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Memorializing an Ideal: Representations of Inclusivity in Canada's National Public Monuments

Eric Weeks

Abstract

In every corner of every town and city, memorials can be found existing in a variety of forms and serving a variety of functions. From small plaques or roadside markers to grand monuments commemorating a national or global event, they attempt to remind the public of individuals or a shared history. However, memorials also perform another role, and that is to not only record and display those subjects which a society deems worthy of commemoration, but also how those histories are shaped, framed and positioned to fit contemporary needs. This paper examines the use of memorials and monuments within Ottawa to create and demonstrate an inclusive, diverse and welcoming Canada. These values are found throughout Canadian society but looking at Ottawa's built environment – the additions to the landscape created from steel and granite – reveals a deeper understanding of what these ideals mean to Canadians, how the nation sees itself and how it portrays itself to the world.

Keywords: monuments, memorials, Ottawa, memoryscape, built environment, representation

Introduction

Monuments and memorials surround us. With designs from the grand and official to the informal and more personal, we encounter them in every town and city. And these memorials commemorate

a wide range of topics, including individuals, groups and organizations; local, national and international events; and ideals, cultures and causes. However, memorials are not created in a vacuum. They reflect and represent not just a society's history, but more specifically how that history is viewed through the nostalgic lens of time and bias. The noble and virtuous are typically more likely to be memorialized than the terrible or horrific. Memorials have the power to influence and promote ideas of altruism, patriotism and nationalism, and by learning about the memorials a nation constructs to bolster these principles, we simultaneously learn about how that nation views itself and how later memorials might be designed to advance this vision.

The described role of memorials is readily apparent throughout the Canadian landscape. Repeatedly in public remarks since becoming prime minister, Justin Trudeau has underlined Canada's identity as an inclusive and diverse society, a claim that rings even more true in light of the recent shifts in the political discourse of the country's southern neighbour. One way these 'touchstone' ideals have been displayed is through Canada's built environment, especially its memorials and monuments to symbolic causes, influential individuals and groups, and war. This paper examines the ways that Canada's commitment to inclusivity is reflected in brick and mortar, cement and bronze, in the city of Ottawa, which like many national capitals, symbolizes the identity of the nation – its national 'brand'.

A capital city straddles two different spheres: the functional, purposeful city that houses the seat of a national government and the highest levels of executive, legislative and judicial powers; and the ceremonial, symbolic landscape representing the nation as a whole, the iconic buildings and structures that attest to a country's history, power and beliefs. When monuments are located in a national capital, their meaning and message is amplified. Ottawa's National Capital Commission (NCC), the federal agency tasked with overseeing the planning and use of federal properties within the capital region, concurs, stating, 'The role of a national capital is to reflect the character, identity, symbols and values of its people. Commemorations play a key role in achieving these goals, as they express enduring values, connections to the past and aspirations for the future.'[1]

In his Introduction to *Commemorations*, a collection of essays on memory and identity, John Gillis describes national memory as something 'shared by people who have never seen or heard of one

another, yet who regard themselves as having a common history', almost akin to Benedict Anderson's 'imagined community'.[2] And in *Covering the Body*, Barbie Zelizer writes about collective memory and how it 'reflects a group's codified knowledge over time about what is important, preferred, and appropriate', how it 'helps people use the past to give meaning to the present and to exercise the full spread of power across time and space', and how it 'reflects a reshaping of the practices through which people construct themselves as cultural authorities'.[3] Whether called public memory, national memory or collective memory, the implied objective is the same – describing the means and methods by which a population, as a whole, chooses to define and remember its past, applying that selected history to not only present-day and future events, but also retroactively filtering the past through this new understanding.

Memorials and monuments play an important function in creating this national memory. Adding to the built environment is no small undertaking. What is built, where it is built, what it looks like and what is not built are all issues that are carefully considered and debated, costing time and money. When a memorial is added to the landscape, its subject and form thereby serve as symbols of collective memory and identity: 'Not unlike punctuation in a paragraph, memorials and other artifacts have long been used as commas, semi-colons and full stops to reinforce the syntax of cities, to clarify the many overlapping spatial systems, and to make them "readable" to those who live in and visit the city.'[4] In *War Memorials as Political Landscape*, James Mayo suggests that:

> the war memorial – a statue, a place, a building, or a combination of these things – is, at its simplest, a social and physical arrangement of space and artifacts that keep alive the memories of those who were involved in a war. As an artifact a memorial helps create an ongoing order and meaning beyond the fleeting and chaotic experiences of life.[5]

We can apply Mayo's description of a war memorial to memorials to any other subject, in that memorials generally frame a specific moment in history and help define the present.

When discussing memorials, it is critical to note that they are not necessarily historically accurate, nor can they provide a full account of historical events or notable individuals. Memorials do not sprout organically from the earth, but instead are proposed, designed and

championed by people who want to put forward a certain rendering of the past. Thus, memorials and monuments are often more indicative of how history is remembered by a community or society during the time in which the memorial is created and later exists, rather than how the subject was understood at the time it happened. Although the passage of time affords a more removed perspective, detached from the emotions and immediacy of the present, it also means that the more displeasing aspects related to commemorative topics can be glossed over – or ignored altogether. This concept is similarly asserted in a 1988 report on Ottawa's memorial landscape, prepared for the NCC, stating:

> In most cases, the process of choosing and installing a memorial for the National Capital is more political and ad hoc than it is the result of any deliberate program of commemoration. Although this may at first seem short-sighted and impulsive for such an important act, it does perhaps best reflect the spirit of commemoration as an expression of political will and evolving public values.[6]

And as will be discussed, memorials are increasingly becoming sites of friction and contention concerning those 'evolving public values'.

