

'Making Change' in the memorial landscape to the Dakota–US War of 1862: remembrance, healing and justice through affective participation in the Dakota Commemorative March (DCM)

G. E. John^a and K. M. Carlson^b

^aDepartment of Geography and Planning, School of Public Affairs, St. Cloud State University, St. Cloud, MN, USA; ^bDepartment of Geography, Maxwell School of Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY, USA

ABSTRACT

The Dakota–US War of 1862 led to the removal and exile of Dakota people from their ancestral homeland. Integral to this process was the forced march of 1,700 women, children and elders from the Lower Sioux Agency to Fort Snelling, Minnesota. Despite the siting of numerous memorials related to the war and its aftermath, few mark the forced march and its legacies. Since 2002, however, the seven-day Dakota Commemorative March (DCM) has been held biennially to remember and honour Dakota ancestors on the original forced march. Following a brief overview of extant place-based memorials at sites along its path, we draw on documentary sources to explore the significance of the DCM as a distinctive Dakota intervention in the commemorative landscape. Through a process we call 'affective participation' – an intense bodily, emotive and transformative engagement in an event – participants on the DCM not only seek to remember but also strive towards healing and justice in the present and the future. Our hope is to expand the focus of current geographical work on discrete site-based memorials to consider the social- and cultural-geographical significance of alternative (particularly Native) forms and scales of commemoration.

'Effectuer des changements' dans le paysage commémoratif de la guerre entre le Dakota et les Etats-Unis de 1862: souvenir, processus de guérison et justice par la participation affective à la Marche Commémorative du Dakota (Dakota Commemorative March (DCM))

RÉSUMÉ

La guerre de 1862 entre le Dakota et les Etats-Unis mena au déménagement de leur patrie ancestrale et à l'exil des indigènes du Dakota. La marche forcée de l'Agence de Lower Sioux jusqu'à Fort Snelling dans le Minnesota, de 150 miles, qui comptait 1700 femmes, enfants et personnes âgées fit partie intégrale de cette opération.

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PALABRAS CLAVE

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Malgré la présence de nombreux monuments commémoratifs liés à la guerre et à ses séquelles, peu marquent cet épisode et son héritage. Depuis 2002, toutefois, la Marche Commémorative du Dakota, pendant laquelle les participants marchent sept jours, le long de la route approximative d'origine, se tient tous les deux ans pour se souvenir des ancêtres du Dakota et de leur marche forcée originelle et les honorer. Après une brève vue d'ensemble des monuments commémoratifs existants liés aux lieux, sur place le long du chemin, nous puisons dans les sources documentaires pour explorer l'importance de la Marche Commémorative du Dakota en tant qu'intervention distincte du Dakota dans le paysage commémoratif. A travers un processus que nous nommons « participation affective » - un engagement intensif corporel, émotif et transformatif dans un événement- les participants à la Marche Commémorative du Dakota non seulement cherchent à se souvenir mais aussi s'efforcent de promouvoir un processus de guérison et de justice au présent et à l'avenir. Nous nourrissons l'espoir d'élargir le centre d'intérêt des travaux géographiques actuels à des commémorations discrètes, sur les lieux, afin de considérer l'importance sociale et culturelle-géographique de commémorations de formes et d'envergures alternatives (indigènes en particulier).

'Haciendo cambios' en el paisaje memorial de la Guerra Dakota-Estados Unidos de 1862: Memoria, Sanción y Justicia a través de la participación afectiva en la Marcha Conmemorativa de Dakota (MCD)

RESUMEN

La guerra Dakota-Estados Unidos en 1862 condujo a la eliminación y al exilio de la gente de Dakota de su patria ancestral. Parte integral de este proceso fue la marcha forzada de 150 millas de 1.700 mujeres, niños y ancianos desde el Distrito Bajo Sioux hasta el Fuerte Snelling, Minnesota. A pesar de la ubicación de numerosos monumentos relacionados con la guerra y sus consecuencias, pocos marcan este episodio y su legado. Desde 2002, sin embargo, la Marcha Conmemorativa de Dakota (MCD), en la que los participantes caminan por una ruta similar a la original durante siete días, se ha celebrado cada dos años para recordar y honrar a los antepasados Dakota en la marcha forzada original. Después de una breve descripción de monumentos existentes locales a lo largo de su trayectoria, nos basamos en fuentes documentales para explorar el significado de la MCD como una intervención Dakota distintiva en el paisaje conmemorativo. A través de un proceso al que llamamos 'participación afectiva' — un compromiso corporal intenso, emotivo y transformador en un evento — los participantes en la MCD no sólo buscan recordar, sino también que se esfuerzan por sanar y orientarse hacia la justicia en el presente y el futuro. Nuestra esperanza es ampliar el foco de trabajo geográfico actual sobre monumentos locales discretos para considerar la importancia social y cultural-geográfica de formas alternativas (en particular indígenas) y escalas de la conmemoración.

Introduction

The Minnesota River Valley has stories to tell ... about the indigenous people struggling to keep their land and their way of life, and about immigrant families who began new lives here. Their stories came together, with tragic consequences for all, in what has become known as

the U.S. – Dakota War of 1862 – a war that had repercussions for the whole country. ('Struggles for a Home,' Inscription on 2012 Minnesota River Valley National Scenic Byway marker series)

There is never simply one memory, nor is there only one way to remember. (Tyner, Alvarez, & Colucci, 2012, p. 856)

The six-week-long Dakota–US War of 1862,¹ one of many conflicts known collectively as the Plains Wars fought between European Americans and Native Americans during the campaign of US westward expansion between the 1840s and 1890s, led to the hanging of 38 Dakota men – the largest mass public execution in US history – and ultimately the removal and exile of Dakota people from their ancestral homeland, *Mni Sota Makoce* (the land where the waters reflect the sky), in the newly established state of Minnesota. A notable episode in the process of Dakota removal was the forced march of approximately 1,700 women, children and elders who, over seven days, were moved from the Lower Sioux Agency on a reserve along the Minnesota River to a concentration camp at Fort Snelling on the confluence of the Minnesota and Mississippi Rivers (Figure 1). Along the way, they suffered abuse at the hands of soldiers and were greeted by angry townspeople who assaulted them with rocks and boiling water poured out of windows as they passed by. Hundreds died of disease and exposure during their months wintering at the camp before the remainder were transported down the Mississippi River for their journey to Crow Creek, a 'barren location' on the Missouri River in South Dakota, where they remained until being settled on a permanent reservation at Santee, Nebraska in 1866 (Anderson, 1986). Despite its far-reaching consequences and the presence of numerous memorials to other events related to the Dakota–US War and its aftermath throughout the region, including the mass hanging, until recently, no memorial recounted the forced march at a discrete site in the landscape. Partly in response, in 2002, the first biennial Dakota Commemorative March (DCM or March) was held to remember and honour the Dakota ancestors who made the original forced march in 1862.

