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# Remembrance, Reflection, Reconciliation: The Performance of Collective Memory in Civil War Commemoration

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Remembrance, Reflection, Reconciliation:  
The Performance of Collective Memory in Civil War Commemoration

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement  
for the degree of Bachelor of Arts in American Studies from  
The College of William and Mary

by

Kathryn Lynn McLane

Accepted for \_\_\_\_\_  
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Part I  
An Analysis of Performance, Collective Memory and Civil War Commemoration

*Sadly, but not with upbraiding,  
The generous deed was done;  
In the storm of the years that are fading,  
No braver battle was won; -  
Under the sod and the dew,  
Waiting the judgment day; -  
Under the blossoms, the Blue,  
Under the garlands, the Gray.<sup>1</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup> Francis Miles Finch, "The Blue and the Gray." *Atlantic Monthly*, 1867.

## Introduction

As the sesquicentennial observance of the American Civil War is currently underway, it is interesting to consider why Americans continue to commemorate this event one hundred and fifty years after its close and how these commemorations have changed over time. I examined shifts in commemorative focus during three major eras of Civil War commemoration—the semicentennial, centennial, and sesquicentennial anniversaries—and learned that, although commemorations during the semicentennial and centennial observances emphasized military heroism and sectional reconciliation, many sesquicentennial commemorations focus on the inclusion of previously disregarded Civil War narratives.

I also found that there exists a relationship between collective memory, performance, and commemoration that can be used to understand the continuing, yet changing character of Civil War commemoration. Sociologist Paul Connerton summarizes this relationship as such: “if there is such thing as social memory we are likely to find it in commemorative ceremonies. Commemorative ceremonies prove to be commemorative only in so far as they are performative.”<sup>2</sup> According to the connections established by Connerton then, commemoration is the performance of a group’s collective memories. I was inspired by a work called *The Archive and the Repertoire* by performance studies scholar Diana Taylor to present my research in the dual format of a paper and the performance of a commemorative modern dance, therefore further exploring the connections between performance, collective memory, and commemoration.<sup>3</sup>

French Sociologist, Maurice Halbwachs, was the first scholar to assign a name to the phenomenon of collective memory. Although memories are unique to each individual, people form their memories through group interaction; therefore, collective memory is a social

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<sup>2</sup> Paul Connerton. *How Societies Remember*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989, 71.

<sup>3</sup> Diana Taylor. *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2003.

construct.<sup>4</sup> These groups can be federal, familial, social, political, or religious in nature and can range in size; however, regardless of their composition, groups maintain their collective memories across generations and membership shifts through acts of transfer, such as commemoration.<sup>5</sup> Commemoration does exist on an individual level; however, due to the role that group interaction plays in the formation of collective memory, I chose to focus my study on the nature of *group* commemorations. According to Halbwachs, group members interpret the past—and thus form their collective memories and, consequently, their commemorative actions—in light of their present circumstances.<sup>6</sup> Commemoration is more than just a direct recreation of a group's memories of the past; rather, commemorative actions also reflect and reinforce a group's current characteristics and identity.

In studying commemorative performances as manifestations of a group's collective memory and identity, the reasons for the continuation and the changing nature of Civil War commemoration become clearer. Groups utilize present frameworks to interpret the past, allowing them to continually redefine their collective memories, identities, and thus their commemorative performances in terms of their present needs. Groups continue to commemorate the Civil War as a way to unite and assert their collective identity; however, over time groups adapt their collective memories to fit their present circumstances, so the nature of their commemorative activities change as well.

In this paper I first describe the methods that I used to conduct my research. I then discuss the dual nature of my project before further exploring the relationship between collective memory, and Civil War commemoration as well as Taylor's ideas about the archive and the

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<sup>4</sup> Maurice Halbwachs. *On Collective Memory*, Translated by Lewis A. Coser. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992, 22.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 34.

repertoire in Part I. In Part II, I draw connections between my academic research and the simultaneous creation of a commemorative modern dance in an attempt to collapse the separation between the archive and the repertoire. In this section I also discuss my concept and choreographic process before reflecting on the project as a whole and drawing conclusions about the implications of my research in Part III.

### Methods

I began this project with one overarching question: why do people continue to commemorate the Civil War one hundred and fifty years after its close? I used the relationship between collective memory, performance, and commemoration as a lens to examine this question and to draw connections between a group's commemorative actions and its present circumstances. I analyzed this question through lenses of history, performance theory, memory studies, and dance, allowing me to take an interdisciplinary approach to the collection, interpretation, and presentation of my research. The first sources I referenced were photographs and drawings from the Civil War era. These primary materials provided inspiration for the rest of my research and also became the choreographic inspiration for much of my dance, as I will elaborate in Part II. I then conducted a literature review of secondary sources concerning performance, collective memory, and commemoration—both generally and specific to the Civil War. Historical evaluations of Civil War commemoration by scholars such as John Hope Franklin,<sup>7</sup> performance studies scholarship by Diana Taylor,<sup>8</sup> and memory studies works by

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<sup>7</sup> John Hope Franklin. "A Century of Civil War Observance." *The Journal of Negro History* 47, no. 2 (1962): 97-107.

<sup>8</sup> Diana Taylor. *The Archive and the Repertoire*.

Maurice Halbwachs,<sup>9</sup> Barbara Misztal,<sup>10</sup> and Paul Connerton<sup>11</sup> became particularly important to my research.

My original concept involved a project exploring types of commemorations performed by groups during major Civil War anniversaries in order to determine the changing nature of Civil War commemoration over time. However, as I learned more about the relationship between performance, collective memory, and commemoration, I began to focus less on the details of specific commemorative activities during these anniversaries and more on the larger connections between a group's collective memory and its subsequent performance of commemoration. I examined this relationship's role in the continuation of Civil War commemoration as well as in the modifications of commemorative focus from anniversary to anniversary.

As I began to explore my research material, I realized that I could not truly understand commemoration—by definition a performance—simply by reading and writing about it. Rather, I had to *participate* by creating a commemoration of my own. Thus, in addition to this paper, I created a modern dance for the twenty-five members of William and Mary's Orchesis Modern Dance Company as a way to enhance my understanding of Civil War commemoration. Presenting my research in the dual format of a paper and a dance, allowed me to combine the archive and the repertoire, as described by Diana Taylor. Taylor discusses the archive of recorded sources and the repertoire of performed sources as two distinct ways of transmitting information that should work in tandem; however, researchers tend to place greater emphasis on the recorded sources of the archive rather than the seemingly ephemeral embodied actions in the repertoire.<sup>12</sup> In her work, Taylor advocates for increased use of performances as legitimate

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<sup>9</sup> Maurice Halbwachs. *On Collective Memory*.

<sup>10</sup> Barbara Misztal. *Theories of Social Remembering*. Open University Press, 2003.

<sup>11</sup> Paul Connerton. *How Societies Remember*.

