

in Minnesota[53] (Wong). Rawitsch, a history student teacher, worked with his computer programming roommates, Heinemann and Dillenberger, to computerize a card game about the Oregon Trail he had created for his eighth-grade class (Wong). Heinemann and Dillenberger collaboratively created the game's computer program, and Rawitsch brought the first version, on teletype, to his classroom, where students collaboratively played (Wong). Notably, after the creators' student teaching ended, the game wasn't revisited until Rawitsch joined the Minnesota Educational Computing Consortium (MECC) in 1974 (Wong), when he made it available for use in multiple schools through MECC. Since then, *The Oregon Trail* has become a popular, well-known videogame—to the point that it is estimated to have sold over 65 million copies and was even inducted in the Video Game Hall of Fame in 2016 ("The Oregon Trail").

The Oregon Trail had several pedagogical intentions that provide key insights into the game's procedural rhetorics and memory work. As a historical simulation, *The Oregon Trail* was explicitly intended for classroom use. Descriptions of its learning outcomes suggest the game was primarily focused on encouraging identification between players and pioneers through gameplay. These pedagogical intentions raise questions about how one defining feature of videogames—that mediating potential of procedural rhetorics—may encourage identification. That is, how might a game's procedural rhetorics be employed to serve an explicit purpose of identification? My upcoming analysis considers answers to such questions.

[53] To read about the creation and development of *The Oregon Trail* in the creators' own words, see Kevin Wong's interview with Rawitsch, Heinemann, and Dillenberger in *Vice* titled "The Forgotten History of 'The Oregon Trail,' as Told By Its Creators."

To further contextualize my analysis of *The Oregon Trail*, though, I first analyze two manuals created by MECC for *The Oregon Trail* games: the 1997 User Manual for OREGON[54] and MECC's 1985 Instructional Computing Courseware for the Apple II computer for The Oregon Trai[55]l. I analyze these manuals in order to establish the game's stated learning outcomes and provide background information about the game's design and intended uptake in classrooms. Here, my attention to supporting technical documents for the game aims to establish *The Oregon Trail*'s intended institutional functionality. Videogames, like all other rhetorical texts, are created within a specific rhetorical situation (Bitzer) or rhetorical ecology (Edbauer); some act, idea, or event *calls* a text into being, and the resulting text responds to and navigates the constraints of that situation. So, within the subfield of videogame rhetorics, I argue it is important to examine the *context* in which a videogame is produced, and to consider that context alongside the results of a close analysis of that game. Such contextual work is similar to how public memory scholars engage in extensive archival research to establish the history and development of a site of public memory as part of their research aims (e.g., King, Tell). While the manuals analyzed here are not specific to the 1990 version I later discuss, their connections to the 1990 version's predecessor are significant and establish an ideological and pedagogical precedent by which I may further assess the procedural rhetorics of *The Oregon Trail.* By analyzing these manuals, then, I aim to establish (1) the explicit,

[54] This manual is available in The Strong's Minnesota Educational Computing Consortium collection in Series 1, Subseries B (Box 1, folder 11).

[55] This manual is available at the Minnesota Educational Computing Consortium's website: http://mecc.co/history/the-oregon-trail---a-157/

pedagogical goals of the videogame (discussed below), and (2) the implicit ideological framing of the game (discussed in the next section).

Explicitly, *The Oregon Trail* was designed to be a pedagogical tool that supplemented classroom instruction. For example, the 1977 manual specifies the game was intended for elementary and middle school classrooms, writing that the game "has been successfully used in classes with children 8 through 13 years old and is thus recommend for this age level" (1). The age specification is significant because it suggests *The Oregon Trail* may, for some students, be part of their first exposure to the history of nineteenth century westward expansion in the United States, and is thus a significant text for its potential to create a lasting impression that may affect the framing of that history for students. A description of the game's intended pedagogical use can be seen in MECC 1977's manual:

> The OREGON simulation was not designed to simply stand alone as a classroom activity, a game of "beat the computer." Nor was it intended to be the focal point of a historical unit. It is assumed that the study of the Oregon Trail in a class is used as a case study of some larger theme, such as the American westward movement, human emigration in history, or people's ventures into the unknown. Within such a theme, the OREGON simulation would be used as a source of information which provides the student a chance to personally experience what he has previously read or heard about (21).

This description indicates the game was intended to 1) facilitate student learning in contexts *outside* of the game, and 2) increase the identification between players and historical content through an emphasis on its ability to enable an individual to "personally

experience" that history. For scholars of public memory, these intentions raise questions about the construction of narratives within the game, in support of that stated learning, and the encouragement of identification. More specifically, these intentions prompt us to consider the meaning-making practices used in service of those intentions.

The potential power of the game's educational intentions can be seen in the 1977 "Learning Outcomes from the Oregon Stimulation." The outcomes elaborate on the game's overall pedagogical purpose[56] by indicating how students will be transformed through their pedagogical playing experience. While all five stated learning outcomes[57] are important, this analysis will focus on the three that most immediately connect to this dissertation's central inquiry into public memory of the Frontier: Historical Facts, Social Science Concepts, and Historical Empathy. The first learning outcome is "Historical Facts," which the two additional points that "The student will learn about the Oregon Trail" and "The student will become familiar with major geographic features of the western United States" (4). The second learning outcome—"Social Science concepts" —states "The student will learn the meaning of the term "emmigration" and some of the reasons why people emigrate" and "The student will learn the meaning of the term 'frontier' and how physical frontiers affect the lives of people who attempt to enter them"

[56] Early iterations of the game, like the 1977 one described in its manual, were played collaboratively by groups of students across multiple class periods.

[57] I recognize the value of the collaboration and research skills identified in the other outcomes (Inquiry Skills and Social Skills. The fourth learning outcomes focuses on "Inquiry Skills" that specify "The student will gain experience in using diaries as an information source and will learn about the strengths and weaknesses of diaries as valid historical sources" and "The student will gain experience in comparing different information sources and determining their accuracy" (4). The fifth and final learning outcome specific "Social skills" with the clarifying statements that "The student will gain experience in group decision making and will recognize the importance of listening to differing points of view and the advantages of division of labor" and "The students will learn how to manage limited resources to achieve a particular goal" (4). The Inquiry and Social skills are notable outcomes because they indicate the game was intended to also support students in greater learning goals that are not tied to the social sciences/social studies classroom.

(4). The third learning outcome is "Historical Empathy: "The student will get a personal feeling for the difficulties encountered by emmigrants in the western United States in the 1840s" (4).

The 1977 game's stated learning outcomes suggest *The Oregon Trail* encourages identification between student-players and pioneers. The emphasis on history—as identified in the Historical Facts and Social Science Concepts—indicates the game intentionally prioritized the pioneer experience in its simulation of Frontier history. Here, the *absence* in learning outcomes is particularly notable, as there is no discussion in the manual about encouraging students to learn about the many Native and Indigenous cultures who would have interacted with pioneers and been affected by their actions. To re-state this more strongly, the game's learning outcomes, as they relate to historical knowledge, provide additional evidence the game presents a selected, limited narrative throughout its historical simulation—one that engages in the "erasure" (Stuckey 232) and "forgetting" (Shotwell 37) of settler-colonial narratives.