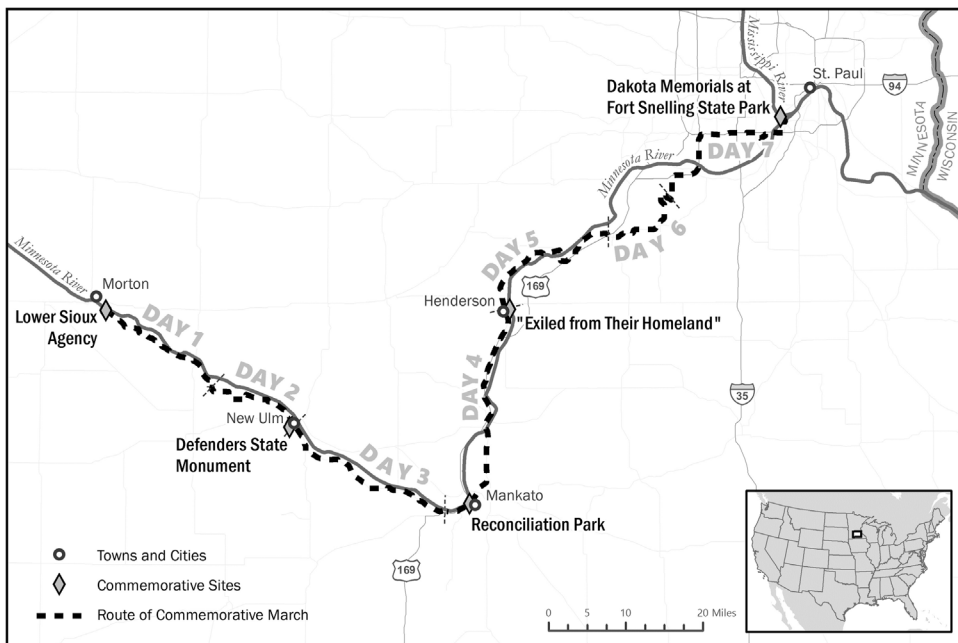


Figure 1. Map showing the route of the Dakota Commemorative March (2002-present) and highlighted sites of the memorial landscape to the Dakota–US War of 1862. Cartography by Richard Bohannon, former geography graduate assistant at St. Cloud State University.

The DCM is the latest event in the Dakota commemorative calendar that includes the annual *Mahkato Wacipi* (pow pow) held in mid-September at Land of Memories Park in Mankato, Minnesota; the 12-hour memorial relay run from Fort Snelling to Mankato starting at midnight every 26 December; and the two-week Dakota 38 + 2 *Wokiksuye* Memorial Horse Ride from Lower Brule, South Dakota to Mankato, Minnesota² – all three latter events in memory of the Dakota men executed in Mankato on 26 December 1862. The March, by contrast, is organized and led by Dakota women and involves the ceremonial placing of wooden stakes inscribed with the Dakota names of maternal ancestors known to have endured the forced march in 1862.³

Following a brief survey of discrete site-based memorials commemorating the Dakota–US War of 1862 and its aftermath along the path of the DCM as extant in 2002, we draw on published accounts and perspectives by participants in the DCM, particularly the work of co-organizer, writer and activist Waziyatawin (also known as Angela Cavender Wilson), to explore the significance and impact of the March as a distinctive Dakota form of commemoration.⁴ We argue that through a process we call *affective participation* – an intense bodily, emotive and personally and socially transformative community engagement with an event – the March provides a means for Dakota people to not only remember and honour their ancestors on the original forced march in 1862 but actively bear witness to and seek healing and justice from the historical trauma of this tragic and hugely consequential event in what is, for many Dakota people, the relatively recent past. Though not as outwardly tangible and seemingly permanent as statues, sculptures or plaques, the DCM makes an important political intervention in the memorial landscape commemorating the 1862 Dakota–US War, interacting with and acting back on the narrative of extant site-based memorials to the war and its aftermath that have elided recognition of the forced march of 1862. Ultimately, we hope to direct attention to the emotional and affective dimensions of commemorative practice in the landscape and expand the focus of current geographical work, which has tended to favour analysis of discrete site-based physical memorials and performances, to consider the social- and cultural-geographical significance of alternative – in this case Dakota – forms and scales of commemoration.

Memorials as place/performance/affect: scalar and temporal geographies of commemoration

Selectively placing and performing the past

Work approaching memory as a component of cultural landscape is well established in the fields of cultural and social geography. Whether in the form of statuary celebrating the achievements of individuals (Dwyer, 2004; Hay, Hughes, & Tutton, 2004; Leib, 2002; Till, 1999), monuments marking events of national or regional significance (Foote, 2003; Gordon & Osborne, 2004; Johnson, 1995, 1999; Sidaway & Mayel, 2007), historic markers locating or describing past events (Alderman, 2012; Henzel, 1991), parks (Hay et al., 2004), public art (Post, 2011) or commemorative street names (Alderman, 1996, 2000, 2003; Rose-Redwood, 2008), memorials connect past and place in a variety of settings. According to Azaryahu and Kellerman (1999, p. 111), '[a]ssociating events with the places where they occurred confers extraordinary symbolic meaning on them'. In giving the past a 'tangibility and familiarity – making the history they commemorate appear to be part of the natural

and taken-for-granted order of things', physical memorials act through the landscape to express and legitimize a certain version of the past (Dwyer & Alderman, 2008, p. 167, citing Azaryahu, 1996; Foote, 2003). In this way, memorials actively produce the ways events, people and places are selectively remembered, understood and even forgotten (Alderman, 2003; Foote & Azaryahu, 2007; Hoelscher & Alderman, 2004). As Hoelscher and Alderman (2004) point out, in every act of remembering is one of forgetting. Equally, 'what is commemorated is not synonymous with what has happened in the past' (Dwyer & Alderman, 2008, p. 167).