<sup>12</sup> Diana Taylor. *The Archive and the Repertoire*, 22.



sources of information. Commemorations are performative; therefore, I wished to contribute to both the archive and the repertoire through the presentation of my research. My work on the paper and the dance reciprocally informed one another, and this interdisciplinary approach enriched my research experience and allowed me to realize the power of combining performance and academic research. My project, therefore, overcomes the separation that has been established between the archive and the repertoire by promoting performance as a legitimate and valuable form of knowledge transmission.

### **Performance, Collective Memory, and Commemoration**

Commemorations are performances that transmit a group's present interpretations of the past; therefore, they are part of Diana Taylor's repertoire of, "live, embodied actions."<sup>13</sup> Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o explains a similar idea in his work, *Enactments of Power*, where he defines performance as a, "representation of being."<sup>14</sup> These two scholars highlight the idea that performances are defined by their vital nature, and therefore cannot be captured by the archive of recorded sources. For example, as the dancers perform my dance, it is part of the repertoire. Audiences will watch the dance, infer meaning, and then disseminate their interpretations of the performance—thus, transmitting the knowledge. However, after the performance ends and exists only in the form of a video recording, it ceases to be part of the repertoire, although the recording becomes part of the archive.

According to Taylor, the archive and the repertoire, "exist in a constant state of interaction," in everyday life; however, researchers often overlook valuable sources in the

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>14</sup> Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o "Enactments of Power: The Politics of Performance Space." *The Drama Review* 41, no. 3 (1997): 11.

repertoire because of their seeming ephemeral nature.<sup>15</sup> She uses the example of wedding vows to show how the archive and repertoire work together.<sup>16</sup> At a wedding, the two parties perform the act of saying, “I do” to symbolize their commitment to each other; then, the couple signs a marriage license, which becomes part of the archive and makes their marriage legally official. The performance of the words, “I do” is part of the repertoire, and is seemingly less important, or at least less permanent, than the signing of the legal documents; however, this performance is an important part of the ritual of marriage and is therefore important to examine as an indicator of cultural practice.

Although the archive and the repertoire should work in tandem in research as they do in everyday life, Taylor explains that they do not, and thus, “the dominance of language and writing has come to stand for *meaning* itself.”<sup>17</sup> Therefore, performances are often overlooked as legitimate sources of information in favor of seemingly more reliable and easily accessible recorded sources. Taylor explains that performance studies bridges this gap between the archive and the repertoire by utilizing both. She advocates for the use of performance as sources of knowledge because, although embodied actions in the repertoire may seem fleeting, they actually, “reconstitute themselves, transmitting communal memories, histories, and values, from one group or generation to the next.”<sup>18</sup> In other words, although every aspect of a singular performance cannot be permanently recorded in the archive, the reactivation of the performance through commemoration allows people to reconstruct their pasts in terms of their present situations and to transmit a version of the original performance again. It is important to note that, because groups rely on their collective memories to create commemorative performances, and

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<sup>15</sup> Diana Taylor *The Archive and the Repertoire*, 21.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 21.

because these memories are interpreted in the context of the present, these recreated performances will likely differ from the original that they represent.

In, *The Social Context of Commemoration*, Barry Schwartz clearly explains how commemorations of past events are influenced by present circumstances: “while the object of commemoration is usually to be found in the past, the issue which motivates its selection and shaping is always to be found among the concerns of the present.”<sup>19</sup> This presentist view is essential to my examination of commemoration as the embodiment of a group’s present conceptions rather than a direct recreation of the past. By examining commemoration as a construct of present, I am better able to understand how and why people have commemorated the Civil War since its close in 1865. The answer lies in the idea that group identity, also a product of collective memory, drives the continuation of commemoration as a way to express the needs of the present. At the same time, as group membership changes, beliefs and items of importance shift over time, so the character of commemoration changes.

Sociologist Barbara Misztal describes how this idea of group identity connects to the social nature of collective memory and thus the performance of commemoration: “the representation of the past, both that shared by a group and that which is collectively commemorated...enacts and gives substance to the group’s identity, its present conditions and its vision of the future.”<sup>20</sup> Group interaction and the subsequent formation of memories is essential to the development of a collective group narrative, and a strong group identity allows for greater unity, stability, and communication within the group.<sup>21</sup> Because collective memory forms the basis of group identity, groups maintain collective unity by transmitting these memories across

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<sup>19</sup> Barry Schwartz. “The Social Context of Commemoration: A Study in Collective Memory.” *Social Forces* 61, no. 2 (1982): 395.

<sup>20</sup> Barbara Misztal. *Theories of Social Remembering*, 7.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

generations. These memories only survive through generational shifts and group membership changes when the group protects the memories through communication and commemoration of some sort.<sup>22</sup> This is evident in the case of Civil War commemoration because the legacy of the Civil War has been maintained over the last one hundred and fifty years only through group interaction and commemoration of their versions of the past. New members adopt the group's ideas and identity as their own, while simultaneously contributing their own experiences to group discussion and memory formation. In this way, old memories and ideas about the past are sustained over time, but adapt to changes in group membership and present group conditions.

Group members use socially constructed collective memories to define their identities, and they maintain these identities and ideas through commemoration. They view the past in terms of their present circumstances; therefore, as time passes and group membership changes, groups can manipulate their memories to serve their present needs and gradually reshape understandings of the past.<sup>23</sup> While this alteration of the past is not always intentional, it is, nonetheless, a way for groups to “reconstruct history,” and “preserve [their] identity.”<sup>24</sup> Groups can distort their past by inventing a fake memory, exaggerating or leaving out parts of their existing memory, placing blame on other actors or environmental factors, or practicing “contextual framing” in order to make an event seem different than it actually was.<sup>25</sup> In each of these cases, groups alter the past to the benefit of their present needs, which allows them to continue commemorating an event over a long period of time in order to conserve their present identities based on ideas of the past. As collective memories and group identity shift over time, so does the nature of commemoration.

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<sup>22</sup> Pennebaker, James W., Dario Paez, Bernard Rimé, eds. *Collective Memory of Political Events: Social Psychological Perspectives*. Psychology Press, 1997, 280.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 277.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, x.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 280-292.

### Why Study Civil War Commemoration?

According to Barry Schwartz, “commemoration lifts from ordinary historical sequence those extraordinary events which embody our deepest and most fundamental values.”<sup>26</sup> Because collective memories are socially constructed they are most likely to be formed and maintained surrounding extraordinary events that impact the lives of people in lasting ways.<sup>27</sup> The Civil War was, without a doubt, a high-stakes event that created a legacy of sectional and racial tension that lasts to this day. Schwartz would predict many groups would likely create collective memories surrounding their own Civil War memories or the experiences of their elders. They then promote these memories through commemorative performances, which likely reach their height during paramount anniversaries. Studying Civil War commemoration in terms of its relationship with collective memory and performance should help us understand commemorative patterns over the last one hundred and fifty years.