The "Historical empathy" learning outcome holds immediate significance for rhetorical scholars because of its connection with rhetorical identification. As defined by Kenneth Burke in *A Rhetoric of Motives,* identification involves a process of consubstantiality, or a likening between two substances (20-21). While the "historical empathy" learning outcome does not call itself identification, its description indicates a similar process is occurring; the emphasis on the cultivation of a student's "personal feeling," for example, speaks to Burke's ideas about consubstantiality. As such, this learning outcome holds immediate implications for the use of identification in *The Oregon Trail*—namely, how does the game encourage identification? What meaning-

making practices are used to support that intended identification work? In sum, then, the 1977 MECC manual for *The Oregon Trail* explicitly indicates the game was (1) designed as a pedagogical tool, (2) contains historical content framed in a settler-colonial perspective, and (3) oriented towards encouraging identification between players and pioneers.

The 1985 manual for *The Oregon Trail* provides additional insights into the game's design, even as key changes between the two documents speak to shifts in narrative framing, historical focus, and the use of identification. This manual, which accompanied the Apple II version of the game, also contains a description of the game's overall intentions. These intentions establish it explicit pedagogical purpose:

> The Oregon Trail may be used to introduce a social studies unit on the Westward expansion or to conclude a unit after acquiring some background. It may be used as a vehicle for researching a topic in language arts or to expand on the theme of "the journey" in creative writing. It may also be used as a stand-alone activity for independent study or enrichment. Certainly, many more connections can be made to the physical and social sciences and to the humanities that can be included in this manual. (13)

The description above clarifies the game should augment and connect with student learning in other contexts—a key similarity to the prior 1975 manual. The continued emphasis on the game's multi-pronged educational value then, twelve years later, suggests an increased recognition of the power of computer-facilitated learning; in particular, the identification of fields adjacent to the history classroom, like "language arts" and "creative writing," suggests the game's educational capacity included the ability

to cultivate a multiplicity of skills, perhaps simultaneously. Later in the document, the manual also describes supplemental activities and assignments—material that further establishes the perceived ability of *The Oregon Trail* to facilitate student learning.

The 1985 student learning objects emphasize knowledge in social studies and language arts. The social studies learning objectives are primarily focused on "decision-making skills" (4), "intellectual skills" (5), "interpersonal skills" (5), and "participation skills" (5), while the language arts objectives highlight "comprehension" (6), the ability to "actively experience and become engaged in what is being read or viewed" (6), and "connect what is read or viewed to his or her own life by learning to use it" (6). Both sets of objectives indicate the game's intended learning would connect with and support student's growing knowledge in other areas as well. Importantly, however, the language arts objectives also speak to the process of rhetorical identification as they encourage a deep connection between student and the game's content. For example, an additional description under that objective explains that playing the game should enable students to learn how "to speculate about the ideas, emotions, and issues of human life throughout recorded time by studying a community of people from the past" (6). To put this another way, this learning objective also emphasizes identification, even if, as in the 1977 manual, the document does not name it as such. *The Oregon Trail,* then, is consistently oriented towards the potential value of *identification,* as a pedagogical strategy, within an education context; for scholars of public memory, this attention to identification is highly significant because of the game's demonstrable settler-colonial narrative. That is, *The Oregon Trail*'s intended identification work may also be read as supporting the continued circulation and uptake of settler-colonial logics within American public discourse,

particularly as this game was featured so prominently in the classrooms of "two generations of US children" (Slater 375).

In sum, the two manuals analyzed here indicate *The Oregon Trail,* in at least two iterations, sought to support student learning by explicitly encouraging identification between players and pioneers through its game design. While these two manuals are *not* technical supporting documents for the game that is examined in my upcoming analysis, they provide important historical context for the game's development and intended usage and suggest a key continuity of the game's mediation of the history of the Frontier through its historical simulation.

Procedural Rhetorics and Public Memory in *The Oregon Trail*

The Oregon Trail has existed in multiple iterations, with updated versions often reflecting technological advancements. Across these various versions, the game's general design as a historical simulation and its narrative framing are consistent: a group of pioneers, directed by the player(s), travel from Independence, Missouri, to Willamette Valley, Oregon, in 1848. To successfully complete the game, the player must make strategic decisions about the occupancy of their pioneer company's leader (banker, carpenter, or farmer), their departure month, how many provisions they should bring, the size of food rations, and how fast their pace should be. As they travel west, players must also decide how to respond to on-the-trail problems like broken wagon wheels, illness, and river crossings. Players may also elect to hunt for food, trade for supplies, and gather additional information by speaking with other travelers. Players primarily interact with the game by typing simple commands, like "Y" or "N" for yes and no, respectively.

Player movement is also restricted because players are limited to traveling along the prescribed route of the Oregon Trail; deviations from that route are not possible given the game's procedural rhetorics. The only exception to this movement restriction can be found in the hunting portion of the game; this elective, mini-game aspect allows player's the ability to directly control their avatar's movement as they look for animals, take aim, and type "BANG" to shoot. If a player dies along the route—an occurrence so common it has even been immortalized in memes that reference one cause of death in the game's ubiquitous message "You Have Died of Dysentery"—they have the option to create a personalized headstone to add to the side of the road. To win, players must arrive safely in Willamette Valley, Oregon. Their final score reflects the value of their chosen occupation, the health of their party members, and any additional supplies they arrived with.

My upcoming analysis focuses specifically on the 1990 version of *The Oregon Trail* available on The Internet Archive. I selected this version for my analysis because of its accessibility and widespread use. I ultimately argue the 1990 version of *The Oregon Trail* relies on the meaning-making of its procedural rhetorics to simulate a pioneer's journey and encourage identification between players and pioneers; the game's procedural rhetorics thus generate a public memory narrative marked by "erasure" (Stuckey 232) and "forgetting" (Shotwell 37).

Public Memory in The Oregon Trail

The Oregon Trail simulates a pioneer's journey from Independence, Missouri, to Willamette Valley, Oregon, in 1848. That is, the game's procedural rhetorics interact on

each other to enable the player to experience a digital, interact representative of a pioneer's journey across the historic Oregon Trail. In doing so, *The Oregon Trail* encourages players to not only act as pioneers, but to identify with them. The game thus constructs a settler-colonial public memory narrative of the Frontier, one that solely focuses on the experiences of pioneers; the game's procedural rhetorics perpetuate and produce the "erasure" (Stucky 232) and "forgetting" (Shotwell 37) that defines settler colonialism.

Crucially, *The Oregon Trail*'s settler-colonial narrative is not unique to its 1990 version; the text manuals for the 1977 and 1985 version suggest the long-standing use of that implicit ideological framework. Consider the following description from the 1977 manual:

> During the thirty-year period from 1840 to 1870, thousands of pioneers traveled over the 2000- mile Oregon Trail to settle on the West Coast. The history of the trail may be seen by some as a strong example of heroic American themes such as "conquering the frontier" and "the pioneer spirit." To others, the great western migration carries the political overtones of the colonists and their descendants forcing out British imperialism and clearing away the native American Indians in an effort to dominate middle North American themselves. At the very least, the journey over the trail represents the human stories of many individuals who, oblivious to historical trends, tried to survive in life as best they knew how. (3)

This description evokes the narrative shape of the Frontier myth—a rhetorical move that participates in the "erasure" (Stuckey 232) and "forgetting" (Shotwell 37) aspects of settler colonialism. Evidence of its settler-colonial narrative can be seen in its

identification of the game's primary narrative focus: those westward bound pioneers. Crucially, the description's clarifying language indicates that narrative portrayal will be sympathetic; the inclusion of words like "heroic" and "great," for instance, as well as the implied association among "American themes," "conquering the frontier," and "the pioneer spirit" suggests the game's content will selectively highlight historical aspects that correspond with those stated values. Additionally, the description also casts the pioneers—and subsequently any players of *The Oregon Trail*—into an a-responsible role. That is, the manual side-steps questions of responsibility with the statement that *The Oregon Trail* examines "human stories of many individuals who, oblivious to historical trends, tried to survive in life as best they knew how." That is, the description implies that because the pioneers were "oblivious" and "tr[ying] to survive," they cannot be held responsible of how their actions participated in those "historical trends." Here, my point in emphasizing this connection within the manual is to consider how such language—particularly that of "historical trends"—works rhetorically, thereby indicating a settler-colonial framework throughout the game. That is, the statement about "historical trends" suggests the game creators were aware of the broader context in which the Oregon Trail was developed—but also that the game's simulation of a pioneer's journey will replicate the very "oblivious[ness]" that the manual states the pioneers operated within in. This manual, then, provides evidence that *The Oregon Trail*'s simulation forwards a settler-colonial perspective that engages in "erasure" (Stuckey 232) and "forgetting" (Shotwell 37).