Given their power to represent the past in partial ways, material memorials have been understood as a specific social–geographical means by which some groups have been marginalized; indeed, memorials can facilitate a form of historical exclusion and absence that contributes to the 'symbolic annihilation' of marginalized groups in the landscape (Dwyer & Alderman, 2008, p. 169, citing Eichstedt & Small, 2002). Beyond the selectivity of stories they do or do not tell, the representational power of physical site-based memorials also rests on their perceived interpretative scale (Alderman, 2003). As Chris Post (2011, p. 47) reminds us, '[s]cale plays a crucial role in memorialization, particularly when dealing with the histories of excluded places, groups, and persons'. In their review of approaches to memorial landscapes in geography, Dwyer and Alderman (2008, p. 171) pose a methodologically poignant question relating to the operating scale of memorials, asking: 'If it was a map, how much "territory" would it cover and what connections would it make?' With memory activated on scales varying from the national and regional to the highly local, space is not merely a passive container for commemorative processes. Rather, commemoration actively produces place/landscape as significant at varying geographic scales (Dwyer & Alderman, 2008). While the choice and importance of the site for a memorial play an important role in the presumed scale of its interpretive community, performances of memory, often focused on discrete place-based monuments or markers or other sites of memory, can serve as effective (and often affective) means for activating various scales of community remembrance.

Work on memorials and commemoration has for some time recognized the role of performance and performativity as a mode of memorialization in the landscape (see for example Alderman & Campbell, 2008; Bosco, 2004; Hoelscher, 2003; Hoelscher & Alderman, 2004; Kaiser, 2008; Purvis & Atkinson, 2009; Rose-Redwood, 2008).⁵ According to Hoelscher and Alderman (2004, p. 350, citing Connerton, 1989), 'performances like rituals, festivals, pageants, public dramas and civic ceremonies serve as a chief way in which societies remember'. Unlike interpretive/textual approaches to physical memorials and monuments, approaching commemoration as performance emphasizes the role and scale of the body as an important site of memory in commemorative practice, in making physical memorials meaningful (Dwyer & Alderman, 2008) and in bearing witness to the past and its legacies (see Robertson, 2014). Echoing Gregson and Rose's (2000) reading of Butler (1993), Dwyer and Alderman (2008, pp. 173–74) write that:

It is not just that these performances happen in or at places of memory. Rather, the memorial landscape is constituted, shaped, and made important through the bodily performance and display of collective memories.

Alderman and Campbell (2008) point to practices of active bodily participation in engaging material artefacts – in this case, tourists handling chains and shackles as material traces from the slave-holding era in the American South – as an important element in the memory work of constructing and representing a region's past. In a different context and invoking the national (if not transnational) interpretative scale, Kaiser (2008) draws

attention to the performative gesture of laying wreaths to commemorate the dead from the Second World War on 27 January (the day Auschwitz was liberated) in post-reunification Germany (see also Purvis & Atkinson, 2009). Integral to the excavation, recovery and reproduction of memory in these studies is the role of bodily performance (see also Bosco, 2004, 2006).

The focus on performance and performativity surrounding public monuments and memorials, with its awareness of the role of bodies in commemorative practices, has found commensurabilities with the recent 'emotional turn' in critical human geography and its concern for the more-than-representational intensities of feeling and affect (see Lorimer, 2005; Pile, 2010; Wright, 2010). Studies focusing on performativity relating to memorials and historic sites have begun incorporating an understanding of their emotional and affective meaning and significance (cf. Dwyer, Butler, & Carter, 2013; Modlin et al., 2011). Consideration of emotions, such as trauma stemming from atrocities, disasters, war and their associated loss of life, recognizes the possibility for monuments, memorials and landscapes to serve as spaces of healing and reconciliation (Foote, 2003; Johnson, 2011; Tyner, Sirik, & Henkin, 2014), even long after the events being commemorated are beyond living memory (e.g. Azaryahu & Kellerman, 1999).

Commemorative landscapes of emotion and affect

With emotion and affect becoming key concepts in human geography (Pile, 2010), it is perhaps not surprising that work on commemoration in cultural and social geography is beginning to take account of the emotive and affective qualities of memorializing past and place. In their study of the role played by tour guides in creating empathy among visitors to southern plantation houses, Modlin et al. (2011) point out that docents often give emotionally evocative accounts of the planter-class families with scant attention paid to the enslaved. Drawing on Thrift's (2004) notion of affect as 'more than emotion, without being separated from emotion', as 'emotion packaged with action – actuated and potential', they use the term *affective inequality* to describe how guides unevenly and by extension unfairly activate historical empathy among the visiting public (Modlin et al., 2011, p. 8; citing Thrift, 2004). For Modlin et al. (2011), more important than the immediate emotion fostered in the public by tour guides, such as sadness-eliciting tears, is the lasting impression such empathy imparts, lending it affective transformative cogency concerning how people, past and place are remembered. To the extent that it reinforces dominant historical narratives and results in affective inequality, the selective deployment of historical empathy can be problematic. Indeed, 'the emphasis on the political manipulation of emotion/affect is key, and offers a necessary line of examination for geography' (Sharp, 2009, p. 78; cited in Pile, 2010, p. 6). But empathy can also be mobilized to challenge dominant narratives about the past and not only through interpretive guides.

As Modlin et al. (2011, p. 15) state, the 'process of remembering means coming to terms with more than facts'. Remembering is an embodied process that can be highly emotional and necessitates healing from and even selectively forgetting the past, particularly when characterized by violent events and/or processes (Johnson, 2011; Tyner et al., 2014). While discrete physical site-based memorials are the products of the materialization of commemorative discourses (Dwyer & Alderman, 2008; citing Schein, 1997), memorials can also assume the form of bodily practices in the landscape, sometimes at

specific historical sites where markers and monuments have been placed and sometimes along paths, routes or across broader arenas associated with processual events in the past that perhaps wrought lasting and traumatic change (cf. Bosco, 2004, 2006; Tyner et al., 2014). Memorial parades, walks, marches, runs, rides, historical re-enactments, dedications and official and unofficial observances are just some examples of active forms of bodily participation in organized events that not only facilitate reflection, but evoke emotion with the potential for the actuation of cultural identity and political action.⁶ We use the term *affective participation* to refer to such bodily, emotional and politicizing engagement of individuals on the Dakota Commemorative March (DCM) as a means of commemorating, bearing witness to, coming to terms with, healing from and even seeking justice for traumatic and violent events and processes in the aftermath of the Dakota–US War. In this, the politicizing role of place/landscape is critical.

According to Modlin et al., ‘narrative meanings attached to places ... shape the ... ability to create affective connections with people from the past’ (Modlin et al., 2011, p. 15). At the same time, affective connections to the past through participation in commemorative practices also shape the narrative meanings of places and landscapes. Given the necessity of place/landscape for embodied engagement, space is necessarily and dialectically related to affective-participatory processes of memorialization (cf. Tyner et al., 2014). Commemorative practices literally take and make place, with the place/landscape comporting an affective connection to the past.