Furthermore, memorials can serve as displays of power, in that those who have typically been able to erect a memorial do so from a position of influence and authority, allowing them to harness the political and social capital necessary to make an addition to the memorial landscape. This same quality can also transform memorials into sites for protest, as those with opposing views are provided with a visible target to challenge, a space from where they can question the governments, groups or social order that had been motivated to create the memorial in the first place.

Commemoration Plans and Strategies

Since the end of the twentieth century, the official Canadian commemoration policy has strongly advocated for Ottawa's memorials to more fully represent all Canadians, across all levels and categories. The promotion of Canada's diversity is similarly reflected in plans for Canada's public history, including its historic sites. Parks Canada's *National Historic Sites of Canada: System Plan*, published in 2000, outlined three strategic

priorities for any 'future commemorative activities': the commemoration of Aboriginal history; the commemoration of ethnocultural communities' history (those other than the French and British); and the commemoration of women's history.[7] Six years later, the NCC released two documents that continued to stress the importance of a broader, more inclusive representation of all Canadians within Ottawa's built environment. *Canada's Capital Commemoration Strategic Plan* identified four 'priority thematic areas' that were still deemed under-represented in Ottawa, adding 'the environment' to the same list created earlier by Parks Canada.[8] The NCC's *Comprehensive Commemoration Program and Policy for Canada's Capital* described the evaluation process for new commemorations, which 'determine[s] whether or not the proposed subject is eligible for a national commemoration on federal lands in Canada's Capital Region'.[9] In addition to meeting set criteria for basic eligibility, any new commemoration is to be considered with regards to a number of factors, so as 'to determine the degree to which the subject is of national symbolic importance and how the subject contributes to making the Capital more representative of Canada and Canadians'.[10] These factors include geographic reach, education and inspirational potential, whether or not the subject addresses one of the under-represented thematic areas, and 'inclusiveness: the degree to which the subject helps to broaden the full breadth of the story of Canada so that commemorations reflect all Canadians from all regions, and from all backgrounds'.[11]

Fittingly, in line with Canada's sesquicentennial, the NCC has published a new plan, one that looks forward to the next 50 years, leading up to Canada's bicentennial celebrations: *The Plan for Canada's Capital, 2017–2067*. Of the three themes and goals that will direct the vision for Ottawa's development and future projects, the first is 'An Inclusive and Meaningful Capital'. According to the NCC,

> The Capital's national cultural, historical and scientific institutions highlight the rich tapestry of Canadian society, and they help attract millions of visitors to the Capital each year. These institutions, cultures and diverse aspirations will evolve through the decades, contributing to the improvement and transformation of the Capital as an inclusive place whose symbols embrace all Canadians.[12]

The plan repeatedly stresses the importance of increasing Indigenous representation across the landscape, stating that 'the Capital in 2067 will be known as a welcoming place for the Indigenous peoples of

Canada and, most particularly, for the Algonquin Anishinabeg who host Canada's seat of national government on their traditional territory.'[13] Along with working to advance a built environment more encompassing of different peoples, even the very wording of the NCC's plan is inclusive, noting that Ottawa exists in a region that has a history that far pre-dates the arrival of Europeans.

While acknowledging the role and significance of Native peoples in the history of Ottawa, *The Plan for Canada's Capital, 2017–2067* also embraces Canada's multiculturalism and the impact immigrants have had on the capital city:

> In 2067, the Capital will reflect the social and cultural diversity of Canada, including its regional identities. Through its built form, it will express the rich identity carved over the centuries by successive waves of immigrants who chose Canada as a place to live. It will embody Canada as a welcoming land, and will foster exchanges and the blending of newcomers and long-established settlers who have created a unique flair in the Capital. Canadians from diverse backgrounds will recognize themselves in the symbols and the democratic, cultural and scientific institutions that define Canada as a land of democracy.[14]

By modifying and adding to the landscape with these aims in mind, the NCC will be able to further create a capital that is inclusive of the various peoples who make up not just the city and region, but also the larger nation as well, reflecting their diversity, shared values and cultures.

Although policies and plans continually recognize that certain groups and subjects are under-represented in Ottawa's commemorative landscape, there are a number of memorials that do in fact demonstrate the idea of an inclusive and diverse Canada, although some more successfully than others. Four specific memorials will thus be examined: the National War Memorial in Confederation Square; the War of 1812 and the *Women Are Persons!* monuments on Parliament Hill; and the Samuel de Champlain statue, located at Nepean Point.