According to Maurice Halbwachs, there are as many collective memories as there are groups in society. Applying this idea to the study of Civil War commemoration allows us to understand that individuals belonging to varying and multiple groups will hold different ideas about the Civil War. For the last one hundred and fifty years, these various groups—ranging from families and religious circles, to organizations such as the Sons of Confederate Veterans—have formed collective ideas about the Civil War. These collective memories are maintained and developed through commemoration, and as group membership shifts, these memories become slightly distorted to fit the present needs of the group and are continually embodied through commemorative actions as a way to reinforce group identity. In this way, versions of Civil War memories have been sustained for one hundred and fifty years.

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<sup>26</sup> Barry Schwartz, “The Social Context of Commemoration,” 377.

<sup>27</sup> Pennebaker, eds. *Collective Memory of Political Events*, 17.

### **The Changing Nature of Civil War Commemoration**

Just as the relationship between collective memory, performance, and commemoration can be used to understand the reasons for continued Civil War commemoration, it can also be used as a lens to examine reasons for the changing nature of Civil War commemoration over time. I analyzed commemorative trends during the semicentennial, centennial, and sesquicentennial anniversaries of the war, and used this information as artistic inspiration for sections of my dance, as I will elaborate in Part II of this paper. John Hanc summarizes the thematic trajectory of Civil War commemoration over the last one hundred and fifty years in a Smithsonian article published at the beginning of the sesquicentennial observance. He writes that the dominant themes of the fiftieth, one hundredth, and one hundred and fiftieth anniversaries, respectively, were sectional reconciliation and reunification, continued reunification and recognition through “pageantry,” and finally, a new focus on inclusivity.<sup>28</sup> Until the current sesquicentennial anniversary, most commemorative performances have emphasized white, sectional reconciliation, reunification, and military heroism. Unfortunately, this narrow attention on the achievement of white, sectional peace completely disregarded the lasting racial tensions and inequalities as well as the contributions of groups such as African Americans and women.<sup>29</sup> As a result, many of the current sesquicentennial commemorations aim to counteract this imbalance by focusing on these previously ignored narratives.

Overall, the changing nature of Civil War commemoration speaks to the idea that the way that groups use present frameworks to interpret the past and form collective memories affects how they commemorate. Barry Schwartz further explains the significant role that current

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<sup>28</sup> John Hanc. “How We’ve Commemorated the Civil War.” *Smithsonian.com*. April 11, 2011, accessed May 2013, <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/history-archaeology/How-Weve-Commemorated-the-Civil-War.html?c=y&page=2>.

<sup>29</sup> John Hope Franklin. “A Century of Civil War Observance,” 99.

circumstances play in the interpretation of the past: “[the] significance of historical events changes from one generation to the next according to a changing infrastructure of societal problems and needs.”<sup>30</sup> In other words, changes in group membership bring a shift in collective memories and group identity and therefore a modification in the focus and performance of commemoration over time.

*Semicentennial (1911-1915)*

As the semicentennial of the Civil War approached, Americans in the North and South had already begun working toward sectional reconciliation. According to John Hope Franklin, many people felt as though enough time had passed since the end of the war for them to step back and, “appraise its significance.”<sup>31</sup> Franklin states that some leaders, such as South Carolina Senator Tillman, even went so far as to claim that the sectional hatred and tension agitated by the war had disappeared completely.<sup>32</sup> However, during the semicentennial, Americans continued to strive toward sectional reconciliation and reunification through events such as the military reunion at Gettysburg in 1913.<sup>33</sup> Here, war veterans symbolically set aside their differences in opinion, shook hands, and commemorated an important battle.

John Hope Franklin notes that, in retrospect, this anniversary would not have run the risk of further inflaming, “the bitterness of sectional animosity.”<sup>34</sup> It was generally “innocuous” in nature because at this point in time few people challenged the goals of sectional reconciliation and reunification by advocating for racial equality or historical accuracy. Therefore at the end of the semicentennial, progress toward white, sectional peace remained unharmed, and no strides were made toward promoting other Civil War narratives.

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<sup>30</sup> Barry Schwartz. “The Social Context of Commemoration,” 374.

<sup>31</sup> John Hope Franklin. “A Century of Civil War Observance,” 100.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 100-101.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 100.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 101.

Through understanding commemorative activities in terms of their relationship with collective memory, one can infer potential reasons for the reserved nature of the fiftieth anniversary. Part of the semicentennial coincided with World War One. As earlier established, groups interpret past memories using their present experiences. Rather than tackling controversial issues or racial tensions, government leaders seized this momentous occasion as an opportunity to capitalize on increasing patriotism and unity in the face of an international war.<sup>35</sup> Commemorations like military reunions emphasized the heroism that defined the war in the North and the South rather than focusing on any previous or remaining sectional and racial disharmony. This is an example of how groups can interpret the past in terms of their present needs. In the context of an impending international conflict, United States leaders recognized that the nation would be stronger as a united whole than as fragmented and warring halves. Men and women commemorated brave military veterans and focused mostly on reconciliation due to the demands of their present circumstances.

#### *Centennial (1961-1965)*

During the fiftieth anniversary many Americans who experienced the war were still alive and contributing their own experiences to their groups. However, by the time one hundred years had passed, these first-hand accounts no longer existed. As a result, group membership and collective memories and identities surrounding the war began to shift, and the nature of commemoration changed. During the centennial, Americans commemorated the brave sacrifices of their ancestors and the legacy they left after their death in a significant way, which created something of a carnival atmosphere around the observance. According to John Hope Franklin Americans at this time “seemed determined to make this a most important occasion not only

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 102.



because the struggle is one hundred years behind them, but also because previous observances have fallen short of the mark.”<sup>36</sup>

In order to facilitate the execution of this momentous occasion, Congress established the Civil War Centennial Commission in 1957.<sup>37</sup> The Commission was comprised of eighteen members including the President of the United States and six of his appointees—two being from the Department of Defense—the President of the Senate and his four selected Senators, the Speaker of the House of Representatives and his four selected members of the House, and one member from the Department of the Interior to act as the director of the National Park Service.<sup>38</sup> The Commission assigned the National Park Service the duty of preserving and improving facilities at battlegrounds through the “Mission 66” Program, which was designed “to assure that the appropriate observances may be held at such sites.”<sup>39</sup> Other federal organizations also commemorated the centennial of the Civil War in their own ways. For example, the Post Office released a commemorative stamp for each year of the anniversary, and the Department of Defense conducted its own commemorative projects such as reenactments, parades, and displays of color guards and army exhibits.<sup>40</sup>

In addition to the work of the federal organizations, forty-four states formed their own commissions to contribute to the centennial observance. Intellectuals and Civil War enthusiasts in the North and South also organized themselves into private groups called Civil War Round Tables, which aimed to commemorate the war and generate interest in the centennial on a local level.<sup>41</sup> These groups were established well before the centennial and only grew in size as the

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 102-3.