Notwithstanding its collective value in elucidating the power of place and forms in the landscape to produce interpretative, performative and affective remembrances of specific events and people, work on memorials and commemoration in geography has arguably tended to overemphasize site-specific and static physical memorials in the landscape. Few have explored geographies of memorialization that rely less on discrete sites to consider the cultural and political implications of more fluid, immediate and intimate forms of commemoration (for a very notable exception see Tyner et al., 2012). Conversely, little attention has been paid to the symbolic activation of larger scale spaces/places/landscapes through participation in performative, emotional and affective practices. Indeed, commemoration can assume alternative forms and occupy different spaces, as the following subsection makes clear.

Alternative (including Native) forms and scales of commemoration

While there is an abundance of work in social and cultural geography addressing site-specific and static physical memorials, there is increasing recognition that commemoration in the landscape sometimes occurs in places absent of formal, official or sometimes any material markers and on scales more expansive than singular sites suggest. In their work on the politics of memory in post-genocide Cambodia, Tyner et al. (2012) note that memorialization of the Cambodian Genocide is not limited to its two official sites but also takes place at other unofficial, ‘unmarked’ and ‘unremarked’ sites of past violence. Such sites point to the ‘existence of landscapes of violence that have not been placed within their geographical or historical contexts’ in the memorial landscape ‘and yet continue to have an impact’ (Tyner et al., 2012, p. 854). In considering ‘landscapes and legacies of violence that are “hidden in plain sight”’, they argue that it is the everyday places, more than the official memorial sites, which ‘function as crucial elements’ in reconciling a ‘tragic past and uncertain future’ (ibid.).

Memorial practices in unmarked and unremarked landscapes, in everyday or banal places, present the potential for memorialization and counter-memorialization independent of the need for permanent and monumental material markers and untethered by the limitations of their site-specific geographies.

Operating on a broader scale of everyday practice, memorialization not limited to (but equally not divorced from) discrete sites and monuments can invest wholesale places/landscapes with political resonance regarding past and present injustices. Alderman and Inwood (2013), bemoaning the lack of attention by geographers to matters of social justice in analyses of memorial landscapes, point to the importance of commemoration as not just a set of forms in the landscape, but as itself a material practice that draws from and contributes to larger scale processes that produce societal injustice.

As an uneven and necessarily imperfect material practice, commemoration is also an historical and spatial process assuming different temporal and geographical scales – one that not only contributes to social injustice but, often through emotionally and affective practices, can also serve to redress it. As Alderman and Inwood (2013, p. 195) argue,

landscapes of memory can be arenas for challenging and potentially redefining the lines of belonging for marginalized groups and are but one avenue activists can take in the continuing struggle for social and economic justice.

Extending the concept of landscapes of memory to include more than site-specific material markers and monuments and incorporate affective commemorative practices in otherwise unmarked and unremarked places over a larger scale allows for a better understanding of how dominant discourses about the past and the continued marginalization of subordinate social groups can be challenged and redefined. Consequently, it also increases the potential for understanding how marginalized, particularly Native, groups have sought healing from the trauma of the past and reclamation and decolonization of their ways of life through the memory work of such practices.⁷

Commemoration of the Dakota–US War of 1862 and its aftermath, we argue, offers a particularly insightful glimpse into the connections between place and past as interpreted and reinterpreted through monuments and memorials and realized through cultural practices in the landscape (see Carlson & John, 2015). Furthermore, and inspired by Tyner et al.'s (2012, pp. 854–855) plea that research on 'landscapes of memorialization ... focus not only on official, popular, or otherwise remarked sites, but also on those sites that are hidden on the everyday landscape', we consider the Dakota Commemorative March (DCM) as an affective participatory engagement with a generally unmarked and unremarked Minnesotan landscape (certainly as far as the 1862 forced march is concerned), which hides in plain sight its legacies of violence,⁸ dispossession and trauma. Indeed, the DCM goes beyond remembering to generate emotions and help shape an affectual politics of place, such that it not only facilitates Dakota understandings of their collective past, but re-enlivens Dakota ways of being in the present. With little work in geography on Indigenous and Native-inspired memorialization in the landscape (for exceptions see Anderson, 2000; D'Arcus, 2003; Gelder & Jacobs, 1998; Hay et al., 2004; Heffernan & Medlicot, 2002; Read, 2008), our work also seeks to draw more attention to Native commemoration from a critical geographical perspective (see also Blake, 2004; Hurt, 2010).⁹

Extant memorials to the Dakota–US War of 1862

Prelude to a commemorative landscape

The commencement of war along the Minnesota frontier followed years of pressure on ancestral Dakota land by European-American settlement facilitated by treaties ceding vast areas. Most notable among these were the 1851 Treaties of Traverse des Sioux and Mendota, which together transferred 35 million acres (14 million hectares – essentially the entire lower half of the present State of Minnesota) from the Dakota to the US in return for a little over \$3 million and a strip of land on either side of the upper Minnesota River. The era following the treaties also saw the institution of a farming programme intended to assimilate Dakota to European-American cultural practices and reduce their dependency on hunting, which was no longer permitted in the territory. Unreliable annuity payments, with the US in the midst of the Civil War (1861–1865), and a sequence of poor harvests pushed the Dakota to breaking point (Meyer, 1967; Wingerd, 2010). A small group of young traditionalist Dakota men,¹⁰ led by a reluctant Taoyateduta (Chief Little Crow), took action in hope that '[t]he whites could be driven from the Minnesota valley, hunting ground recaptured, and the hated farm program destroyed' (Anderson, 1986, p. 131). While for settlers the attack on settlements was understood as an uprising involving the massacre of civilians, for some Dakota – having lost their hunting grounds and facing starvation and the inexorable loss of their ways of life – it was a fight for physical and cultural survival, a defensive act.¹¹