The Memorials

The National War Memorial, considered by the NCC to be the 'pre-eminent commemoration' in Ottawa, 'will remain the tallest commemoration in the Capital, and the NCC will ensure that all future

commemorations will remain lower in scale'.[15] Dedicated during a 1939 royal visit by King George VI and Queen Elizabeth, the memorial was intended to honour the thousands of Canadians who served in the First World War. The memorial, which rises 21 metres from its base, is comprised of 22 uniformed bronze figures – as well as two horses and a field gun – representing all branches of the military, moving through a granite archway, atop of which are two additional bronze figures, symbolizing Peace and Freedom. Although the figures – including two mounted on bronze horses – are shown holding weaponry and pulling a field artillery piece, their postures and facial expressions do not convey aggression, but instead evoke a mixture of hope and weariness.[16] These men and women are not going off to war, but instead are returning from battle and looking ahead to the peace they fought and sacrificed for; the memorial therefore also serves as a reminder to their fellow citizens of what that peace cost, in both money and lives. A 1932 article from *The Times* in London describes the memorial as having 'a great degree of realism in the faces and attitudes of the figures, and complete accuracy in the representation of every detail of military equipment'.[17]

At roughly eight feet tall, the figures are impressive in both their size and authenticity. Pages of correspondence between the Office of the High Commission for Canada in the United Kingdom, the Canadian Department of National Defence, the Prime Minister's Office, Members of Parliament and the sculptor, Vernon March, demonstrate not only the exacting consideration and attention to detail regarding which military services would be represented on the memorial pedestal, but also, more notably, how the figures would be dressed and accessorized.[18] Every facet of the memorial was discussed, from the style of helmets and headwear to uniforms and tartan kilts, to the accuracy of the weaponry, tools and other equipment on display, even so far as to how the figures should be posed and arranged.

Most importantly, the planners and designers of the memorial believed it was vital that as many branches and services of the Canadian military as possible should be represented in the National War Memorial, including infantrymen, sailors, airmen, sappers, foresters, signalmen, railway troops, air mechanics and stretcher bearers. Accordingly, this meant that individuals of different genders and ethnic origins would be depicted, from the kilted member of the Scottish Highland Battalions to the infantryman who 'might well represent one of the 3,500 native Canadians who served in the war overseas'.[19] Two women are positioned at the rear of the procession, one representing the Nursing Services, the other shown in a Voluntary Aid Detachment uniform,

signifying all other women's corps. It is worth acknowledging, however, that the possible Native person appears to be the only visible representation of a person of colour included in the memorial. Missing from the memorial is any figure denoting the Black Canadians who served in the First World War, albeit in segregated units, thus further illustrating the degree to which memorials are unable to tell a complete story, and the limitations of historical accuracy.

With both male and female figures featured moving through the archway – including the kilted soldier representing the 28 Scottish-Canadian regiments who fought in the war, the possibility that another of the figures might represent an Indigenous individual and a wide variety of services and corps depicted – an attempt was made, to some degree, to write a version of an inclusive Canada into the National War Memorial. It is an open, early effort at displaying diversity for a nation that now proudly publicizes and nurtures its multiculturalism.

The pedestal upon which the figures stand bears the years of the First World War on the front and back. The years encompassing the Second World War and the Korean War were added to the sides in a 1982 rededication ceremony, in order to include and acknowledge the veterans of those wars. On Remembrance Day, 2014, the memorial was rededicated yet again, with the addition of the dates for both the South African War and the mission in Afghanistan, along with the phrase 'In Service to Canada/Au service du Canada'. With each successive rededication, the memorial became increasingly inclusive of all Canadians who served their country in times of major conflict, further symbolizing the sacrifices made by Canadian citizens. The phrase added in 2014 likewise is an acknowledgement of all Canadian veterans, including those who fought and died in smaller, less costly conflicts. As memorial scholar Jim Zucchero comments, 'The memorial, installed in a prominent public space in 1939, has now become an element of the landscape that is absorbed and reflected, almost in an organic way, by the society in which it exists.'[20] The National War Memorial, initially meant to honour those men and women who volunteered to fight and serve in the Great War, has become a commemoration to military service and sacrifice made by generations of Canadians, with a timeline ranging from the end of the nineteenth century to the present day.

Another war memorial highlighting Canada's inclusivity is the War of 1812 monument, unveiled in November 2014, just prior to Remembrance Day. The NCC's request for design proposals asked submitting artists to create a unique design that would be 'a tribute to the courage and bravery of those who successfully defended their

land – the English and French speaking militias of British North America (now Canada), First Nations, and Métis allies who together assisted the British Army and Royal Navy'.[21] The monument is also meant to serve as a symbol of the 'heroic efforts, courage and solidarity of the men and women who successfully defended their land in the fight for Canada', while helping present-day and future Canadians 'take pride in our traditions and shared history'.[22]

The winning design, entitled 'Triumph Through Diversity', features seven bronze figures on top of a granite base in three parts: two smooth, shaped ends evocative of the boats used by the Royal Navy; and a roughly hewn central piece, signifying Canada's landscape. The bronze figures, slightly larger than life-size, portray:

> a Métis fighter firing a cannon; a woman bandaging the arm of a Voltigeur; a Royal Navy sailor pulling a rope; a First Nations warrior pointing to the distance; a Canadian militiaman raising his arm in triumph; and a member of a British Army unit, specifically the Royal Newfoundland Regiment, firing a musket.[23]

As its name suggests, the monument celebrates the diversity of those who came together and defended the nation, from aggressive American invaders, decades before Confederation, showcasing an example of 'racial, linguistic and gender inclusiveness'.[24] Therefore, the monument has the ability to appeal to a broad cross-section of Canadians, particularly those represented by the figures, and include their histories in the story being told on the national stage.