<sup>37</sup> “The Civil War Centennial: A Report to the Congress,” 3.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 32-33.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 42.

anniversary commenced. These groups increased overall interest and enthusiasm for the centennial observance by holding discussions, meetings, and lectures, and distributing information to the public about the War.

The emphasis on exciting presentation and commercialism was one of the largest critiques of the centennial, both during and after the anniversary. James Robertson attributes this circus-like atmosphere to three specific characteristics of the centennial: battle reenactments, souvenirs and mementoes, and the great amount of literature produced about the Civil War during the centennial—often “shallow” and focusing only on military aspects of the War.<sup>42</sup> Centennial commemoration in the form of battle reenactments became a point of contention among participants.<sup>43</sup> Facilitated by some state, federal, and private organizations, these events became ways for laymen and Civil War enthusiasts to participate in the anniversary and to learn more about the Civil War. Supporters of reenactments claimed that they provided, “realism, color, and pageantry and...brought authentic sights and sounds of the Civil War to even greater numbers of persons.”<sup>44</sup> However, opponents such as members of the national commission believed that these reenactments, “were an affront to good taste and an abuse to history.”<sup>45</sup> Opponents also believed that these reenactments along with the production of souvenirs and a plethora of inaccurate reading material contributed to the cheap “carnival atmosphere” of the centennial.<sup>46</sup> While many Americans resolved to commemorate the centennial on a federal and local level, John Hope Franklin notes that people in the southern states approached the centennial with even greater fervor and enthusiasm than their northern counterparts. Southerners built a

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<sup>42</sup>James I. Robertson Jr. “The Civil War Centennial—Archival Aspects.” *The American Archivist* 26, no. 1 (1963): 11-14.

<sup>43</sup> “A Report to the Congress,” 44.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 44-45.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 45.

<sup>46</sup> James I. Robertson Jr. “The Civil War Centennial—Archival Aspects,” 11.

large number of monuments, staged battle re-enactments, produced souvenirs, and encouraged their own version of Civil War history.<sup>47</sup>

In retrospect, the Commission stated that it enjoyed the advantage of the high public interest in the Civil War but was disadvantaged by the racial tensions spurred by the concurrent Civil Rights movement and southern resistance.<sup>48</sup> Karl Betts, the original director of the Commission, “had no intention of making race a central theme of the centennial.”<sup>49</sup> Although many official centennial commemorations attempted to remain racially neutral, one event in particular placed the centennial at odds with the Civil Rights movement, and predicted the ultimate embarrassment of the centennial observance.<sup>50</sup> At an annual Commission meeting in Charleston, South Carolina, a black woman representing the state of New Jersey was not allowed to stay in the hotel where the meeting was held. This controversy found its way to national news circuits, and President Kennedy publicly criticized the Commission. Historian Robert Cook writes that, from this point forward, the centennial became somewhat of a “national embarrassment.”<sup>51</sup>

Eventually, two historians named Allan Nevins and James Robertson replaced Betts and attempted to refocus the centennial on “education and commemoration,” rather than “spectacle and commerce.”<sup>52</sup> At this point the centennial became less of a pageant and therefore lost steam as many Americans became disinterested. While the commission attempted to remain as neutral as possible, Nevins, as a historian, aimed to educate Americans about the true history of the Civil

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<sup>47</sup> John Hope Franklin, “A Century of Civil War Observance,” 104-105.

<sup>48</sup> “A Report to the Congress,” 2.

<sup>49</sup> Cook, Robert, Kenneth Noe, Dana Shoaf, Jennifer Weber. “Historians’ Forum: The American Civil War’s Centennial vs. the Sesquicentennial.” *Civil War History* 57, no. 4 (2011): 389.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*

War. Therefore, during the centennial, he worked to, “[restore] the contribution of slavery to the conflict to full prominence.”<sup>53</sup>

Nichols claims that during and after the centennial, racial conflict became impossible to ignore as visual evidence of the Civil Rights struggle and inequality made its way into American homes.<sup>54</sup> At this time, conflicts over race relations were visible, causing historians to reconsider race relations in their interpretations of the war. After the centennial, historians shared a “general acceptance of slavery, of race, as a factor of paramount importance.”<sup>55</sup> Here, again, is an example of Americans using their present circumstances to interpret the past. The passage of time and subsequent changes in collective memories of the war altered the way that many Americans viewed the conflict. The simultaneous existence of the Civil Rights movement and the Civil War centennial observance reminded many Americans that they had not made as much progress toward racial equality as they might have wanted to believe. Regardless of efforts by the commission to maintain unity amid the brewing Civil Rights movement, Robert Cook explains that the centennial ended rather unsuccessfully and “served mostly to highlight how deep the sectional and racial scars remained a hundred years after the war.”<sup>56</sup>

#### *Sesquicentennial (2011-2015)*

While the centennial was a collective national and local commemorative effort resulting in an initially enthusiastic, carnival-like atmosphere that eventually fizzled to an embarrassment, the sesquicentennial seems like a much more subtle affair thus far. The sesquicentennial is ongoing; so, it is difficult to draw any real conclusions about the anniversary. However, four prominent Civil War historians—Robert Cook, Kenneth Noe, Dana Shoaf, and Jennifer Weber—

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<sup>53</sup> Roy F. Nichols. “A Hundred Years Later: Perspectives on the Civil War.” *The Journal of Southern History* 33, no. 2 (1967): 153.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 153-154.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 154.

<sup>56</sup> Robert Cook et al., “Historian’s Forum,” 390.

participated in a forum in 2011 to compare and contrast the centennial and sesquicentennial and to make predictions about the rest of the sesquicentennial observance. At this forum, Weber notes that both national and local newspapers ran stories about the Civil War before the anniversary began and have continued this trend throughout the observance.<sup>57</sup> The aforementioned article by John Hanc is one example of this type of literature, which serves as an indication of continued but understated interest in this anniversary of the Civil War.<sup>58</sup> Two bills to establish a federal commission were voted down by Congress in 2009 and 2010.<sup>59</sup> Therefore, even though the historians noted evidence of interest in the sesquicentennial, they speculate the level of success that this “low key” anniversary can achieve.<sup>60</sup> Without a federal commission, this anniversary has been focused more at a local level, which has the potential to produce a “scattered, uneven,” anniversary.<sup>61</sup>

Cook declares that “inclusiveness appears to be the chief watchword of the sesquicentennial.”<sup>62</sup> Many commemorative performances seem to be focusing on recognizing the stories and struggles of all groups who participated in the war, especially women and African Americans.<sup>63</sup> For example, the Virginia state commission organized conferences and symposia on these topics, and the National Park Service is also reaching out to black visitors by emphasizing the “relevance of slavery and race to NPS sites like Antietam and Petersburg.”<sup>64</sup> However promising this inclusivity seems though, sectional and racial tensions do remain; in fact, Weber claims that the sesquicentennial anniversary provides “the ill-informed the

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<sup>57</sup> Robert Cook et al., “Historian’s Forum,” 381.