The Dakota–US War of 1862 raged on for almost 6 weeks until the Dakota involved in the fighting surrendered on 26 September 1862, after being overwhelmed at the Battle of Wood Lake. While the war and its aftermath are important to the context of our paper, it is not our purpose to recount in documentary fashion specific episodes that occurred. Nor are we concerned to give an exhaustive inventory of how the war and its aftermath have been commemorated in the landscape. To be sure, hundreds died during the conflict (Carley, 1976; Dahlin, 2009), property was destroyed and atrocities were committed on all sides. So too did the war have lasting effects for the Dakota and settlers, though the legacies for each, including how the war and its aftermath have been selectively remembered and forgotten, differ greatly. Indeed, for the Dakota, the immediate aftermath of the war saw the hanging of 38 Dakota men, the largest mass public execution in US history, the imprisonment of hundreds more Dakota men, and, crucially in the context of this paper, the forced march of the approximately 1,700 Dakota women, children and elders held at the Lower Sioux Agency to a concentration camp on a floodplain below Fort Snelling, where they were kept over winter before being transported by river to a drought-afflicted reservation in Crow Creek in the Dakota Territory in May 1863 (Meyer, 1967). Hundreds died from exposure and disease in prisons, at the internment camp and in passage to the reservations, where those who survived suffered further from disease and starvation. By contrast, with Dakota removal from Minnesota made law with the passing by Congress of the Dakota Expulsion Act on 3 March 1863, the European-American settlers remaining in Minnesota and the waves of immigrants who followed would prosper from unfettered access to rich agricultural land serving the basis for long-term settlement and economic success (Waziyatawin, 2004, 2008). These legacies have also shaped the development of the commemorative landscape to the Dakota–US War of 1862, including the stories it tells, plays down or altogether omits at various sites.

Sites remembering the Dakota–US War of 1862

The geography of site-specific memorials to the Dakota–US War of 1862 extant in 2002, the year of the first DCM, consisted of a wide range of markers, monuments and statuary throughout the landscape of southern and central Minnesota and along the Minnesota River Valley – the vast majority of which commemorated events from the perspective of the European-American settlers. Altogether, these memorials constructed a spatial narrative (Azaryahu & Foote, 2008), telling a story about the conflict and its aftermath. In doing so, they produced ways those events and the people involved were selectively remembered or forgotten, imbuing particular places with historical significance and eliding others. Far from a consistent narrative, a singular story, the Dakota–US War has been commemorated differently by various communities in Minnesota, with some sites having undergone significant change in how events are interpreted (Carlson & John, 2015). The result has been not only an uneven and inconsistent spatial narrative about the war and its aftermath, but also one characterized by stark omission – most notably concerning the forced march of 1862. Significantly, in 2002 – the year of the first DCM – there was not a single formal reference made to the 1862 forced march at any discrete site-specific public memorial in the commemorative landscape to the Dakota–US War. In the following, we briefly survey memorials extant in 2002 commemorating events in the war and its aftermath at three key sites along the route subsequently taken by the Dakota Commemorative March (DCM).

New Ulm, Minnesota

A number of plaques and markers in the city of New Ulm, Minnesota, make reference to the Dakota–US War of 1862, with most commemorating events related to the two intensive battles fought there. Representing entirely the perspective of the town's largely German-descended European-American settlers, memorials record the effects of the battles on New Ulm's infrastructure and townspeople and honour the bravery of its citizens and militias. Typical of these is the Minnesota Historical Society marker, sponsored by the Brown County Historical Society and erected in 1962, telling the story of the battles as part of the town's defence during what it calls the 'Sioux Uprising' (Figure 2). Other markers celebrate New Ulm's



Figure 2. Two Battles of New Ulm, Minnesota Historical Society Marker, 20 June 1962, New Ulm, Minnesota. Photograph by K. Linzmeier. Retrieved from <http://www.hmdb.org> and reproduced in accordance with website's guidelines.

pioneers and record their role in the conflict and reference the few homes and buildings to have survived and the fires that broke out. Easily the most prominent and locally celebrated memorial to the Dakota–US War of 1862 in New Ulm is the Defenders State Monument (Figure 3).

Erected in December 1890, the monument stands 25-feet tall and is constructed of white bronze on a stone pedestal. Inscriptions describe the monument's purpose as honouring the 'memory of the citizens ... in defeating the enemy in the two battles of New Ulm, whereby the depredations of the savages were confined to the border, which would otherwise have extended into the heart of the State'. As its name suggests and the text makes clear, the Defenders State Monument represents exclusively the historical perspective of the town's settlers, touting the 'bravery' of New Ulm's citizens and those from the surrounding area who came to their 'rescue'. Over the years, the Monument has served as the focal point of elaborate multiday celebrations commemorating the Dakota–US War, beginning with its dedication in 1891 and continuing with decennial anniversaries of the war well into the twentieth century.¹² Absent in New Ulm is any narration concerning the fate of the Dakota following the town's successful defence during the war. A different scenario has emerged, however, in the commemorative landscape to the war and its aftermath further down the Minnesota River Valley and a day's walk from New Ulm on the path of the DCM in the city of Mankato, Minnesota.



Figure 3. The Defenders State Monument, New Ulm, Minnesota (looking north-east along Centre St.). Photograph by Gareth John.

'The hanging site' (Reconciliation Park), Mankato, Minnesota

In 1912, a large monument was erected with the inscription 'Here Were Hanged 38 Sioux Indians, Dec. 26th, 1862' (Andrews, 2010). The starkness of the Mankato marker and its blunt wording led to its falling out of public favour early on, though it wasn't until the 1970s that plans were developed to create a new commemorative landscape – this time with the input of Native people. In 1971, the old marker was removed and by 1978, through collaboration between the Dakota Mahkato Mdewakanton Association, the Minnesota Historical Society and Mankato community members, a new marker was set in place. Though it falls short of naming the condemned Dakota men, the plaque does contextualize the conflict as culminating from 'years of friction ... as settlement pushed into Indian hunting grounds' and resulting 'in the near depletion of the frontier and the exile of the Dakota from Minnesota'. It also commemorates the first 'reconciliation ceremony' involving 'Native Americans and the Mankato community' which took place on 5 November 1975 – a theme that would come to define future commemoration at the site (Figure 4).

In 1987, on the 125th anniversary of the mass execution, a sculpture by Tomas Miller of a Dakota chief called 'Winter Warrior' was unveiled next to the 1978 plaque and Governor Rudy Perpich declared 1987 to be the Year of Reconciliation statewide in Minnesota. In 1997, the hanging site was renamed Reconciliation Park and adorned with another sculpture by



Figure 4. Dakota (Sioux) Memorial – 1862, Minnesota and Blue Earth County Historical Societies Marker, 1978 (with 1987 sculpture 'Winter Warrior' by Tomas Miller in background), Mankato, Minnesota. Photograph by Kelsey Carlson.



Figure 5. Bison sculpture by Tomas Miller, Reconciliation Park, Mankato, Minnesota. Photograph by Gareth John.