The 1985 game manual also contains textual evidence of the simulation's settler-colonial framework. It states:

> Fiction is used in this simulation to establish time, place, character, and event. However, the primary intent of the simulation is to particularize events and details that will suggest the broader experience of not one, but many overland journeys. Simulations will also suggest the impact that over 300,000 people trekking overland by covered wagon to Utah, California, and Oregon had on the development of the western states. (1)

Crucially, the description above emphasizes the use of *simulation* to achieve that rhetorical work. That is, the 1985 version envisioned the purpose of its simulation work to fictionally approximate multiple pioneer journeys for the player. As in the 1977 version of the game, the absences here are indicative of the "erasure" (Stuckey 232) of settler colonialism; neither the 1977 nor the 1985 game versions engage in any critiques of westward expansion or seek to affirm the experiences of Native and Indigenous communities.

Within the 1990 version of *The Oregon Trail,* the settler-colonial narrative is articulated largely through its primary emphasis on pioneer experiences in its historical stimulation. Evidence of this narrative prioritization is abundant, but I take (1) the game's restricted avatar possibilities and (2) limited engagement with Native and Indigenous communities and perspectives as my two key examples. First, a player has limited options for interacting with and playing through *The Oregon Trail*'s historical simulation. As mentioned earlier, they may play as either a carpenter, a farmer, or a banker—an occupational choice that affects the amount of money a player will begin the game with. The game's text explains the differences between the occupational choices, stating that "[t]raveling to Oregon isn't easy! But if you're a banker, you'll have more money for

supplies and services than a carpenter or a farmer," and "[h]owever, the harder you have to try, the more points you deserve! Therefore, the farmer earns the greatest number of points and the banker earns the least." While the player has the option to name themselves and other party members, the party leader's occupation is the avatar's defining feature, as this choice then affects the player's future possibilities within the simulation. Here, what is *not* possible from the game's procedural design is especially significant; a player who wishes to deepen their understanding of westward expansion from any perspective *other* than a pioneer cannot do so within the design of the game. For example, *The Oregon Trail*'s procedural rhetorics restrict players into acting as the avatar of a settler within its simulation of a settler-colonial history—a decision that ultimately also affects the game's identification work because that procedural limitation means players are encouraged to identify with only pioneers.

Slater's previous analyses have also recognized the problematic implications of the game's narrative framing through the limitations of the player's potential avatars; when speaking about her own analyses, she explains "this player-character alignment assumes a worldview that requires player assimilation to a raced and gendered default: if you want to be a part of this experience, if you want to occupy the center of the narrative, you need to assume a white male avatar (377). In other words, Slater's prior work on other versions of *The Oregon Trail* has also rightly identified how the avatar selection furthers the game's settler-colonial narrative; these options not only *center* the experiences of pioneers but also implicitly position players into that identity (377). To extend her analysis into the 1990 version, I argue that the game's procedural rhetorics—

namely, its simulation of on-the-trail experiences—contribute to the work of rhetorical identification between players and pioneers (discussed in a later section).

In the second instance, the 1990 version *The Oregon Trail* contains limited to no engagement with the perspectives and experiences of Native and Indigenous communities. Crucially, the game's exclusion of Native and Indigenous communities is procedural. For example, as discussed above, the avatar possibilities do not include an option to experience the history of the Oregon Trail from any perspective *other* than that of a pioneer; here, the game's procedural rhetorics limit how a player can engage with the historical content that is the focus of the simulation. Additionally, Native and Indigenous communities appear in the game primarily within an assistance role or in some illustrations[58] provided at major trail landmarks. The assistance role usually involves aiding pioneers or providing additional information—an aspect that connects to the findings of previous research that has analyzed representations of Native and Indigenous communities. For example, Robert F. Berkhofer's analysis of White representations of Native and Indigenous communities in his work *The White Man's Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present* notes there are two forms this representation commonly takes (28). He describes the first as "the good Indian" who is "friendly, courteous, and hospitable to the initial invaders of his land" and the second as what he refers to as "the bad Indian in White eyes," a representation that contains "a list

[58] *The Oregon Trail*'s also contains illustrations at each major trail landmark*;* these illustrations contain bright colors and are drawn in a flat, pixelated style. Depending on the landmark, the illustrations either emphasize the natural environment or a scene at a fort or town, thereby creating a visual representation of the Frontier. While the visual rhetorics deployed within *The Oregon Trail* offer significant entry points into further assessing its settler-colonial narrative, doing so moves beyond this chapter's focus on the game's procedural rhetorics. Future iterations of this project will analyze the use of these illustrations, their content, how their visual rhetorics function within the game, and how they contribute to representations of Native and Indigenous communities within the game.

of almost contradictory traits" from the first (28). To re-state Berkhofer's insights into the context of this dissertation, another aspect of the settler-colonial framework involves limited representations of Native and Indigenous communities, ones that position those communities into a binary where they are either supportive or hostile to settler actions.

Slater has also noted these issues with *The Oregon Trail*'s engagement with the histories and experiences of Native and Indigenous experiences; she argues "the game nevertheless perpetuates a racist narrative that privileges the ethos of white settlement through its refusal to engage directly with the genocidal consequences of westward expansions" (381). Ultimately, the consistent *absence* of Native and Indigenous voices in the telling of this history further indicates its hegemonic settler-colonial framework. The game's design, then—that is, its procedural rhetorics—ultimately replicate the "erasure" (Stuckey 232) that marks settler-colonial histories. Crucially, such replication holds high stakes because of (1) the text's educational purpose and (2) the interactivity of the game's procedural rhetorics. In the first instance, the game's replication of a settler-colonial narrative indicates the ways in which current education institutions, like schools, are sites in which that framework is articulated. In the second, the interactivity of the game's procedural rhetorics, when considered alongside its settler-colonial narrative, raises questions about the ethical dimensions of identification work—questions I take up in a later section.

In sum, then, *The Oregon Trail* produces a settler-colonial public memory narrative of the Frontier through its simulation of a pioneer's journey. That is, the game's procedural rhetorics delimit how a player may engage with the history of the Frontier,

creating an interactive narrative that casts players as actors in the settlement of the Frontier and encouraging players to identify with pioneers.

Meaning-Making in The Oregon Trail

As a meaning-making practice, the procedural rhetorics of *The Oregon Trail* simulate one aspect of Frontier settlement: the westward migration of pioneers. Slater's previous analysis of the 1985, 1992, and 2002 versions of the game found the game's spatial representation is indicative of its implicit settler-colonial narrative; she argued "[t]he game therefore not only imagines a white male protagonist, but also reinforces that particular identity by ascribing to it a spatialized worldview that has historically accompanied white masculine supremacy" (391). In this section, I extend Slater's prior work to consider how aspects of the 1990 game's procedural rhetorics *simulate* a pioneer's navigation of the Frontier. In particular, *The Oregon Trail*'s procedural representation of the trail and movement along the trail are key aspects of its simulation of Frontier settlement and the pioneer experience. These aspects of the game's procedural rhetorics function as meaning-making practices that create a conscribed Frontier geography, one that enables a particular, limited kind of engagement with a pioneer's experiences.