A commemoration that focuses solely on Canada's gender inclusivity is the memorial entitled *Women Are Persons!* As described by Canadian Heritage, the monument honours 'the joint efforts of five women who won a legal challenge to have women considered "persons" under the *British North America Act*, thereby making them eligible for appointment to the Senate'.[25] The five women – Emily Murphy, Henrietta Muir Edwards, Louise McKinney, Nellie McClung and Irene Parlby – not only set an important legal precedent, but also helped further progress women's rights in Canada. The large memorial space, which features the 'Famous Five' toasting the occasion with tea, is level with the ground, allowing visitors to interact with the monument. The statues of the women are positioned in a loose circle, with Edwards and McKinney seated on either side of a small table. Across from them stand the statues of Parlby and McClung, with the latter holding up a newspaper, dated 18 October 1929 in both English and French, proclaiming 'Women Are

Persons' and 'Les Femmes Sont des Personnes'. Completing the circle is the statue of Murphy, standing next to an empty seat, inviting visitors to join in the celebratory gathering. The monument was unveiled in 2000, one year after an identical monument was dedicated at the Olympic Plaza in Calgary, Alberta, the home province for each of the women. *Women Are Persons!* is symbolic of an inclusive Canada inasmuch as it prominently celebrates five women who took a stand for equality and changed the course of Canadian history for the better. However, as will be discussed later, the monument is also a clear example of the ways in which Canada's memorial landscape can be improved upon and made more inclusive.

The fourth memorial under consideration is the statue of Samuel de Champlain, the 'Father of New France' who, in addition to founding Québec City in 1608, explored the Ottawa River in 1613. The statue, placed high above the ground on a pedestal approximately 16 feet tall, features Champlain with his left arm on his hip, his left leg taking a slight step ahead of his right; in his extended right arm he holds up an astrolabe (incorrectly placed upside down by the sculptor). An official description of the statue states that it 'commemorates the 300th anniversary of Champlain's second voyage on the Ottawa River. It was erected at the same spot where Champlain made his solar observation during his expedition in 1615'.[26]

An examination of the statue in its present state does not readily reveal any sign of Canadian inclusivity or diversity. A seemingly average statue of a white man, in a rather typical composition, is not unusual or rare. However, the statue of Champlain displays Canada's inclusivity through the way in which it was modified in the 1990s. In 1924, a bronze sculpture of a First Nations individual – a male dressed only in a loincloth, holding a bow in his left hand and a quiver of arrows slung over his back – was installed at the base of Champlain's pedestal.[27] The addition, described as an Anishinabe scout, was originally meant to be kneeling in a canoe, and was symbolic of the partnership between Champlain and Aboriginal peoples in exploring and navigating the waterways. The citizen's committee funding the monument had not raised enough money to include the scout when the statue was first dedicated, and years later, still had not raised enough to include the canoe. As a result, the Native figure appeared to be kneeling far below the elevated Champlain, any context or allusion to a partnership between the two men absent from the finished product.

In June 1996, as part of a protest against racially offensive depictions of Native peoples, Ovide Mercredi, national chief of the Assembly of First Nations, covered the scout with a blanket. Mercredi

said that the pose and position of the sculpture was demeaning, humiliating and inappropriate, as the Anishinabe scout appeared subservient to Champlain. What is more, at that time, Ottawa had 'no monument directly recognizing the contribution of Indians, Metis and Inuit peoples to Canada', exacerbating the offence felt by Aboriginal groups.[28] Months later, after a meeting between NCC officials and Mercredi, the NCC agreed to move the Anishinabe scout to a new location in the capital. Discussing the decision, NCC spokesperson Lucie Caron said, 'We're living in the 1990s now and the sculpture dates back to 1915. The interpretation of that time versus the interpretation of these days is different.'[29] Nevertheless, after the NCC's announcement, close to 500 people telephoned the *Ottawa Citizen* to voice their opinion on the matter, with about 75 per cent of callers stating that the statue should be left alone. Kelly Egan, writing for the *Ottawa Citizen*, summarized the dominant response: 'Removal would be an act of historical revisionism and political correctness. Recurrent in their comments was the idea that the statue should not be altered just because it no longer suits the sensibilities of 1996.'[30]

These conflicting beliefs reveal a larger issue often involving memorials to a bygone era, individuals or principles, when commemorating those subjects is no longer palatable to the general public. In order to display a more inclusive public history, one that does not celebrate the discrimination or subjugation of a segment of the population, existing aspects of the built environment must often be changed. This scenario has been unfolding in the American South, where statues and memorials commemorating Confederate-era events and individuals have been challenged. In April 2017, the New Orleans city government began the process of removing four different memorials erected during the Jim Crow era, arguing that continued veneration of monuments representing such a divisive and hate-fuelled time was no longer appropriate. Similarly, two months later, Justin Trudeau announced that the Langevin Block building, a federal office building directly across Wellington Street from Parliament Hill, would be officially renamed the Office of the Prime Minister and Privy Council. The building had been named for Hector-Louis Langevin, a member of John A. Macdonald's cabinet and a key proponent of the residential school system. When explaining the change, Trudeau commented:

> There is a deep pain in knowing that that building carries a name so closely associated with the horror of residential schools. Keeping that name on the Prime Minister's office is inconsistent with the

> values of our government, and it's inconsistent with our vision of a strong partnership with indigenous peoples in Canada.[31]

To alter the memorial landscape in these ways – whether in Ottawa or in New Orleans – is neither political correctness run amok nor is it rewriting history. Instead, it is acknowledging that memorials play an important role in defining a national, regional and local identity, as well as then displaying that identity in the public sphere. They convey a society's values and can underscore a preferred historical narrative, one that is not static and can be interpreted differently as time passes. When that message is either hurtful or a gross misrepresentation of a group of people, it must be changed or removed entirely. Moreover, taking down a statue or memorial does not erase that event or individual from the history books. Rather, it demonstrates that the present and future do not need to be held captive by past values that are later viewed as outdated, backwards or purposely harmful.