Miller – a 35-ton bison in Kasota limestone (Figure 5). As the *Mankato Free Press* reported, it was hoped the park would ‘build a bridge of healing, forgiveness and understanding’ (Lindberg, 1997). Continuing the reconciliatory process begun in the 1970s and satisfying a long-held wish among Dakota to have the 38 condemned men honoured with their individual names at the site of their death, on 26 December 2012 – the execution’s sesquicentennial – a bronze and fiberglass memorial designed by two Native artists was dedicated at Reconciliation Park during a ceremony in which Mankato Mayor Eric Anderson read a proclamation declaring 2012 the year of ‘forgiveness and understanding’ (Krohn, 2012). The dedication ceremony was held in conjunction with the 8th Annual Dakota Wokiksuye Memorial Ride from South Dakota and the overnight memorial relay run from Fort Snelling. The slogan promoted by the Dakota organizers of the event was ‘Forgive everyone everything’, which was subsequently inscribed on the granite benches facing the memorial. Like the hanging site in Mankato, the site of the concentration camp below Fort Snelling, in what is today Fort Snelling State Park, similarly underwent recognition during the Year of Reconciliation.

Wokiksuye K’a Woyuonihan (Remembering and Honoring) at Fort Snelling

The *Wokiksuye K’a Woyuonihan (Remembering and Honoring)* memorial at Fort Snelling State Park, the destination for the biennial DCM, commemorates the site of the concentration camp where Dakota women, children and elders spent the winter (1862–1863), before being transported to a reservation in Dakota Territory in May 1863. The vaguely tipi-shaped timber-framed memorial (Figure 6) was erected and dedicated in 1987, the Year of Reconciliation, with a pipestone marker placed at its centre by Amos Owen, a member of the Prairie Island Indian Community who was one of the organizers of the first memorial *wacipi* (pow wow) in Mankato in 1972 and instrumental in the conception and organization of events in the lead-up to and during the Year of Reconciliation. Like recent commemorative markers and statuary at the hanging site in Mankato, the memorial at Fort Snelling State Park, which is administered by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and separately from Historic Fort Snelling itself, which is run by the Minnesota Historical Society, represents an



Figure 6. Wokiksuye K'a Woyuonihan (Remembering and Honoring) memorial and plaque, Fort Snelling State Park, Minnesota. Photograph by Gareth John.

empathetic view of events in the aftermath of the Dakota–US War in recognizing the suffering of the Dakota and their resultant removal.¹³

The memorial is close to the park's visitor centre, nestled among deciduous trees which now occupy the once open floodplain where the concentration camp was situated. Showing photographs of the camp, a Dakota woman, and other Dakota prisoners, the accompanying plaque (Figure 7) refers to the camp and the Dakota people, which it lists as numbering 1,600, 'many of them women and children', imprisoned over winter following the Dakota–US War of 1862. 'Frightened, uprooted, and uncertain of the fate of their missing relatives', it reads, 'the interned Dakota suffered severe hardship'. A sacred site, as the marker declares, the *Wokiksuye K'a Woyuonihan* memorial lies not only on the site of the concentration camp following the forced march and prior to their removal from their ancestral homeland, but

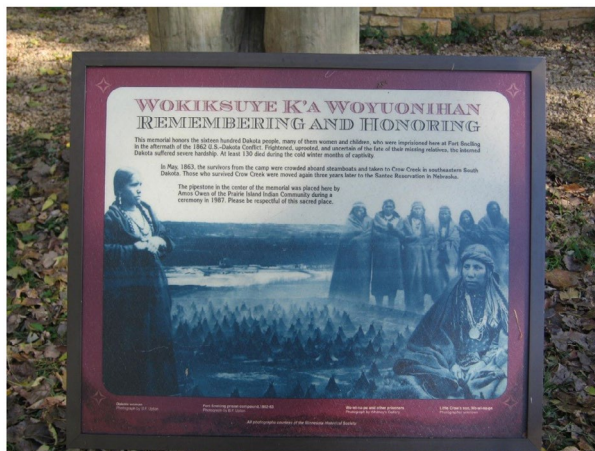


Figure 7. Close-up of plaque at Wokiksuye K'a Woyuonihan (Remembering and Honoring) memorial, Fort Snelling State Park, Minnesota. Photograph by Gareth John.

also at the heart of the sacred *Bdote*, the Dakota place of first creation lying at the confluence of the Minnesota and Mississippi rivers (Waziyatawin, 2008; Westerman & White, 2012). This historical–geographical coincidence makes the final approach and closing ceremony and banquet of the DCM at the memorial site especially poignant for the marchers who also understand the process as a ‘Dakota homecoming’ (Wilson, 2004).

Despite marking the site of the concentration camp that came at the end of the forced march of 1862, as with other pre-2002 markers and memorials in the commemorative landscape to the Dakota–US War of 1862 and its aftermath, the *Wokiksuye K’a Woyuonihan* memorial oddly omits reference to the forced march itself – a process during which the Dakota also endured ‘severe hardship’, but an event notably more difficult to locate with a material marker at any particular site because of the extensive distance over which it occurred and not least of all because of the resultant exile of the Dakota from those places. Indeed, even as late as 2002, 15 years after the Year of Reconciliation in Minnesota, not a single extant site-specific marker or memorial in the landscape specifically commemorated the forced march of Dakota women, children and elders in November 1862.

Notwithstanding the very different approach taken in Mankato and Fort Snelling State Park as compared to New Ulm, the vast majority of memorials and markers in the commemorative landscape at the beginning of the new millennium still grossly underrepresented Dakota experiences related to the Dakota–US War and generally. According to Waziyatawin (2006, p. 6):

Our homeland is littered with monuments erected to glorify the bravery and martyrdom of those who invaded our [Dakota] lands and fought our People, some of whom lost their lives. Southern Minnesota markers also celebrate those who helped in our annihilation and expulsion. It is about time that we question these monuments and the ideologies they represent.

While the 1978 plaque and the other subsequent memorials at Reconciliation Park in Mankato and the *Wokiksuye K’a Woyuonihan* memorial at Fort Snelling State Park mark a significant departure from the type of triumphalist settler ideology inscribed on and performed at the Defenders State Monument in New Ulm, both perspectives arguably privilege site-specific and distinctly European-American forms of memorialization and in different ways support and legitimize a hegemonic order in which the power to commemorate remains largely with the dominant social group – European-American Minnesotans. Indeed, as Alderman and Inwood (2013, p. 191) note:

Hegemony operates by acknowledging the needs and ideas of subordinate groups and then seeming to incorporate the[ir] interests ... into the national collective identity, thereby giving the appearance that the interests of marginalized groups have been considered in the organization and maintenance of society. Within such a hegemonic social order, memorials and heritage sites narrate a more racially or ethnically inclusive national history, but it is a story scripted to uphold dominant cultural ideas and values about society.