<sup>58</sup> John Hanc. “How We’ve Commemorated the Civil War.” *Smithsonian.com*. April 11, 2011.

<sup>59</sup> Robert Cook et al., “Historian’s Forum,” 381.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 383.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 383-384.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 384.

opportunity to spread misinformation...[and] it [also] has the potential to inflame racial tensions.”<sup>65</sup>

One way that the sesquicentennial differs from the centennial is that many participants in this current anniversary are interested in and willing to probe past commemoration of military heroism and reconciliation. However, not every participant is committed to the commemorative theme of inclusivity, as exhibited by the Secession Ball held in South Carolina in 2010.<sup>66</sup> While this was not a state-sponsored event, a group of South Carolinians hosted this ball to celebrate South Carolina’s role in being the first state to secede before the Civil War. This commemorative event received much negative media attention and began the sesquicentennial on a sour note. However, Noe explains that the amount of ridicule and protests that this event received makes it clear that “national context for Confederate celebration at least clearly has evolved dramatically in half a century.”<sup>67</sup> This event and the subsequent backlash exemplifies how commemorative focus and ideas of acceptability change due to a group’s present circumstances and interpretations of the past.

Although many Americans have evolved past publicly expressing blatantly racist sentiments, events like the Secession Ball indicate that racial prejudices and belief in historical inaccuracies still exist in the United States. The Secession Ball is evidence of the unfortunate persistence of the Lost Cause ideology held by some southerners. Proponents of the Lost Cause ideology celebrate the Confederacy and claim, among other things, that the Civil War was fought over the issue of states’ rights rather than slavery. Weber details the “unshakable hold” that Lost Cause mythology has on many Americans, and she claims that “part of what holds popular imagination on this point is familial pride: some ancestor was a brave soldier who was fighting

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 386.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 385.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 383.

for his home, or for states' rights, not for slavery. But the adamant adherence to causation other than slavery is not solely the product of family lore."<sup>68</sup> In addition to these familial ties, many southern children are taught in school that slavery played a relatively small or nonexistent part in the Civil War even though professional historians agree that this is untrue. Commemorations can range from informal, spontaneous observances to more grand and choreographed private and public displays. Therefore, the actions of remembering ancestral contribution to the Civil War and teaching Civil War history in schools can be commemorations in themselves as well as ways to build collective memory around a past event. This speaks to the idea that collective memories and ideas are socially constructed; different groups develop identities based on their respective socially constructed memories of an event and then maintain these ideas through commemoration.

However, due to the various forms that commemoration can take, Americans in the north and south may be exposed to different ideas about Civil War legacy and history—both on a daily basis and during more formal commemorative settings such as anniversary observances. When a person defines his identity based on membership in a group, then it may prove difficult to change his mind about something that he cares deeply about or assumes to be true. For example, some residents of southern states may ignore some of the unfortunate, harsh realities of the Civil War in favor of their own interpretation of the war—perhaps facilitated by exposure to Lost Cause ideology through their family lore or education. It is important to emphasize, however, that this idea does not extend to all residents of southern states.

African Americans play a different role in the sesquicentennial than they did in the centennial observance. Cook explains: “the chief difference between 1961 and 2011 is that the intervention of the Civil Rights movement (now generating a powerful memory of its own) has

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 384-385.

left African Americans in a much stronger position to contest attempts by neo-Confederates to peddle their politically-charged narrative of the Civil War.”<sup>69</sup> Weber also emphasizes the idea that African Americans are participating greatly in this anniversary, indicating the strides made toward racial equality since the centennial. Weber uses Barack Obama—the first African American President of the United States—as an example of the advancements that have been made thus far.<sup>70</sup> However, she states that there is undeniably still work to be done to secure equal rights for all.

The historians agree that it is “too soon to pronounce the sesquicentennial dead on arrival,” just because it lacks the enthusiasm and fervor of the centennial anniversary.<sup>71</sup> Groups such as the National Park Service, local groups, and universities, museums, and libraries are planning commemorative events for the sesquicentennial observance. The role of technology has also become very prominent during this anniversary. Online newspaper articles, blog posts, and Facebook groups provide Americans with widespread information about the war—even if this information lacks accuracy or well-rounded points of view. Noe explains, “at their worst, these discussions admittedly generate more heat than light...yet at their best [they] offer challenging posts and thoughtful conversations about the war and its legacies for a generation attuned to forming opinions at their keyboards.”<sup>72</sup> The prevalence of technology in modern society already has begun to change the way that people commemorate. Rather than attend a battle reenactment or visit a museum, many Americans have access to Civil War information and conversations from the comfort of their own homes. This is yet another way that commemoration has adapted to the needs of the present.

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 390.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 391.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 386.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.



The historians in the forum recognize the need to modify their role due to the changing nature of commemoration. They realize that their duty in this anniversary is to facilitate interest and productive conversations about the Civil War and to combat inaccuracies and biases seen in many Internet pieces.<sup>73</sup> During this current anniversary where Americans are so far removed from the Civil War itself, John Gillis writes that, “the old holidays and monuments have lost much of their power to commemorate, to forge and sustain a single vision of the past, but they remain useful as times and places where groups with very different memories of the same events can communicate, appreciate, and negotiate their respective differences.”<sup>74</sup> Therefore, the sesquicentennial can be used as a way to further reconciliation and also as a teaching moment to encourage open conversation and to educate Americans about lesser-known narratives of the Civil War.

### Conclusions

The relationship between collective memory, performance, and commemoration provides a platform on which to study the continuation and the changing nature of Civil War commemoration. Groups continue to commemorate the Civil War as a way to assert their group identity and maintain their collective memories of the war. However, as time passes, groups alter their memories to fit their present needs; therefore, commemoration looks noticeably different during the fiftieth, one-hundredth, and one-hundred-fiftieth anniversaries. Groups interpret the past using their present circumstances, so ideas about the Civil War, and thus Civil War commemoration, have changed over time.

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 395.

<sup>74</sup> John R. Gillis ed. *Commemorations, The Politics of National Identity*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996, 20.

Also, in each of the anniversaries, external conditions affected the ways in which people interpreted and commemorated the Civil War. The semicentennial remained relatively uncontroversial partially because of the concurrence of the anniversary and World War One. The one-hundredth anniversary coincided with the Civil Rights movement, which led the national Commission to adopt a neutral stance and focus commemoration on military heroism and continued reconciliation. Finally, the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary is being greatly affected by the prominent role that technology plays in American society. Many Americans have access to technology in some form, which changes the nature of commemoration. Now, Americans can participate in Civil War conversation and commemoration from behind a keyboard. Overall, it can be concluded that the relationship between collective memory, performance, and commemoration can, in fact, be effectively applied to the study of Civil War commemoration to understand why Civil War commemoration has continued and changed since 1865. Groups do use their present context to interpret past events and effectively redefine their memories and thus their commemorative activities over time.