*The Oregon Trail'*s map is one example of how the game's procedural rhetorics simulates a pioneer's navigation of the Frontier. Containing the historic route for the Oregon Trail, the map is a two-dimensional bird's eye view of the contiguous United States in 1848. The route, beginning in Independence, then follows a general northwest path across the North American continent to the trail's endpoint in Willamette Valley,

Oregon. The route's start and end points are denoted with stars, and the only political border shown is the US-Canadian one. Along the map's route, forts, landmarks, and mountains are marked with graphics; once a player has reached some of those landmarks, they are provided with the option to view an illustration of the surrounding area.

Throughout the game, the player can access the map by selecting the "Look at map" option. As a meaning-making practice, the map serves two primary functions within the game. First, the map supports the educational intentionality of the game by providing the player, who is likely a student, with a geographic reference depicting a previous iteration of the United States. Second, the player's location on the trail is marked, and so a player referencing the map can also use it to track their progress through the game. In doing so, the map contributes to the player's procedural engagement with the geography of the North American continent—an engagement that, like other aspects of the game's procedural rhetorics, is limited to only the historic Oregon Trail.

The map, however, does more than depict where a player may be in the game world and how far they have progressed; the map also demonstrates the prescribed route that the player must take as they play through the rest of the game. As a meaning-making practice, then, the map is significant because it represents the limited procedural movement of players through the game—and, thereby, through a pedagogical simulation of history. The map's representation of a player's planned procedural movement is key because a player actually has limited abilities to control where their pioneer-avatars *move* in the game world; the majority of the time, a player's movement across the Frontier necessarily follows along that pre-determined path. That is, the game's procedural rhetorics do not allow players to deviate from the path—in the 1990 version, there are no

side quests, so players can *only* experience the game's primary narrative. Furthermore, this procedural limitation[59] on player movement also means that players experience the simulation—and the Oregon Trail's route—in a linear fashion; it is not possible to turn around and move backwards along the game's prescribed route. Here, the procedural limitations on player movement—and the resulting linearity of the game—contribute to the game's simulation of a pioneer's experiences navigating the Frontier.

By providing the player with this map—in a game world where the player does not need to *actually* use the map to as a navigation tool—then, *The Oregon Trail* both supports its educational purpose of providing students with information about the historic Oregon Trail *and* contributes to the game's functionality as a simulation. The map thus contributes to the game's simulation of a pioneer's experiences crossing the Frontier because it provides the player with a geographic reference by which they can track their movement and contextualize their progress through the game—a reference that further mediates the player's perception of Frontier history.

The Oregon Trail's procedural depiction of movement, itself, also supports its simulation of a pioneer's navigation of the Frontier. Throughout the game, movement is consistently depicted in only one visual aspect—through the use of an animated graphic that scrolls along the top of the computer screen throughout gameplay. This graphic, located in the top righthand corner of the screen, contains an oxen pulling a wagon across a changing landscape. When animated, the graphic implies the oxen is moving across the

[59] There are two notable exceptions to the game's procedural limitation of player movement: 1) when players must choose which path to take when the trail forks, and 2) during the hunting mini-game, in which the player can move an actual avatar around. In those instances, though, player movement is still constrained, as in the first case players must still continue along the route of the Oregon Trail and in the second players cannot move their avatar beyond the boundaries of the hunting mini game.

screen—from right to left—through the motion of its feet and changes in the accompanying landscape illustration.

Crucially, the layout of this animated graphic implies west-ward movement; if a cardinal compass were overlaid on the player's computer screen, the oxen would appear to be moving from the east towards the west. This westward movement is also implied by the fact that even when the oxen "moves," it does not actually travel across the screen. Instead, the landscape in the rest of the graphic changes—an illustrative choice that makes it seem as though there is always more horizon and more land to travel across. For example, if a river appeared on, it would move from the left to the right of the screen, while the animated oxen would remain in the same location. The implied *west*-ward motion of the oxen—and, thus, the player and pioneer-avatar—is significant because of the connections between westward expansion and the Frontier; that is, in the history of the United States, the Frontier, as a boundary space, shifted westward as settlements increased. The implied westward motion of the oxen speaks to the simulation's historical content about the Frontier. Emphasizing westward motion, then, is a significant aspect of the game because it connects to the game's educational purpose and settler-colonial narrative.

Additionally, the movement of the player's pioneer-avatar is further portrayed through the data located beneath the animated oxen graphic. The data conveys information about the date, weather, health, food supplies, distance to the next landmark, and the total miles traveled. Here, movement is explicitly represented through changes in the distance to next landmark and in total miles traveled. Crucially, though, sometimes movement along the trail is stopped by broken wagon wheels, illness in the party, or poor

weather like blizzards. Even when this occurs, the included data contains to mark the player's progress through the game by noting the changing date, monitoring the health of their pioneer-avatars, and stating the remaining food supplies. The procedural representation of the player's movement also functions as a way for the player to assess their success in playing the game; as a player learns how to succeed at the game, they necessarily learn how to best interpret the data about their pioneer-avatar's movement. The use of procedural rhetorics to convey the player's movement across the Frontier landscape contributes to *The Oregon Trail'*s simulation of pioneer history.

In sum, then, *The Oregon Trail* relies on its procedural rhetorics, as a meaning-making practice, to simulate a pioneer's journey across the Frontier. It primarily does so through the procedural rhetorics of its map, the route, and movement itself. Taken together, these aspects interact on each other to build a settler-colonial narrative, one that is communicated in the representation of the trail and movement along the trail.

Identification in The Oregon Trail

As discussed previously, *The Oregon Trail'*s identification-oriented educational purpose prioritizes the experiences of white pioneers. Slater's prior analyses of multiple iterations of *The Oregon Trail* notes that the game "superficially makes room to accommodate players of any gender or race through the nonspecific use of second-person address, but the game's visuals, language, and limited opportunities implicitly frame the "you" traveling the Trail as white and male" (377). Here, Slater's previous work establishes both the limitations and consequences of *The Oregon* Trail's perspectival constraints. In this section, I build on Slater's work—which is focused on the versions

from 1985, 1992, and 2002—to consider specifically how the 1990 game encourages rhetorical identification between players and their pioneer avatars. I argue the game's procedural rhetorics are foundational to this identification work; namely, the game's positioning of students into acting as a pioneer throughout the game, the simulation of misfortune on the trail, and alignment between the game's winning objective and the pioneer's success all encourage the player to identify with their pioneer-avatars. In doing so, *The Oregon Trail* relies on its procedural rhetorics, a meaning-making practice, as an identification strategy—a rhetorical action that speaks to the previous versions' explicit emphasis on identification as an intentional learning outcome for the game, as well as Slater's prior analysis of other game version's problematic representations. The procedural construction of identification, in turn, also speaks to both (1) *The Oregon Trail*'s articulation of a settler-colonial narrative through its limited perspective and (2) the game's lasting consequences, as a pedagogical tool, within American public(s).