In Ottawa, this is exactly what occurred with regard to the statues of Samuel de Champlain and the Anishinabe scout. Ovide Mercredi and the Assembly of First Nations' critique of the statue was not some sort of annoying whining, but a genuine desire to be included in the national capital's commemorative landscape. Although it took another three years after the initial decision was made, in 1999 the NCC removed the Native sculpture from the base of Champlain's pedestal and relocated it to nearby Major's Hill Park, overlooking the Ottawa River and Parliament Hill. By altering the Champlain statue, the NCC was able to represent a more inclusive Canada through subtraction. The NCC demonstrated that Ottawa's landscape could and should reflect social progress, and that the concerns of the minority deserve to be valued, heard and addressed.

Location and Prominence

In order to fully understand the message of inclusivity put forward by these memorials, it is important to consider too where in Ottawa they are located. All the commemoration policies and strategies in the world, meant to represent an inclusive and diverse Canada, are for naught if the related memorials are tucked away in hard-to-find or out-of-the-way sites. Instead, each of the memorials discussed here are in visible, well-known and heavily trafficked locations throughout Ottawa, albeit some to a greater degree than others. Each site is also a point of interest

along Confederation Boulevard, a ceremonial and discovery route winding through Ottawa and across the Ottawa River into Gatineau, Quebec, connecting a number of sites of national importance.

In 1857 Ottawa was named the capital of the Province of Canada and would transition into the national capital ten years later, after Confederation. During an 1893 speech, a future prime minister, Wilfrid Laurier, declared his intention to see Ottawa transformed into the 'Washington of the North', with similar street layouts, design schemes and architectural symbolism as found in the American capital city. By 1899, the Ottawa Improvement Commission had been established to 'create a city worthy of a capital'.[32] Inspired by other urban landscape projects and the City Beautiful movement, the Commission worked to turn Ottawa into an awe-inspiring city.

A lack of funding, two world wars and, at times, an uninterested public, led to a floundering design policy for Ottawa. However, in the late 1940s, Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King, a man long interested in urban planning and development, renewed the campaign to create a cohesive urban fabric. As David L. A. Gordon and Brian S. Osborne have detailed, for the Prime Minister, turning Ottawa into a distinguished and grand capital city was paramount, and creating a ceremonial landscape was central to this plan. As they note:

> Indeed, for much of the 20th century, the planning of Ottawa – and of Confederation Square in particular – was much influenced by [Mackenzie] King's sensitivity to, and cultivation of, the national imagination. In particular, he blatantly manipulated the national identification with wartime sacrifices and the evocative power of the symbolic commemoration of the 'blooding' of the nation in global conflict to further his mission of building a capital suitable for a nation that was shedding the last of its colonial ties.[33]

To achieve this, Mackenzie King hired French planner Jacques Gréber to make Ottawa a capital city that combined form and function, one that would be 'worthy of Canada's greatness'.[34] Moreover, the new plan for the nation's capital was meant to serve as a living memorial to those Canadians 'who lost their lives in the service of their country during the Second World War'.[35] While the physical manifestation of this symbolic act never occurred, the intention was to create a lookout point on the Gatineau Hills, across the river from Ottawa, allowing visitors a panoramic vista of the capital. According to the plan, this memorial terrace 'would lie at the foot of a large wall visible from the city, and

formed of the natural stone of the grounds, and on which inscriptions and symbols would portray the glorious deeds of the Canadian forces, while the National Capital Plan would appear, *in reality*, from the terrace'.[36] Thus, the design of the capital city would be a reflection of, and testimony to, the sacrifices made by Canadian servicemen and women.

By the 1980s, in order to foster Ottawa's role as a reflection of Canadians' shared values, character and identity, the NCC decided that the city required a ceremonial overhaul, and needed a unifying feature. The solution was found in the concept of Confederation Boulevard, a route that consists of a primary loop, moving from Wellington Street to Sussex Drive and MacKenzie Avenue, crossing the Alexandra Bridge to Gatineau, continuing down Rue Laurier, crossing over the Ottawa River once more via the Portage Bridge, and reconnecting with Wellington. The boulevard includes two spurs, one proceeding further up Sussex Drive to 24 Sussex and to Rideau Hall, while the second leads up Elgin Street towards the National War Memorial. Canadians have thus attempted to find a way to construct their national identity and symbolize a nation born through both war and peace with the creation of Confederation Boulevard. With each of the memorials here under review located on the ceremonial route, their inclusive nature is thus tied into, and serves as a part of, the broader display of Canadian culture.