Part II  
Creating a Commemorative Performance

As I read about Diana Taylor's claim that performance studies beneficially combines the archive and the repertoire and began applying the relationship between collective memory, commemoration, and performance to the study of Civil War commemoration, I realized that there was no better way to represent my findings than both writing and performing them—effectively breaking down the dichotomy between recorded sources in the archive and performances in the repertoire as ways of transmitting information and creating meaning. Therefore, I choreographed a commemorative modern dance as a way to contribute to the current sesquicentennial observance of the Civil War.

As president of William and Mary's Orchesis Modern Dance Company for the 2013-2014 academic year, I had the opportunity to choreograph a dance for the entire company for our Spring concert, *An Evening of Dance*. This provided me with a platform on which to create and perform my commemoration. The company of twenty-five undergraduate students performed my piece titled, "Remembrance, Reflection, Reconciliation," in Phi Beta Kappa Memorial Hall on March 20, 21, and 22, 2014. The company was very involved in learning about my research as part of the rehearsal process; I kept them informed about the meaning and emotions behind my choreography so that they would be more invested in the commemorative story that they were portraying for the audience. As I elaborated in Part I, the repertoire is only capable of containing live performances that the archive cannot hold; therefore, my dance contributed to the repertoire only when it was performed live. Now, the dance exists in the archive in video work.

My dance is a chronological exploration of Civil War commemoration beginning with a depiction of the Civil War itself and ending at the present-day sesquicentennial anniversary. I began the process by dividing my piece into five sections: war, post-war recovery and the beginning of commemoration, then the semicentennial, centennial, and sesquicentennial

anniversaries. I then listed the main themes, specific concepts, emotions, and events that I wished to explore choreographically in each section. I drew these ideas from my research that I was simultaneously conducting. I outlined my paper and dance at the same time in an effort to ensure that one part of the project enlightened the other. Once I had this basic skeleton, I began to improvise—and later asked the entire company to improvise—based on photographs and drawings that I brought to rehearsal.

As I mentioned in Part I, these primary sources served as a starting point for both my paper and movement ideas and later provided the dancers with a more concrete vision of the Civil War. I specifically chose photographs that had interesting groupings of people or scenes that I thought could be translated into a dance. For example, I gravitated toward photographs that captured movement—people running, falling, dying, or supporting one another; I could draw emotion and meaning from these photographs that I could then translate into my piece. However, I did use some photographs that pictured still subjects—military formations for example—as reference points for shapes and patterns that I could use in my dance. After collecting a variety of photographs and drawings, I created phrases inspired by these pictures. I choreographed most of the first and second sections as well as parts of other sections of the dance using these primary sources as inspiration. I then continued to develop the ideas inspired by these photographs and wove in ideas about the relationship between collective memory and commemoration as well as types of commemorations during the anniversaries.

### **Choreographic Process**

I choreographed the dance in such a way that the themes of the anniversaries are represented in different sections of the piece, while recurring movement motifs give the piece a

sense of continuity. This choice represents the idea that collective memory changes over time as groups interpret their past with present frameworks. The seed of the memory presumably remains the same while the interpretation and performance of that memory changes over time. Therefore, I began my choreographic process by creating a few key movement phrases, which, in a sense, commemorated different parts of my research. I then developed and expanded on these phrases to fit the context of different sections of the dance. For example, before rehearsals even began, I choreographed a duet inspired by the battlefield experience and a phrase based on the steps it takes to load and fire a Civil War rifle, which both reappear multiple times throughout the dance.

The first section of my piece represents the bravery, chaos, death, and fear on the Civil War battlefield, inspired completely by Civil War photographs and drawings that I found in two Civil War photography books: *In the Wake of Battle: The Civil War Images of Mathew Brady*,<sup>75</sup> and *The Civil War: A Visual History*.<sup>76</sup> For example, the rigid line formations at the beginning of the piece were inspired by a photograph of Civil War military regiments, and at the end of the section, I created an L-shaped formation of dancers on the floor portraying a picture of dead soldiers lined up after the Battle of Antietam.<sup>77</sup> I created movement that exemplified the rigid military formations and actions in the photographs, while at the same time evoking feelings of chaos and fear that soldiers probably felt while at battle. In this first section, I was careful to not cross the line between the portrayal of chaos and ineffective sensory overload because I wanted the audience to be able to distinguish movement that recurs later in the piece. This is not to say that I derived every phrase in the piece from earlier movement, but when I did develop new

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<sup>75</sup> George Sullivan. *In the Wake of Battle: The Civil War Images of Mathew Brady*. Prestal Publishing, 2004.

<sup>76</sup> “The Civil War: A Visual History.” Parragon Publishing, 2011.

<sup>77</sup> George Sullivan. *In the Wake of Battle*, 162.

phrases, I tried to keep them stylistically similar to evoke, again, a sense of continuity throughout the piece.

Two movements that reappear throughout the piece are first established in this section. The “rifle phrase,” which consists of arm movements that depict the steps it takes to load and fire a rifle, is prevalent in every section of the dance. However, the style of the movement changes slightly from one section to the next, demonstrating the changing nature of collective memory over time. In the first section, the movement is done either in place or while walking rigidly in military formations; in the second section, it is performed while gliding across the floor more fluidly; and in the final section it is performed in both of these ways as well as while jumping. Another recurring movement motif that begins in this section and is seen throughout the rest of the piece is a specific arm placement where the right arm is draped over the head with the right hand covering the left ear and the left hand crosses beneath the chin to cover the right ear. In the first section, this arm placement indicates the deafening sound of rifle and canon fire on the battlefield; however, as it recurs throughout the piece, it becomes a symbol of collective memory of the war. Ideally, an engaged audience member could recognize this shift, at least indirectly, because the foundation of the movement remained consistent while small details changed throughout the piece. To me, and hopefully to the audience, this shift symbolizes the role that both maintaining and changing collective memories plays on the nature of the commemorative performance.

The second section of the piece represents the recovery period directly following the war when Americans began the commemoration process. As the dance transitions from the battlefield scene to this period of recovery, one remaining soldier mourns, and the “dead” from the first section awaken to represent the memories of the fallen soldiers. The bulk of this section,

however, focuses on the beginning of the memorialization process after the war. On center stage, dancers portray four monuments that were built to commemorate the war, inspired by photographs of actual monuments. While the dancers in the center blend from one monument pose to the next, other dancers circle around them—performing movement that symbolizes commemoration. This movement was inspired by earlier movement phrases that reappear here to indicate memories of the war, as well as by general ideas of memory and commemoration that I explored in Part I.