To play *The Oregon Trail* is to act as a pioneer. Here, this rhetorical acting can be immediately connected to prior work on the use of interactive identity strategies in museums (Weiser; Daniel-Wariya) and the educational potential of videogames (Gee). First, Daniel-Wariya, building specifically on Weiser's prior work on identification strategies like "play a role" within museums, develops the term "*choose your own adventure"* (396, emphasis original) to account for the identification work that occurs within Decision Points, a simulation game located within the George W. Bush Presidential Library and Museum. He explains

> While taking on the role of President Bush is in some ways like the *play a role* method because players are encouraged to identify with President Bush by

> assuming his role, the specific way they take him up as avatar in a videogame-based exhibit might hint to an emerging method—or perhaps a subspecies of *play a role*—in museums utilizing such interactive technology. We might call it the *choose your own adventure* method. (396)

Here, Daniel-Wariya's apt theorization points to the additional possibilities—and consequences—of identification when facilitated through videogames. *The Oregon Trail,* like Decision Points, can also be categorized as an example of the "*play a role"* identification strategy because individuals, by playing the game, quite literally play the role of a pioneer who is participating in the settlement of the Frontier through their westward migration. In other words, by *acting* as pioneers in *The Oregon Trail,* players are ultimately encouraged to identify with those pioneers.

Because of *The Oregon Trail*'s educational intentions, however, this "*play a role"* identification work has significant pedagogical consequences. To more fully assess those consequences, consider James Paul Gee's theory of the agent/co-design principle in educational games. Gee, stressing that videogames can be a highly successfully form of problem-based learning, introduces the agent/co-design principle ("Jim Gee Principles of Gaming"); he explains that "[i]n good learning, the learner must feel like what they do matters. They must feel like an agent. And games make you an agent in a very interesting way. Even in playing a game you are co-designing the game because what you do in a game affects the game" (2:10-3:31). In other words, one way that videogames can successfully support learning is through the medium's interactive ability to enable a player to act as "an agent"—a rhetorical positioning that reads as analogous to Weiser's and Daniel-Wariya's discussion of the "play a role" identification strategy. So, within a

simulation game, players are not only encouraged to *identify* with their avatars, but are also *co-designers* of their avatar's fate and effect on the game world—an insight that, within the context of *The Oregon Trail*, indicates that students, when playing the game, are not only encouraged to *identify* with pioneers as they play that role, but that they are also *co-designers* in the work of settler colonialism. That is, players are implicitly positioned, within the game, as *co-designers* of the "erasure" (Stuckey 232 and "forgetting (Shotwell 37) of the resulting settler-colonial public memory narrative. Such rhetorical efforts indicate that *The Oregon Trail* has significant theoretical and pedagogical implications for rhetorical scholars—implications I consider after my analysis of how *The Oregon Trail*'s procedural rhetorics contributes to this problematic identification work.

The Oregon Trail's simulation of trail experiences supports identification between players and their pioneer avatars. More specifically, the game's consistent inclusion of misfortunes and hardships on the trail, as part of its procedural representation of Frontier history, encourages that identification work. Historically speaking, travel on the Oregon Trail was a difficult, life-threatening journey marked by hunger, disease, and conflict. *The Oregon Trail* game includes these aspects of that experience in its simulation of a pioneer's journey. Misfortune and hardship regularly befall players, examples of which include failed river crossings (which result in lost supplies or drowned party members), robberies, wagon fires, inclement weather, and illnesses like cholera and dysentery. Sometimes these challenges result in the deaths of the some in the player's party. In worst case scenarios, those events may end the game with the player's primary avatar's death as well. When this occurs, players have the option to create a personalized grave marker by

writing an epitaph. Encountering multiple instances of misfortune and hardship throughout gameplay provides players with some examples of what pioneers experienced while traveling on the Oregon Trail. This procedural representation of trail experiences also connects to the game's educational intentions, as students, by playing through the game, learn about trail experiences and other aspects of the history of the Oregon Trail. The game's simulation of these events, then, provides players with an interactive first-person experience of life on the Oregon Trail—a perspectival framing that, as students *must act as* pioneers in their responses to those events, supports identification.

However, some of the game's misfortunes and hardships can be caused—or prevented—by a player's decisions. For example, concerns about potential inclement weather can be partly addressed by leaving during an optimal departure month, while issues that might arise from the party's health can be somewhat alleviated by decisions about the party's wagon pace (steady, strenuous, or grueling) and food rations (filling, meager, or bare bones). Significantly, it is in the player's best interest to keep the members of the party healthy by making reasonable food and pacing decisions; the game's description of how points are allotted explains that, "Your most important resource is the people you have with you. You receive points for each member of your party who arrives safely; you receive more points if they arrive in good health!". Other misfortunes—such as robberies or wagon fires—cannot necessarily be prevented, but they can be mitigated by proactive player decisions (purchasing additional supplies, hunting whenever possible, trading for supplies, etc.). So, as players learn how to not only *play* but *win* the game, then, they also become more aware of how their early game decisions will affect the possibilities of their later game actions and their eventual success

at the game. That is, playing the game teaches players how to *win* the game through the successful navigation of *The Oregon Trail'*s procedural rhetorics, primarily those on-the-trail hardships and misfortunes—that is, how to ultimately *succeed* in their acting as a pioneer.

The resulting procedural alignment between the success of the player and their pioneer-avatar—achieving the winning objective of arriving at Willamette Valley, Oregon—supports identification between the two. Players have an interest in not merely *acting* as a pioneer to play the game, but *successfully acting* as a pioneer in order to win. That is, if the pioneer-avatar *succeeds* in traveling the Oregon Trail through the player's effective navigation of the simulation, then the player *wins* the game. In other words, *The Oregon Trail* positions students into striving to act as successful participants—Gee's "co-designers"—in its simulation of the settlement of the Frontier, a positioning that is articulated within a settler-colonial narrative marked by the "erasure" (Stuckey 232) of the violent, genocidal acts that made such settlement possible. Scholars of public memory will likely find this procedural alignment and the resulting identification work ethically troubled[60]. From a justice- and equity-oriented perspective, what are the potential consequences of positioning players into acting within a historically violent role, especially for the game's stated educational purpose? What does this then suggest about the continued circulation of public memory narratives within a public? Moreover, given the unique interactivity of videogames, as a medium, in what ways are those consequences particularly salient in digital memory sites?

[60] I have considered similar questions in my *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* article about the use of objects in the Heard Museum's exhibit *Remembering Our Indian School Days: The Boarding School Experience;* there, I draw on Weiser's discussion of Lauren Obermark's theory of overidentification.

In *The Oregon Trail*, players must act as pioneers to navigate the simulation' procedural limitations in order to win. That is, *The Oregon Trail* enacts its identification-oriented purposes through its use of procedural rhetorics. The game's design, identification-oriented intentions, and settler-colonial narrative thus present theoretical and pedagogical implications for rhetorical scholars. Theoretically, the game's procedural rhetorics demonstrates how rhetorically positioning individuals into *acting* as others can contribute to identification work—work that, depending on the context in which it is deployed, may be used to replicative violent discourse or promote empathy. Crucially, this phenomenon has also been examined in Daniel-Wariya's work on Decision Points; while his analysis focused on a videogame used *within* a public memory site, my analysis of *The Oregon Trail* indicates that a videogame—even when not intentionally conceived of and designed as a site of public memory—can also contribute to that rhetorical work. So, procedural rhetorics, writ large, may be a key site for future work focused on rhetorical identification because of their ability to "mediate," to use Cloud's term, filter, and inform a player's engagement with reality. How do procedural rhetorics appear in other public memory sites? What would a procedural rhetorics of a physical public memory site entail? And what does this usage ultimately suggest about the ethics of identification in public memory?