The centrepiece of Confederation Square, the National War Memorial is situated in a central location, at the juncture of Wellington and Elgin Streets, and nearby a number of other noteworthy structures, including Parliament Hill. The memorial serves as the main site of memory for Canada, as every year on 11 November the National Act of Remembrance occurs in Confederation Square. Thousands of Canadians attend the event, including the prime minister, governor general and various other government and military officials, as well as representatives from family groups and public organizations, with wreaths laid at the base of the memorial's pedestal to honour all of Canada's fallen soldiers. After the conclusion of the official ceremony, veterans and other citizens crowd around the memorial to pay their own respects in what has become an impromptu tradition; visitors leave their poppy lapel pins on the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier as personal acts of remembrance.

Canada's Tomb of the Unknown Soldier had previously been located in London's Westminster Abbey, until it was repatriated and placed in front of the National War Memorial in 2000. In the 1990s,

a movement to establish a Tomb on Canadian soil started to gain traction. According to a report prepared at the time by the Angus Reid Group, a survey-based research company, 'Support for this initiative appears to be driven by Canadians' sense that Canada should have its own memorial to honour its war dead. This sentiment appeals to Canadian patriotism and nationalism outside of the context of the British Commonwealth.'[37] The survey group found that over 75 per cent of those polled favoured repatriating the remains of an unknown casualty. Of those, when asked why they agreed, 25 per cent said they believed the remains should be buried in Canada, 21 per cent believed Canada should have its own Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, and 20 per cent believed that doing so would honour the memory of the dead.

Since 2007, in response to an act of vandalism, a Ceremonial Guard has stood watch at the site during the summer months. Along with the National War Memorial and the Tomb, in October 2014 Confederation Square gained greater significance when one of the honour guards on duty, Corporal Nathan Cirillo, was shot and killed in a terror attack.[38] On the first anniversary of the attack, a plaque honouring Cirillo was unveiled along the southeast side of Confederation Square, reading, in part, 'Corporal Cirillo never left his post. Forevermore he shall stand sentry, on guard for Canada.' Further, the plaque is positioned in such a way as to frame the scene; it is at the edge of the square, clearly visible to passing pedestrians on the pavement. When you stand in front of the plaque and look towards the National War Memorial, you also look towards the spot where Cirillo was shot, and can see the Parliament Hill buildings in the background, allowing for an association between his sacrifice and the larger values represented in those other structures.

Confederation Square and the National War Memorial are not simply places of commemoration, but have become sacred sites within Canada's national narrative, the 'symbolic centre of an imagined and performed Canada'.[39] Canadians modified the National War Memorial and the larger Confederation Square, which was initially meant to commemorate the First World War, in order to meet the memorial needs of later generations. The additions have woven all Canadian military service and sacrifice into a broader, more inclusive memorial site.

And yet, while adding the dates for other wars and conflicts to the National War Memorial is symbolically inclusive, it has also fundamentally shifted the meaning of the memorial. The terms of the

memorial's design competition maintained that the monument should not:

> glorify war or suggest the arrogance of a conqueror. While the spirit of victory is essential it should be expressed so as to not only immortalize Canada's defenders, but convey a feeling of gratitude that out of this great conflict a new hope has sprung for future prosperity under peaceful conditions.[40]

The National War Memorial, surmounted with the allegorical figures of Peace and Freedom, is thus meant to also represent a desire for a more positive future, the product of the incredible cost borne by the Great War generation. Instead, it is reminder that Canada has not only been involved in a number of wars, both before and long after the First World War, but also that the lessons of losing Canadians to war has yet to be learned.

The placement of both the War of 1812 monument and the *Women Are Persons!* monument on Parliament Hill understandably grants them a certain amount of meaning and weight. With the Centre, East and West Blocks, along with the Library of Parliament, designed in the iconic Gothic Revival style of architecture, Parliament Hill is easily identified as the political heart of Canada. There are close to 20 different monuments and statues on the grounds of Parliament Hill, and the War of 1812 monument is the only memorial on the site dedicated to the subject of war. The monument is found near the East Block on the southeast corner of the Hill, overlooking Confederation Square, a location that was not chosen without some controversy. One point of contention is that the monument is close to the National War Memorial, yet also removed from it and on a relatively higher plot of land. While the War of 1812 monument does not intrude into Confederation Square, it does drift around the edges – it is there and yet not quite there. The other main objection to the location of the monument is that it is a monument to war and military conflict, when all others on the Hill are dedicated to political figures and topics. As John Geddes wrote in *Maclean's*, 'These are central figures of our democratic saga. Other aspects of Canadian history are rightly memorialized elsewhere.'[41]

Additionally, while memorializing a diverse coalition of peoples fighting for a common goal is a lofty objective, the true motivation driving the creation of the memorial was primarily political. A plank in the Conservative Party's 2011 federal election platform was the commemoration of the bicentennial of the War of 1812, and the

memorial was just one part of nearly C$30 million spent on the celebration.[42] The Conservative platform described the war as an event that 'saved Canada from American invasion and confirmed our destiny as a country distinct from the United States'.[43] This was all in line with a broader agenda by Stephen Harper to emphasize a Canadian history that focused more on the military and the country's ties with the British monarchy.[44] As such, it was important to the Harper government that a memorial to a war fought prior to Canadian Confederation be prominently located on Parliament Hill, regardless of whether or not it fitted in with the existing theme of the memorials found on the site.