The dancers who perform commemorative movement at the feet of the monuments represent everyday Americans who are collectively recovering from losses incurred during the War. Their movement is slow, sad, and reverent, with bursts of emotion and energy throughout. The dancers begin the phrase by forming two separate circles on either side of the “monument” on center stage. The dancers in these circles are on opposite sides of the stage but move in unison to depict the idea that the social nature of collective memory influences commemoration. The separation of the circles also acknowledges the lasting sectional differences produced by the war, while also alluding to the fact that Americans in both the North and the South similarly mourned the losses of loved ones and commemorated the heroic actions of their militaries. This idea and formation was inspired by the Finch poem that opens my piece as well as this paper. The poem speaks to the idea of reconciliation and recognition that, though the two sides were divided ideologically, they commemorated the war in similar ways. At the end of this section, the two circles merge into one larger circle around the monument—symbolizing the beginning of the reconciliation process that is to continue throughout the rest of the piece.

The third section—symbolic of the semicentennial—begins with an artistic exploration of the reconciliation and reunification process, inspired by a picture of the fiftieth anniversary



reunion at Gettysburg.<sup>78</sup> In this section, the dancers tentatively overcome their differences and begin to reunite; however, there is still an underlying sense of tension created by constant eye contact and aggressive partner work. At the start of this section, two dancers perform a duet where they move in unison but never touch. At the end of this duet, the two finally make contact, symbolic of their reconciliation. Then, a group of eight dancers enters to simultaneously perform similar duets. They are in constant physical contact with one another but, again, there is a sense of uneasiness and aggression behind the movement.

The centennial section begins with the formation of the eighteen-member Civil War Centennial Commission created by Congress to oversee a federal Civil War commemoration. In this scene, dancers swirl across stage until suddenly a mass of eighteen people forms to facilitate the reconciliation of two dancers at the front of the stage—indicated by the reflection of the duet’s movement in the clump. After the two dancers reach a point of reconciliation at the hands of the Commission, they exit the stage with the Commission as other dancers representing a battle reenactment enter the stage. This exit represents the desire of the Commission to avoid association with these reenactments, as I described in Part I.

The dancers representing the battle reenactments perform movement from the first section of the dance, but with much more passion. This movement represents the enthusiasm and fervor with which people commemorated and reenacted the war on its one hundredth anniversary. In this same section, I represent the role of Civil War Round Tables as well as the relationship between the simultaneously occurring Civil Rights movement and the centennial. I call the phrase performed by the round table group the “book phrase.” The five dancers in this

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<sup>78</sup> Erin McCann, “Civil War Veterans at Gettysburg Anniversary in 1913—in Pictures.” *The Guardian*, last modified July 1, 2013. <http://www.theguardian.com/world/gallery/2013/jul/01/civil-war-gettysburg-anniversary-pictures#/?picture=411883186&index=2>.

section perform movements that emulate reading a book to portray the role of round tables in increasing knowledge and enthusiasm for the centennial.

To represent the separation and tension between the centennial and the Civil Rights movement, five dancers enter stage representing the power and passion of the Civil Rights movement. During their phrase, they create a monument pose inspired by the Virginia Civil Rights Memorial, located in Richmond, Virginia, and are then are forcibly removed from stage by a group of dancers representing the Commission's desire to maintain neutrality.<sup>79</sup> However, one dancer from the Civil Rights group breaks through the chaos, dances freely, and provides the transition into the sesquicentennial section of the piece.

The final section of the piece, representing the current one hundred and fiftieth anniversary, highlights the narratives of African Americans and women by literally pushing the narrative of military heroism to the background. To demonstrate this idea, two lines of dancers continuously file across the back of the stage doing the "rifle phrase" seen throughout the piece to represent military action and heroism. The lighting is very dim in this back part of the stage so that these two lines are practically dancing in silhouette. Dancers from these two lines file downstage into the light and begin to portray the narratives of groups, which had been previously ignored during Civil War commemoration. The Civil Rights group returns to dance a modified and even more empowered version of the phrase from their first appearance, and it also emulates the African American Civil War Memorial found in Washington, D.C.<sup>80</sup> Then a group recognizing the narrative of women during the Civil War begins to dance. Four dancers

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<sup>79</sup> Tonya Rice, "The Virginia Civil Rights Memorial." Examiner, last modified December 2, 2011. <http://www.examiner.com/article/the-virginia-civil-rights-memorial-richmond-va>

<sup>80</sup> National Park Service. "African American Civil War Memorial Photo Gallery," last accessed February 21, 2014. <http://www.nps.gov/afam/photosmultimedia/photogallery.htm>.

eventually move downstage to represent the women who disguised themselves as men and fought in the war, women who acted as nurses, women who sewed and did laundry for the troops, and women who acted as spies.

Finally, the dancers in the back of the stage stop doing the rifle phrase and join the dancers in the front of the stage to perform a phrase that, to me, represents the role of technology in the sesquicentennial. Instead of choreographing movement that emulated literal use of technology, I decided to create more abstract movement that was high-energy and quick—representing the speed and ease with which people can now communicate and commemorate the Civil War. This is one of the most abstract parts of the piece, and if I had more time I would further develop the phrase so that it more readily represents the role of technology during the current anniversary.

I end the piece by bringing all twenty-five dancers back on stage with movement drawn from all of the earlier sections. This represents the continued role of collective memory in commemoration, but at the same time, the modifications to these movements represent the fact that, over time, collective memory and thus commemoration becomes distorted. Eventually, all of the dancers come together to form one final pose. They create four circles—one within another on center stage, one downstage left, and one downstage right—representing the two separate circles on either side of the monuments in the second section and the eventual joining of these circles in an effort of reconciliation. The dancers link arms and arch toward the ceiling through their upper spines as the lights fade and the curtain drops.

This final position of vulnerability indicates the strides made toward increased sectional and racial acceptance and cooperation; however, the piece ends rather ambiguously. With this uncertainty I aim to portray the idea that, although progress has been made toward reconciliation,

reunification, and inclusion of new narratives, there is still much work to be done to ease the remaining tensions. However, in retrospect, I do not think that my ending does enough to reflect the ongoing nature of Civil War commemoration and reconciliation. Therefore if I were to reconstruct this piece, I would change the ending. Rather than having the lights quickly fade on a final, still image, I think that it would be more effective to have the curtain close on a fully lit stage while the dancers are still moving. This would better represent the concept of continued work toward reconciliation even in light of the progress that has been made.

### **Supportive Elements**

#### *Music*

I strategically selected music that would enhance, rather than draw attention from, my choreographic intentions. The first piece of music, titled “Drum Calls” by the Eastman Wind Ensemble, is a reproduction of Civil War drum calls, which I found to be appropriate for the section of the piece that represented the Civil War itself. It helps to evoke a sense of urgency, tension, and chaos, and the percussive nature of this piece of music would lend itself nicely to the sharp militaristic movements while contrasting with some of the smoother and more sustained movement. The next sections of music are more fluid and somber. The second piece of music called “This Place is a Shelter,” by Ólafur Arnalds is a rather simple piece consisting of piano and strings. The final piece of music titled “Experience” by Ludovico Einaudi represents the commemorative progression of the three anniversaries that I studied; the music crescendos, peaks, and then falls back to a more simple, somber sound as well. At the end of this final piece of music, I added a brief portion of “Drum Calls” to bookend the piece and to represent that idea that the process of recovery and reconciliation is ongoing.