Pedagogically, *The Oregon Trail'*s identification-oriented purpose—and, even, its intentionality as an education text—also indicates that classrooms are a key site in which understanding about a community's past are articulated. In other words, classrooms, as those sites of education, may also participate in the work of public memory—and so future scholarship on the rhetoric of public memory should examine how both schools

and pedagogical texts participate in the establishment and circulation of certain public memory narratives. What *other* pedagogical tools participate in memory work? What is the relationship between educational institutions and public memory? Here, future scholarship may find Lauren Obermark's theorization of a "pedagogy of memory" a strong basis for that inquiry. Ultimately, then, *The Oregon Trail*'s settler-colonial memory work indicates that procedural rhetorics may contribute to identification work and that pedagogical tools may have significant connections to public memory.

Conclusion

The Oregon Trail articulates an interactive, settler-colonial narrative of the Frontier, one that employs procedural rhetorics to simulate a pioneer party's journey across the Frontier and encourage identification between players and their pioneer avatars. In doing so, *The Oregon Trail*'s procedural rhetorics, as a meaning-making practice, produces a hegemonic narrative of the Frontier—one marked by "erasure" (Stuckey 232) and "forgetting" (Shotwell 37). Within the broad context of public memory studies, *The Oregon Trail* suggests that a historical simulation game may not only *produce* a public memory narrative, but also encourage the active *uptake* of that narrative by players because of the medium's unique interactivity and resulting identification work. Additionally, the use of procedural rhetorics to do so indicates that future public memory scholarship may examine how other public memory sites—especially *non*-videogame ones—may contain procedural rhetorics. That is, how might procedural rhetorics appear in a museum exhibit or a monument? What would a theory of

procedural public memory entail? For public memory scholars, then, the potential public memory-producing functionality of procedural rhetorics warrants additional examination.

Within the context of the remembering-forgetting dialectic, specifically, *The Oregon Trail*'s procedural rhetorics demonstrates the epistemic complexity of acts of remembering and forgetting within a public. In particular, the game's interactive narrative indicates that the *production* of forgetting in public memory is more than the mere absence of a certain perspective; it can also be the procedural positioning of players into acting as "agents" and "co-designers" (to use Gee's terms) within the confines of the game's implicit ideological framing and to then identifying with that very ideology. Within *The Oregon Trail,* the game's procedural rhetorics and resulting "*play a role*" (Weiser; Daniel-Wariya) identification work *generated* the "forgetting" and "erasure" of settler-colonialism by positioning players as actors in its simulation of the Frontier history. The procedural production of forgetting, then, ultimately prompts scholars of public memory to attend to how acts of forgetting are built and sustained across a community's various public(s); just as remembering is *invented* through the use of meaning-making practices within a public memory site, so too is forgetting. I take up the theoretical implications for the *making* of forgetting in my conclusion.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION: BETWEEN REMEMBERING AND FORGETTING

This dissertation began from two primary commitments. The first concerned the primacy of the "remembering-forgetting dialectic" (Blair et al 18) within memory studies, as its numerous critiques and challenges indicate that while it may seem to simply identify two foundational, opposing dimensions of public memory, it is also a prime conceptual space for thinking through the implications and functionality of certain epistemic acts. The second arose from a commitment to recognizing the epistemic stakes of hegemonic and of decolonizing public memory narratives of the Frontier, as expressed in three selected public memory sites. In the examining the overlap between these two commitments, I have sought to consider how the nuanced complexity of remembering and forgetting may be even further complicated with the active recognition of how epistemic world views—like that of settler colonialism—infect and affect those epistemic memory acts. This final chapter bridges those two central commitments by discussing the key similarities and differences across the meaning-making practices used within those sites and by contextualizing the implications of those meaning-making acts within the remembering-forgetting dialectic.

I argue that the tension between acts of remembering and forgetting, and the varied meaning-making practices used in service of them, indicate that the remembering-forgetting dialectic remains a highly significant site of inquiry for public memory scholars. More specifically, I draw on John Muckelbauer's astute discussions of the postmodern problem of change in order to expand our disciplinary awareness of the epistemic functionality of the remembering-forgetting dialectic; the assumed antithetical

relationship between these two acts overlooks the complexity of meaning-making within public memory, especially as those meaning-making practices may repeat or negotiate difference within repetition. In order to explore the nuances of this argument, I conclude by addressing the following questions:

(1) What key themes can be traced across these case studies regarding the remembering- forgetting dialectic?

(2) How does these case studies transform our understanding of the epistemic stakes of remembering and forgetting with US public memory of the Frontier?

In addressing these questions, however, I take my cue from rhetorical historiographers who resist the finality of conclusions. As Cheryl Glenn writes in *Rhetoric Retold: Regendering the Tradition from Antiquity through the Renaissance*: "A regendered rhetorical history can never be completed or concluded. We scholars, male and female alike, still have much work to do—that is the feminist premise and promise of this study and the reason for "Against Conclusions," the subtitle of this last chapter" (174). Like Glenn, I position this final chapter as an opening, rather than an ending, into future discussions about the epistemic stakes and functionality of public memory. Ultimately, this dissertation calls for additional scholarship to attend to the space between remembering and forgetting in order to account for the effect of epistemic worldviews on the formation of public memory narratives.

Remembering and Forgetting: Key Themes

The three sites analyzed here are vastly different in their narrative focus, meaning-making practices, and participation in hegemonic and counter public memory

narratives of the Frontier. Despite—and also because of—these differences, a few key themes concerning questions of remembering and forgetting in public memory emerge. These key themes are: 1) memory as an epistemic act, and 2) memory as pedagogical. In identifying and discussing these key themes, I further establish the complexity of public memory and provide evidence for my overall argument.

Memory as an Epistemic Act

Memory, itself, is a meaning-making practice. That is to say, public memory is an epistemic act, and the various meaning-making practices used in service of that act—to invent, sustain, circulate, and distribute—are inherently committed to the work of epistemology. The three sites analyzed within this dissertation demonstrate the breadth of meaning-making in memory. The *Proctor Historical Park,* for example, shows how the invention of a symbolic landscape may also invent memory, while the exhibit *Remembering Our Indian School Days* asks us to consider the complex contributions that objects and the first-person voice may offer in memory work. Finally, *The Oregon Trail'*s procedural rhetorics demonstrates how a simulation of a settler-colonial history may generate the "forgetting" (Shotwell 37) and "erasure" (Stuckey 232) of settler colonialism. These varied meaning-making practices are used in service of vastly different public memory narratives—each with their own set of intentions and functionality within American public discourse. The *Proctor Historical Park* and *The Oregon Trail,* for instance, both articulate iterations of hegemonic forgetting narratives of the Frontier, building memory work that centers the experiences of settlers while excluding the perspectives of Native and Indigenous communities. The meaning-making

practices used in service of that work—namely, place-making and procedurality—further indicate that additional attention to the epistemic resources used in service of the replication of settler colonial logics is needed. On the other hand, the significant memory work advanced within *Remembering Our Indian School Days* offers a decolonizing narrative, one that in both method and narrative focus shifts the conversation about Frontier public memory to "unforget" the consequences of those settler colonial actions and to build a productive narrative that foregrounds the experiences and perspectives of Native and Indigenous communities. The Heard Museum's use of objects, first-person voices, and the built environment to do so thus further suggests that the need for sustained attention to methods for the invention of memory—especially when coupled with the significant need for decolonial documentation work—within our rhetorical scholarship.