The *Women Are Persons!* monument, however, is in fact a memorial directly related to Canada's democratic saga, and thus rightly belongs on the Hill. The legal victory fought for by the Famous Five allowed Canadian women to take a more active role in politics, creating a more inclusive Canada as a result. Isabel Metcalfe, founding chair of the Famous 5 Ottawa, the group responsible for the monument's installation on Parliament Hill, has said about the location:

> It's near the doors of the Senate, where they so wanted to be. It's near Sir John A Macdonald, who was the founding father of Confederation and who excluded the women from the British North America Act. It's near the British Privy Council who heard the Persons case and who said yes, women are persons. It's near Mackenzie King, who was the Prime Minister of Canada that allowed [the Five] to move their petition forward when they were turned down by the Supreme Court. That was the placement we needed to be in historically.[45]

There is some debate regarding the memorial's location on the Hill, with *Ottawa Citizen* writer Robert Sibley arguing that the memorial should instead be in front of the Supreme Court. This alternate location is preferred because there, in his words, 'it would be a constant reminder to the Supremos [*sic*] to keep their hubris in check'.[46] I would suggest, however, that it is vital that the monument remain where it is, particularly if it is to be read as a monument to Canada's inclusivity. That is largely due to the fact that it is the only memorial on Parliament Hill that features women, except for the statues of Queen Victoria and Queen Elizabeth II, and the occasional allegorical female figure decorating other memorials. Therefore, the only Canadian women actually memorialized on Parliament Hill are the five in the *Women Are Persons!* monument. They deservedly take their place among other

important people in Canada's political history, the Prime Ministers and Fathers of Confederation likewise commemorated in the heart of the federal government, and close to the political institutions they had been excluded from for years. Not only does the monument symbolize the inclusion of women in the political process, it is also a meaningful enough subject to be included with other noteworthy memorials.

High on Nepean Point, the Samuel de Champlain statue is located on a particularly visible and prominent plot of land in Ottawa. The site offers commanding views of Parliament Hill and the Ottawa River. A feature of the NCC's long-term vision for the next 50 years of planning in Ottawa is a list of 17 milestone projects, projects that will guide the successful completion of the plan. One of these is the rejuvenation of Nepean Point, which includes improvements to the landscaping and accessibility of the site, along with a pedestrian bridge connecting the area to Major's Hill Park. The two areas are currently separated by the roadway leading to the Alexandra Bridge, so a pedestrian overpass would more closely link Nepean Point and the statue of Champlain with the greater Ottawa core region. However, the prominence of the Champlain statue only highlights the different fate of the statue that was removed in the act of inclusion.

The Anishinabe scout, moved across the road to Major's Hill Park, is much more difficult to locate. Major's Hill Park is a massive green space within the capital city, providing a scenic location for relaxation and recreation. The sculpture of the Native person seems almost hidden in the northwest corner, far away from most other attractions in the park. The statue is along a footpath, but at an odd bend, separate from the main walkway; to view the statue, you either need to be looking for it or exploring every corner of the park. It is simply not in a spot that receives much pedestrian traffic. What is more, the Anishinabe scout is placed in a small clearing amid the surrounding bushes and tall grass, worsening its already obscured location in Major's Hill Park. It is an odd conclusion to the monument's story: removed from one statue in order to demonstrate Canada's inclusivity and as an acknowledgement of the concerns of an important segment of the population, the Anishinabe scout is now nearly hidden away. Perhaps the rejuvenation of Nepean Point, and the planned pedestrian bridge to Major's Hill Park, will redesign the landscape in a way to draw more focus to the sculpture, increase more foot traffic to the site, and create a stronger spatial relationship between the scout and Champlain. But this remains to be seen, as a final design proposal will not be selected until 2018 at the earliest, and the start of any site work will not commence until the autumn of 2019.[47]

What is Missing?

Examining the flaws in the final placement of the Anishinabe scout provides an opening to further explore any deficiencies in Ottawa's commemorative inclusivity. While in the past the NCC recognized the need for an increase in the number of memorials related to the history of Aboriginals, women and ethnocultural communities, the plan for the 50 years leading up to the bicentennial is slightly less explicit. Although the NCC's *Plan for Canada's Capital, 2017–2067* includes a much-needed section on increasing the representation of Canada's Indigenous peoples within Ottawa, other groups are not specifically mentioned. Instead, there is a broad statement that 'it is intended that new commemorations should honour the achievements of civil society, including Indigenous, social, cultural and scientific subjects that are currently under-represented in the Capital's commemorative landscape'.[48] It is not entirely clear if inclusive commemorations to women or ethnocultural communities will be as much of a priority in the future.

This concern is compounded by the description of the *Women Are Persons!* monument found in 'Discover the Hill', a guidebook to the grounds of Parliament Hill created by Canadian Heritage. In one paragraph, the booklet briefly describes the monument and who it memorializes, and says that their Supreme Court victory 'was a landmark step in Canadian women's struggle for equality, helping to pave the way for women to participate fully in all aspects of public life'.[49] Two subsequent paragraphs very briefly outline additional strides women made towards political equality, such as obtaining the right to vote or standing for election to the House of Commons.[50] Finally, there is a sidebar, entitled 'Canadian Women Pioneers', that merely underlines the extent to which women are still not included in Ottawa's commemorations. It reads:

> After the 'Persons' case, other women pioneered in Canadian politics, including: Cairine Wilson, first female senator; Ellen Fairclough, first female cabinet member; Muriel McQueen Fergusson, the first female speaker of the Senate; Jeanne Sauvé, first female speaker of the House of Commons and first female governor general of Canada; and Kim Campbell, Canada's first female prime minister.[51]

Rather than an inspiring series of women who made great strides in Canadian politics, the list comes across more like a catalogue of women

who have not been memorialized in Ottawa. Just having their name included in a guidebook is not nearly sufficient. No other memorial in the pamphlet includes a supplementary list of associated people; it is not as if the description of Sir John A. Macdonald's monument provides an account of other men who were Fathers of Confederation or Prime Minister. Instead, any woman who has achieved some level of political distinction gets lumped together with the Famous Five, with that monument serving as a catchall memorial to women in general. In order for Ottawa, and particularly Parliament Hill, to be more inclusive when representing women, the list above might be a good place to start looking for new commemorative subjects.