In this way, the commemorative theme of reconciliation in official state declarations, unveiling ceremonies, the renaming of the hanging site and through the narratives of and performances at place-based memorials in Mankato and Fort Snelling State Park, while commendable, might also be considered a later manifestation of dominant cultural ideas and values about the Dakota–US War of 1862 and its aftermath. Certainly they have not universally served an adequate purpose, falling short of the commemorative needs and goals of many Dakota people (Waziyatawin, 2004).¹⁴ Furthermore, where Dakota-organized forms of commemoration have occurred (e.g. the pow wow, horse ride and memorial run), they have

tended to focus on the 38 male victims of the mass public hanging in Mankato. By contrast, organizers of and participants in the Dakota Commemorative March (DCM) have sought alternative means for commemorating the events of 1862 and honouring their ancestors.

While organized to principally remember and honour those on the original forced march in 1862, the DCM considers the legacies of and seeks healing from those events in ways that affectively engage Dakota participants from across the upper Midwestern US and Canada with a largely unmarked and unremarked landscape (at least so far as the 1862 forced march is concerned), and not at just a few specific sites, but throughout the commemorative landscape to the war and its aftermath. In the next section, we address the March as an alternative and uniquely Dakota counter-memorial (Legg, 2005), as a more-than-representational intervention in the extant memorial landscape in terms of what is commemorated and how and its operative and interpretative scales. In particular, we explore the ways it draws on affective participation in the landscape to not only remember but heal from the historical trauma of events in the aftermath of the Dakota–US War of 1862. We conclude by considering the affective outcomes of the DCM, especially the extent to which a future-oriented transformative politics focused on social justice for the Dakota has taken hold and how Dakota perspectives on the war and its aftermath, including the forced march of 1862, are beginning to be reflected in interpretation at site-specific markers in the region.

Affective participation in the Dakota Commemorative March (2002–present)

The DCM as alternative/counter memorial

Described as Minnesota's own 'Trail of Tears' (Mato Nunpa, 2004), the forced march of approximately 1,700 Dakota women, children and elders on 7–13 November 1862 from the Lower Sioux Agency to a makeshift concentration camp established on the floodplain below Fort Snelling was absent in the hegemonic historical narrative of site-specific markers in the commemorative landscape to the Dakota–US War of 1862 extant as of 2002. Memorials commemorating specific events in the war and its aftermath at discrete places, such as the battles in New Ulm and the mass hanging in Mankato, resulted in a focus on those events and places and the stories they told at the expense of other historical events and processes less easily narrated and observed at specific sites. Indeed, the forced march of 1862 extended over seven days between the Lower Sioux Agency and Fort Snelling and was part of a longer term process of Dakota removal and dispossession with violent and traumatic consequences. As Tyner et al. (2012, p. 854) recognize, 'highly visible and officially commemorated sites serve to obfuscate other, more mundane sites (and practices) of violence'. In this way, landscape is duplicitous (Daniels, 1989), highlighting the past in outward physical forms of commemoration in certain ways at some places and elsewhere hiding it in plain sight. The DCM was organized in part to address the failure of discrete place-based markers to commemorate the forced march in 1862. As a practice of remembrance that promotes an embodied and highly emotive engagement with events, people and processes associated with the original forced march in 1862, the form and scale of the event are reflective of the intention of its organizers and participants to intervene in the commemorative landscape to the Dakota–US War of 1862 in a radically different way.

The DCM was organized by Waziyatawin (also known as Angela Cavender Wilson), then a history professor at Arizona State University, and Gabrielle Tateyuskanskan, an educator,

artist and activist from the Lake Traverse Reservation in South Dakota, at the suggestion of Leo Omani during a summer institute in New Ulm in June 2001 (Faimon, 2004, p. 248). Called *Manipi Hena Owasin* [We Remember All Those Who Walked] (Schoenhoff, 2004, p. 290), the seven-day commemorative march has taken place biennially since 2002 on the anniversary of the dates of the 1862 forced march.¹⁵ Starting at the Lower Sioux Agency near Morton, Minnesota on 7 November and closing with a ceremony and feast at the *Wokiksuye K'a Woyuonihan* (Remembering and Honoring) memorial at Fort Snelling State Park on 13 November, participation in the March varies each year and over its duration, with anywhere between a handful of people on some legs to several hundred participants (Faimon, 2004). A train of vehicles, including a mobile restroom, provides breaks for the road-weary and respite from the more extreme weather. Each evening, church and town halls and school gymnasiums serve as places for participants to eat their evening meals and sleep on their makeshift beds. They also serve as venues for public talks by DCM participants to raise awareness of the history being commemorated. Besides a grueling seven-day walk along often exposed highway stretching between towns along the Minnesota River, in which participants relive some of the physical hardships their ancestors endured on the original forced march, the DCM also serves an important ceremonial function. As Gwen Westerman, a humanities professor at MSU, Mankato and participant in the DCM since 2004 clarifies, the March is 'not a protest. It's not a re-enactment. It's a spiritual ceremony for healing and for honoring those women and children we descend from' (quoted in Beckstrom, *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, 12 November Beckstrom, 2012). A key ceremonial element of the March involves symbolically marking the landscape.

At every mile along the route, a ceremony is held in which the names of two or more maternal ancestors known to have been on the original forced march are read aloud. A wooden stake with the Dakota names of the women written on red ribbons is driven into the ground – the only tangible physical trace left on the DCM. Participants pay their respects by praying, burning sage and offering tobacco. For many Dakota participants, the naming ceremonies evoke a range of powerful and sometimes unexpected emotions that reconnect them as a Nation/community to their ancestors, each other, their past and not least of all their ancestral homeland (Mato Nunpa, 2004; Wilson, 2004). Rather than static, objective and bounded as are stone or bronze memorials, as an affective practice, the DCM is a fluid, immediate, intimate, emotive, complex and highly personal form of commemoration not bound to a single site.¹⁶ Compared to discrete place-based memorials, the March occupies a more extensive scale in terms of the physical path it takes and places/landscapes engaged (see Figure 1), as well as the interpretative community it serves.