To more fully consider this idea, note the contrast between the display of the barber chair in *Remembering Our Indian School Days* and the disassembly and reassembly of historic structures in the *Proctor Historical Park.* Both of these curatorial practices are used as foundational meaning-making practices within the site's memory work; crucially, they also raise similar questions about the display of materiality, the creation of context, and the invention of public memory. On one hand, the barber's chair bears no prior relationship with the history it is used to document, but its effective use within the exhibit repositions it into a symbolically powerful artifact. On the other, the disassembly and reassembly of buildings in the *Proctor Historical Park* raises the following question: are the buildings still *original*, having been deconstructed, moved, and rebuilt? Within the *Foy Proctor Historical Park*, the structures were reconstructed

using the building's original materials—but the physical displacement of the structures from their original physical location and their subsequent re-contextualization within the park asks us to interrogate the importance of provenance and originality in public memory work

If we compare the use of "original artifacts" in the *Proctor Historical Park* with the barber chair display in the exhibit *Remembering Our Indian School Days,* we are presented with two starkly different exigences for the use of nearly "decontextualized" materiality as it appears in public memory site. In *Remembering Our Indian School Days,* the use of a non-original artifact (the barber chair) functions as a necessary documentation effort in response to systemic historic erasure of Native and Indigenous experiences; in the *Proctor Historical Park,* the display of the historic buildings functions as a key meaning-making practice in the establishment of a settler colonial public memory narrative. To state this more simply, in the first case the barber chair's inventional power functions as a decolonial documentation device that offers needed revisions to hegemonic public memory narratives that *forget* the experiences, lives, and cultures of Native and Indigenous peoples; within the *Proctor Historical Park,* however, the decontextualized inventional power of the displayed collection serves to perpetuate dominant "forgetting" narratives of the Frontier. This difference suggests that, broadly speaking, the use of decontextualized "artifacts" (in an expansive sense) is highly significant. The contrasting example discussed here suggests that the use of various meaning-making practices to rhetorically invent a public memory narrative—albeit ones that function drastically differently—prompts us to further consider how memory, itself, is an epistemic act.

Taken together, these varied meaning-making practices and their contributions to the establishment of a public memory narrative indicate a compelling intersection between public memory and rhetorical invention. These meaning-making practices establish knowledge, negotiate the placement of that knowledge within other "rhetorical ecologies" (Edbauer), and encourage site visitors to incorporate that knowledge into their lives and worldviews. In doing so, they indicate that memory is an epistemic act. The evidence of these varied epistemological practices and stakes ultimately calls us to further attend feats of rhetorical invention occurring in public memory practices and sites.

Memory as Pedagogical

The pedagogical dimensions of public memory are another key theme, as indicated in each site's shared educational intentions and functionality. The connections between pedagogy and public memory are well established within previous rhetorical scholarship; beyond the historic inclusion of memory within the canon of rhetoric, recent scholars have examined how "memory places" may function as sites of rhetorical education and epideictic rhetoric (Obermark), theorized the application of public memory in rhetoric and writing classrooms through the creation of MEmorials as a tool for developing civic, community literacy (Ulmer), and presented successful examples of the inclusion of public memory-oriented assignments and pedagogical practices within rhetoric and composition classrooms (Greer and Grobman). In particular, Lauren Obermark's theorizing of a "pedagogy of memory" rightly identifies how sites of public memory may position visitors into an experience akin to rhetorical education. As Obermark points out, public memory sites are often explicitly oriented towards

education, and, through their display of epideictic rhetorics, perform values and implicitly argue for the perpetuation of certain values; she argues that "epideictic rhetoric is central to the pedagogy of memory, as values are promoted and denied through acts of remembrance" (195). Here, Obermark's insights are particularly telling, as they further indicate the stakes of public memory: memory matters, as those "memory places" may work to uphold, challenge, or complicate hegemonic understandings and knowledge about certain historical events. In doing so, too, they encourage the perpetuation of certain societal values through their epideictic display. Within this dissertation's focus on Frontier public memory, specifically, Obermark's insight encourage us to closely interrogate how those "memory places" may encourage or resist the continuation of settler colonial logics and values through the epideictic display of values and orientation towards rhetorical education.

Each of the three sites analyzed here had educational intentions. The *National Ranching Heritage Center'*s mission statement identifies historical preservation as a primary goal, while the grant applications submitted in support of funding for *Remembering Our Indian School Days* explicitly speaks to the need for the exhibit's history of the off-reservation boarding schools to be accounted for in its documentation efforts. Finally, *The Oregon Trail* was explicitly designed for use within an educational setting, and while its use eventually extended into home computers, its creation was a landmark in the propagation of edutainment technologies. Taken together, then, these three sites suggest the multiplicity of pedagogical dimensions and applications of public memory. For instance, these three sites contain both explicit and implicit pedagogical work. Explicitly, each site was designed for educational purposes; whether to preserve

ranching heritage, document the history of off-reservation boarding schools, or create an interactive virtual historical text for school children, these three sites sought to create an educational experience for their visitors. Implicitly, however, two of these three sites contain at least one additional level of pedagogical work through their immediate connection to educational institutions. *The Oregon Trail,* for example, was designed for and used within school classrooms, and its sustained, wide-spread use has had a lasting effect on hegemonic constructions of public memory of the US Frontier; that is, *The Oregon Trail*'s distribution and use within classrooms demonstrates how educational institutions may replicate hegemonic ideologies. Additional evidence of this can be seen in the Heard Museum's exhibit; as discussed earlier, the founding principle of the off-reservation boarding school was cultural assimilation, and so these schools were institutions explicitly oriented towards that goal. Crucially, however, those schools were transformed through advocacy efforts, and so the exhibit also functions as a compelling example of how educational institutions can become prime sites of resistance and negotiation.

The connections across settler colonialism, schools, and public memory suggest that while public memory has pedagogical dimensions, rhetorical scholars should also attend to how pedagogical practices, themselves, may function as examples of meaning-making practices that may build public memory. That is to say, the sites surveyed here prompt us to further consider how schools, too, may function as sites in which public memory is built and how educational institutions, as a system, may function as an infrastructure that enables the large-scale distribution of certain public memory narratives.

Epistemic Stakes, Dialectic, and Public Memory

As discussed previously, the common evocation of the antithetical binary between remembering and forgetting remains a compelling topic within memory studies, even as some scholars have critiqued it as a "simplistic restatement of the problem of representation in public memory studies" (Blair et al 18). While such scholarship has rightly prompted us to revisit and challenge common assumptions in memory studies, it has also encouraged us to "move beyond" those questions into other pursuits, such as examinations of the articulation of public memory through material means or the effects of tourism and economics and formation of public memory narratives. The wealth of scholarship doing so, however, further reifies the central importance of *meaning-making* in acts of memory as it draws our attention to the various forces that act upon or may contribute to the establishment and circulation of public memory; that is, this breadth of public memory scholarship indicates the foundational significance of epistemic acts in the making of memory.

My analyses ultimately indicate that while it is tempting to overlook the remembering-forgetting dialectic, doing so dismisses the nuances of meaning-making, their epistemic contributions, and the ecologies of knowledge in which public memory narratives are articulated. In other words, the remembering-forgetting dialectic remains an important site of inquiry for public memory scholars. In this section, I consider how my analyses further indicate the epistemic stakes of remembering and forgetting within US public memory of the Frontier. To do so, I draw on John Muckelbauer's astute discussion of dialectic as it is expressed in his work *The Future of Invention: Rhetoric,*

Postmodernism, and the Problem of Change. More specifically, I extend Muckelbauer's insights about the problem of change into the realm of public memory, offering examples of how the case studies analyzed within this dissertation speak to this very issue.