### *Costumes*

I wanted to create costumes that would subtly depict the blue and gray uniforms of Union and Confederate soldiers, respectively. I wanted all of my dancers—male and female—to wear the same costume to represent a sense of uniformity and unity. With the money that I received from a Charles Center Undergraduate Research Grant along with Dance department funding, I purchased black jazz pants and a flowing, white, sleeveless shirt for each dancer. I then dyed the shirts in an ombré, or gradient, style from light blue to dark gray. This blending of blue and gray symbolizes the post-war reconciliation and reunification Americans began to achieve through the ongoing process of remembrance and commemoration. I sewed gold buttons down the front of each shirt in an effort to make them look, subtly, more uniform-like.

### *Lighting*

I worked with a student lighting designer named Sunny Vinsavich, to create a lighting design that would enhance the emotions and messages that I was depicting through my choreography. Sunny attended a few of my rehearsals and then referred to videos and communicated with me about her ideas for the lighting plot. I had a few specific lighting ideas for certain sections of the piece, which Sunny incorporated into her lighting design. She beautifully emphasized sections of increased and softening tension with corresponding lighting colors. For example, the war section was powerfully lit with bright colors; however, when the music changed and the second section began, the lighting became softer, indicating a change in mood and the beginning of the commemoration process. One other important part of the lighting process was the projection of part of the poem, “The Blue and the Gray,” by Francis Miles Finch at the beginning of the dance. The same poem opens this paper. I wanted to provide the audience with another clue about the piece and its story of Civil War commemoration and reconciliation,

so the dance opens with all twenty-five dancers standing motionless in photograph-inspired formations as the music starts and the projection appears.

Part III

Collapsing the Dichotomy between the Archive and the Repertoire

## Reflection and Conclusions

I used the relationship between commemoration, collective memory, and performance—described by Paul Connerton—to answer my original question: why do groups continue to commemorate the Civil War? By viewing commemorative activity as a mirror to a group's present circumstances, I found that commemoration is more than just a direct recreation of the past; rather, it represents the present status of a group—for example, what is important to them and what they want to remember and why. A cohesive set of collective memories and beliefs creates a more united and strong group; therefore, groups continue to commemorate as a way to adapt their collective memories to their present needs, thus reinforcing their group identity built on these memories.

Progress toward total reconciliation and inclusion can be achieved through communication. With continued commemoration groups simultaneously remember and interpret their past while performing and communicating their ideas and identity. Groups with competing ideas about the war commemorate their versions of the past in order to assert their accuracy. This is evident in the way that many southerners adopted an enthusiastic approach to commemoration during the centennial. Due to the nature of commemoration and collective memory discussed in Part I, this process of commemoration will likely continue until groups stop actively remembering the Civil War. This may not happen until the sectional and racial tensions, legacies of the Civil War, are completely alleviated.

My project is significant because it offers a unique way of thinking about Civil War commemoration and because it contributes both to the archive and the repertoire through this research paper and my dance. It was important to me that I did not simply create a dance that directly depicted my research. Rather, my dance and paper work together to present this research



in a twofold way that effectively collapses the dichotomy between the archive and the repertoire. As I simultaneously choreographed my piece and wrote this paper, I consistently found that one process informed the other. It was at once beneficial and frustrating to create both of these presentations of my research at the same time. Working on the two pieces together helped me to identify potential holes in my research. It also forced me to think deeply about each part of my research as I often choreographed the section that coincided with the part of the paper that I was writing at the time. However, it was limiting at times to rely on the current status of my research or paper for choreographic direction and inspiration.

As I described in Part I, Diana Taylor, claims that although researchers tend to view sources in the archive and the repertoire as separate entities, they do and should work together—as evidenced by Taylor’s wedding example. My dual contribution of a research paper and a dance collapses the separation between the archive and the repertoire and upholds Taylor’s idea of the significance of the use of performance in research. Diana Taylor claims that performance studies allows us to “take seriously the repertoire of embodied practices as an important system of knowing and transmitting knowledge.”<sup>81</sup> She also writes that, by accepting performance as a legitimate source of information, one expands the definition of knowledge and can, “[rethink] the canon and critical methodologies.”<sup>82</sup>

By applying the concept of the archive and the repertoire to research in a field outside of performance studies, I expand the scope of Taylor’s ideas and reinforce their validity. My dance, as part of the repertoire, generated and transmitted knowledge, and therefore expands the generally accepted idea of how information should be communicated. The written portion of this project—now part of the archive of recorded information—works in tandem with the dance to

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<sup>81</sup> Diana Taylor. *The Archive and the Repertoire*, 26.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

exhibit how the archive and the repertoire can be used simultaneously to transmit knowledge.

The importance of written sources to research should not be minimized; however, as my project shows, the combination of recorded and performed knowledge provides for well-rounded research and the extension of what we consider to be knowledge. Therefore, interdisciplinary research such as this project creates new ways to gather and transmit knowledge as well as to contribute new knowledge and meaning to both the archive and the repertoire.

### **Potential Future Application**

The model that I used for my project—the application of the relationship between collective memory, performance, and commemoration along with the idea of combining the archive and the repertoire—can and should be reproduced in different circumstances to ensure its continued capability for use. The method of contribution and use of both the archive and the repertoire could be applied to any type of research project. This would help to greatly expand the definition and scope of what is considered knowledge and would also provide greater relevance and acceptance to performed sources in the repertoire. In the future, the application of the relationship between collective memory, performance, and commemoration should be tested in a different commemorative situation to ensure that the relationship still determines the continuation but changing nature of commemoration over time. Myself or any other researcher could identify another moment in history around which groups would have likely formed memories. For example, the relationship could be used to examine commemorations of another war as well as other distressing events such as the Holocaust or the September 11 terrorist attacks.

If I had more time to conduct this project, I would have liked to gather information from sources in the repertoire as part of my initial research. I would have found a way to attend several Civil War commemorations in order to experience the performance of commemoration first-hand while it still was encapsulated by the repertoire. If I were to do this project again and focus on these performed sources from the outset, my project would not only break the boundary between the archive and the repertoire by contributing research to both, but it would also bridge the gap by using sources from both. I recognize that my claims of overcoming the separation between the archive and the repertoire would be stronger had I been able to draw sources from both of these categories as well. Also, both my written and artistic explorations of the relationship between collective memory, performance, and commemoration would have been stronger if I was able to draw from evidence in the repertoire to support my claims, further advocating for the importance of performance to commemoration. Therefore, in the future, myself or anyone else to attempt a project along these lines should attempt to make use of sources in the repertoire as well as the archive.

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