Another issue involved with the creation of an inclusive memorial landscape is found at the National War Memorial. As the date ranges for other conflicts have been added to the memorial's pedestal and arch, a precedent has been set in terms of the type of conflict – and the military members who served in the conflict – that can be officially included in the national narrative of military sacrifice. The memorial features the years of the five costliest conflicts in Canada's history. If a future war involves a body count higher than one of those five, will it earn the particular honour of being added to the pedestal? Or will it only meet the level of the 'In Service to Canada' inscription? It is a grim standard, to be sure.

Conclusion

In a multi-part assessment of the national capital's memorials and statues for the *Ottawa Citizen*, Robert Sibley asked, 'is there such a thing as being too inclusive? If every group can erect a monument to its particular grievance, will monuments lose their unitary function and become symbols of social fragmentation? If everyone gets their slice of symbolic territory, can we really have "national" symbols that unite us regardless of creed, colour or sexual persuasion?'[52] I respectfully challenge his conclusions, instead maintaining that incorporating other stories and other histories does not dilute national identity or unity. Nor does it imply that anyone not already sufficiently represented in the city's memorials does not feel a sense of unity or connection with the Canadian story. Instead, it demonstrates an acknowledgement and acceptance that a diverse population created, and still creates, that national identity. Far too many memorials have been created by the majority to celebrate the majority. How much of a unitary function can

a memorial really play if it excludes or ignores large segments of the population?

Ottawa and the NCC have endeavoured to increase the representation of communities that have long been left out of the city's memorial landscape. And if there is a corresponding increase in the slices of symbolic territory doled out to various groups, would that truly be so bad? Instead of a homogenous monoculture, Ottawa's urban fabric can become an accurate reflection of the diversity and inclusiveness of the Canadian people. With extreme forms of nationalism and xenophobia on the rise around the world, it becomes ever more important for the public face of Ottawa to demonstrate the country's willingness to accept and embrace people of all races, ethnicities and genders, and of any other social or cultural distinction.

One site where an expression of the country's multiculturalism and inclusivity can be memorialized in stone will be Parliament Hill's new Visitor Welcome Centre, slated to be built as a part of the massive, decade-long, C$3 billion rehabilitation project of the Parliamentary Precinct. Currently, the sculptures and carvings on Parliament Hill's Center Block tell a very specific story of Canada. The carvings around the main entrance, Confederation Hall, and the House and Senate lobbies, focus on different layers of Canadian symbols. These include sculptures detailing 'Canadian heraldry, nature, and history',[53] the arms of the provinces and territories, and related symbols such as 'the official flower, the coat of arms, the leading agricultural product, and the largest industry of each province'.[54]

In an interview, Phil White, the Dominion Sculptor, and thus the person in charge of the carving and sculpture programme in the Parliamentary Precinct, commented that the existing carvings tell the story of Canada through history and geography. However, there exists an opportunity, as a part of the planned Welcome Centre, for the sculptures to demonstrate the theme of multiculturalism. As a result, for the thousands of visitors, from across Canada and around the world, who travel to Ottawa and take a tour of Parliament Hill, one of the first lessons they will encounter will be various carvings that announce: 'This is who we are, a diverse and welcoming society.' It is a chance to tell the story of Canada on a more intimate and personal level, focusing on the people and values that comprise the nation, and moving beyond the official flowers or coats of arms.[55]

Humans are constantly modifying both their natural and built environments. We erect houses, pave roads, bridge rivers, exploit

natural resources and so on. From the major to the minor, from suburbanites mowing a front yard to a massive public works project, humankind is continuously using and altering the environment to suit its needs. But memorials are something we add to our world for the sole purpose of remembering and honouring. We write books, create plays and films and pen songs and poems that all recount moments from our collective and individual histories. Yet memorials are meant to be constant visual reminders of the past. They are meant to be noticed, to command our attention, rather than being pushed aside or relegated to a dusty library bookshelf. Memorials and monuments are highly public structures, so that all of society may interact with them and bear witness to the commemorative act, and all that it represents.

Designing a monument that physically represents intangible ideas – such as diversity, equality or inclusivity – can be difficult. Moreover, creating a completely inclusive commemorative landscape is an unreasonable undertaking. It is simply not possible to erect a monument to every person, group or event in Canadian history. However, it is important to strike some balance, to design a memoryscape that actively tries to be inclusive, or at the very least, does not purposely exclude or marginalize certain subjects, communities or topics. That balance is a goal that Ottawa has long worked to achieve, in both policy and practice. While work remains to be done, the capital city's public spaces and memorials serve as a tangible, three-dimensional statement of Canada's efforts towards being a welcoming, inclusive and diverse society.

Notes

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