The problem of change, as Muckelbauer defines it, is an incessant, troublesome issue. He describes it as follows:

> …dialectic change, what I am referring to here is simply a style of engagement in which negation is the general principle of transformation. That is, whether the stakes are a new concept, a different social structure, a divergent form of subjectivity, a fresh reading or an innovative technology, difference and novelty only emerge by somehow overcoming and negating particular others—outdated concepts, oppressive social structures, limited structures, or simply undesirable propositions. The important point here is that the negative movement of dialectical change is the generative engine of whatever "difference" or "novelty" results. (4)

To re-state Muckelbauer's keen insights, the problem of change emerges from an overarching methodological habit for the formation, contestation, and revision of knowledge that relies upon that negating motion. In some sense, perhaps that negating motion is unavoidable; as Muckelbauer tells us, our disciplinary methods and the academy, writ large, is seemingly oriented towards the production of gaps. With his theorizing, gaps are created through the act of negation, an act that is seemingly foundational and, perhaps, inescapable in common academic methods for the pursuit of knowledge; when discussing acts of topical rhetorical invention, Muckelbauer explains that "[i]n order to discover a gap in understanding, one must introduce the importance of

understanding where it did not exist: thus, the *discovery* of gaps is simultaneously with the *production* of gaps" (139, emphasis original). He goes on to elaborate that "[f]urther, this production/discovery style is accomplished through a very precise stye: it connects the text to particular assumptions and it then proceeds to articulate this connection as an absence" (139). In other words, this negating motion occurs when our revision-oriented critiques operate by first identifying absence—and in that identification of absence, Muckelbauer argues, absence is produced. So, as Muckelbauer has astutely written, theorizations focused on dialectic and much knowledge formation are doomed to repeat the very movement of that negating motion, even as they seek to subvert, challenge, or be rid of it.

The reflexive use of negation[61]—and subsequent re-affirmation of prior knowledge—presents a complex issue for public memory scholars, particularly those who are invested in questions of responsibility, equity, and justice in public memory sites, narratives, and practices. That is, if, as Muckelbauer tells us, our attempts to revise hegemonic knowledge claims results, in part, in the reification of those very claims through the act of negation, then we are presented with a troublesome issue when it comes to the potential uses of public memory within public discourse. For example, if responsibility-oriented changes to public memory narratives of the Frontier, the Confederacy, or the Holocaust in fact, re-inscribing the very narratives, ideologies, and

[61] In this project, however, I do not presume to have side-stepped the issue of the negating motion. In my discussion of the remembering-forgetting dialectic, I am aware of how my analyses, synthesis, and theorization participate in the broader shape of dialectic criticism. Crucially, however, my critique argues for the epistemic contextualization of that dialectic within worldviews—and so, in making that argument, I seek not to subvert dialectic itself but rather to draw our attention to how our meaning-making practices and the "ecology of memory" (Tell) in which "memory places" (Blair et al) are situated offer us valuable entry points for thinking through the epistemic resources that are available to us as methods of making memory.

values that necessitate those accountability-driven revisions in the first place, then we are left with the unsettling implication that injustice replicates seemingly constantly, despite our best efforts and intentions to do otherwise. What, then, are we to do?

Previous public memory scholarship has touched on similar questions, even if they do not use this terminology or draw on postmodern theorizations of dialectic. James Young's discussion of Germany's Holocaust memorials, for example, ends with the compelling insight that perhaps the most fitting memorial to the Holocaust is actually the debate *about* how to memorialize the Holocaust; Young's sharp insights about the subversion of the monument as a form of public memory, more specifically, is akin to the very problem of change that Muckelbauer describes. Furthermore, Jeffrey Olick's sweeping discussion of the turn towards a "politics of regret" within civic discourse lends additional weight to this issue. Clearly, then, this "problem of change" further speaks to the epistemic stakes of public memory. Within the context of this project, Muckelbauer's insights indicate that careful attention to the replication of hegemonic Frontier public memory narratives, the needed articulation of decolonizing responses, and the relationship between them is needed; that is to say, "the problem of change" further indicates the high stakes of the epistemic acts of remembering and forgetting within public memory.

Muckelbauer's solution to the problem of change involves the development of a new methodology, a "style of engagement that is irreducible to this repetitious dialectic of negation" and which he names "an 'affirmative' sense of change" (12). Drawing from the prior works of Deleuze and Derrida, Muckelbauer explains that this "affirmative" change depends upon the recognition of repetition. He writes:

> So if the negative movement of dialectical change cannot be overcome and can only be repeated, this does not mean that all repetition is the same or that all repetition necessarily reproduce the same. Instead, it only means that everything hinges on how one repeats (rather than if one repeats). In other words, in any particular encounter, everything depends on one's orientation within repetition: an orientation towards negation itself or an orientation toward the singular rhythms within negation (12-13).

In other words, Muckelbauer asks us to refocus our epistemic efforts not on overcoming repetition, itself, but rather to attend to *methods* of repetition—the how. Within the context of public memory, then, this ""affirmative" sense of change" further indicates the overwhelming significance of meaning-making practices. That is to say, if what matters is *how* repetition occurs, then our scholarship can grapple with problems of change, the production of gaps, and the re-affirmation of pre-existing knowledge through the close attention to the meaning-making practices that comprise that very repetition.

Within the context of Frontier public memory, the attention to the *how* of repetition—those meaning-making practices and their contributions to acts of remembering and forgetting—thus encourage us to attend to the broader epistemic context in which public memory narratives are articulated. In other words, my analyses and attention to acts of remembering and forgetting within Frontier public memory indicate that common assumptions about the remembering-forgetting dialectic do not fully recognize the complexity of repetition and variety of meaning-making practices used within public memory. Overlooking the remembering-forgetting dialectic, then, dismisses the epistemic stakes of acts of remembering and forgetting, the wealth of

meaning-making practices, and those moments of "affirmative change" that Muckelbauer describes. Ultimately, the remembering-forgetting dialectic remains a significant entry point for public memory scholars; future work should consider the meaning-making practices used in those moments of repetition as a way to address the problem of change within the high-stakes realm of public memory.

The Space Between

In this dissertation, I have offered descriptive analyses of three "memory places" that make use of different meaning-making practices, are utilized for different purposes, and interact with the epistemic framework of settler colonialism in different ways. In doing so, I have examined the replication of settler-colonial logics within two sites that express hegemonic forgetting Frontier public memories and how one public memory site offers a highly significant "unforgetting" narrative of that settler-colonial history. While it is tempting to both cast remembering and forgetting as the antithesis of each other and to conclude that this dialectical description is reductive (Blair et al 18), the sites discussed here indicate that additional attention to the *methods of memory*—those meaning-making practices and the *how* of repetition—is needed in order to uncover the full complexity of the epistemological aspects of public memory. That is, our scholarship must increasingly account for the various epistemic acts that *invent* public memory, even as we also reflectively and carefully consider how our methods for *seeing* method affect the subsequent formation and circulation of knowledge. In other words, our scholarship must examine the conceptual space *between* remembering and forgetting, working to account for and include the many meaning-making practices that engage in those epistemic acts.

Dismissals of the remembering-forgetting dialectic thus overlook the significance of epistemic worldviews on the making of memory. Both remembering and forgetting are complex epistemic acts, ones that are invented through the use of and interaction between multiple meaning-making practices; assuming that they are antithetical, always opposed in value, and mutually exclusive fails to account for the ways in which latent, ideological assumptions affect the formation and circulation of knowledge claims within a society's vast rhetorical ecology of public discourse through that negating motion. Moving forward, then, our scholarship should attend to the space *between* remembering and forgetting—to that rich, conceptual site in which meaning-making practices articulate and negotiate the contextualization of knowledge claims. The analyses included in this dissertation have ultimately sought to revisist the remembering-forgetting dialectic, and to make the case for its continued relevance for public memory studies. Our future scholarship should thus closely attend to what is *between* remembering and forgetting, the use of the various meaning-making practices utilized within that site, and how that space is bound within certain epistemological frameworks.

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