While the operative scale of the DCM engages places/landscapes along its entire 150-mile route, the March also draws together the Dakota *Oyate* [nation] dispersed throughout the Upper Midwestern US and across the border in Canada. Since their exile following the Dakota–US War of 1862, Dakota people have been separated not only from their ancestral homeland but also from each other, making historical and cultural commemoration more of a challenge than for localized European-American communities in their compact settlements. Mary Beth Faimon, a social worker by training and a Minnesotan of European-American heritage who helped organize and participated in the 2002 DCM, recognizes that '[t]he community is usually a geographic entity, such as a neighborhood, city, or village. Within the traditional Dakota *Oyate* there are many communities. The geographic area encompasses Canada, North and South Dakota, Nebraska and Minnesota' (Faimon, 2004, p. 246). Following

Dwyer and Alderman (2008), if the DCM were a map, operationally it would cover the entire length of its path (see Figure 1), but its participatory and interpretative connections extend far beyond the region. Like the annual pow wow, memorial horse ride and relay run, the DCM serves to reunite Dakota people from across the larger region in practices of remembrance that also have the effect of reforging familial and broader cultural ties. According to Clifford Canku, a spiritual leader from Sisseton, South Dakota, 'the significance of the walk is both historic remembrance of the people who came this way before us, and also the revival of the spirit of being Dakota' (quoted in Dyslin, 2002). Indeed, remembrance and cultural-spiritual revival are co-constitutive processes on the DCM, pursued as part of the desire to both bear witness to and heal from the traumatic and divisive events during and in the aftermath of the Dakota-US War of 1862.

For the Dakota diaspora, divided into factions during the war in 1862 and subsequently exiled and separated since, the memory work of the DCM goes beyond remembrance to promote healing among and between

descendants of the Dakota who chose not to fight in the war and fled; those who remained during the period of war on their treaty land and did not act; those who fought for their homeland, died, were wounded in battle, or hanged in Mankato; and those who betrayed their own people or were killed by the U.S. government forces. (Faimon, 2004, p. 245)

For Waziyatawin (2004, p. 325), 'the fractionated relationships among the surviving Dakota have been transferred, from generation to generation, creating a lingering resentment among our own people'. The DCM has thus served as a way to bring Dakota people together to repair the cultural damage resulting from their experiences with conquest and colonization – the key to which is healing from what Faimon (2004) calls the 'historical trauma' of the effects of the war and its aftermath and continuing what was an interrupted grieving process:

Addressing the historical trauma is an essential element to the recovery process, and remembering and mourning are critical. The recalling and retelling of history from an Indigenous perspective bears witness to the experience and context of 1862–1867. (Faimon, 2004, p. 241)

In this way, the DCM has been a deeply affective counter-memorial practice for its participants.

Registering emotion on the DCM

While the biennial DCM is a deeply spiritual event that is about collectively bearing witness to the past and fostering a renewed and reclaimed Dakota identity, many of the participants who recorded their experiences marching have stressed its emotional and affective impacts. As Waziyatawin (2004, p. 293) points out, 'most of us were deeply affected by our participation and felt transformed by the end of the experience'. For Chris Mato Nunpa, a retired professor of Indigenous Nations and Dakota Studies at Southwest Minnesota State University who was involved in the planning stages of the DCM, it also provided an opportunity to grieve those who had not yet been grieved 'in the appropriate, ceremonial, and Dakota way' and remember many others who suffered physical harm in the aftermath of the war – men who were hanged in Mankato and bodies disposed of; a baby who was grabbed from her mother's arms and 'dashed to the ground' by a townswoman in Henderson and placed by her mother in the crotch of a tree before carrying on; women, children and elders scalded by boiling water poured out of windows and assaulted with rocks and household objects at the hands of angry townspeople as they passed through Henderson; and Mato Nunpa's own relative whose stomach was slit by a soldier's saber and then thrown into a creek for

not understanding an order to move on (Mato Nunpa, 2004, p. 232). Accordingly, the DCM has involved physically and emotionally reliving the trauma of the forced march such that its tragedy has become 'very real through the emotions of hurt, sadness, and anger' (Mato Nunpa 2004, p. 231).

The physicality of participating in the DCM is integral to creating historical empathy for or bearing witness to the physical suffering endured by those on the original forced march in 1862 (Waziyatawin, 2004), but the March also comports the emotional agony of the event commemorated and its long-term social effects:

While it was clear we were all participating to remember our ancestors and the suffering they endured on the march back in 1862, it was equally clear that the sense of hurt and pain from that event was intertwined with all the hurt and pain we have felt from the loss of connection to our relatives, from the suppression of our stories and culture, and from the distances we now have to travel to come together. (Waziyatawin, 2004, p. 299)

Participants in the DCM experience sadness and anger,¹⁷ together with 'ongoing stress and anxiety' associated with a grieving process that had undergone a 140-year interruption. As Waziyatawin (2004, p. 311) explains, 'not only are Dakota people today carrying the grief that resulted from the terrible suffering endured by our ancestors leading up to 1862 and proceeding to the present day, but we are also trying to resume that interrupted grieving process'. The DCM has provided an important arena for the continuation of that process, facilitating healing and intracultural unity through affective participation in the event.

According to Waziyatawin (2004, p. 326), there developed 'a deep sense of unity among the marchers' that fostered intergenerational healing and a feeling of profound interconnectedness among the Dakota. With the intensification of such bonds, the conclusion of the first DCM in 2002 – coming at the end of seven physically and mentally draining days on the road and many months of prior planning – was emotional for participants, particularly the final approach to Fort Snelling via Mendota Bridge:

It was at that time that the fort finally came into sight, and from that vantage point we could look down upon the site where the concentration camp stood. All we could do was continue to put one foot in front of the other as grief overtook us. At one point one of the young girls broke down, and we stopped to comfort her, and pray for her. The last portion was difficult for all of us. (Waziyatawin, 2004, p. 329)

As Diane Wilson recalled, 'a palpable wave of grief settled in as the history that we had recreated began to blur the distinction between past and present' (Wilson, 2004, p. 343).

The grief experienced on the DCM, for some, would give way to more joyous emotion. Referring to a contingent from Sisseton who were so overcome with grief at the hanging site in Mankato that they left the March saying they didn't think they could handle seeing Fort Snelling, Mary Beth Faimon recalled at the final feast and gathering at Fort Snelling State Park how the connectedness and resultant joy the group was experiencing stemmed from the pain and mourning they had also shared:

People who came and didn't stay long enough only experienced the sorrow and the pain. They weren't there to have that other part of that healing with the bonding and with each other and the joy that came with that connecting. (Mary Beth Faimon, quoted in Waziyatawin, 2004, p. 326)

For those who participated in the whole process, the DCM was uplifting, reforging familial and intracultural ties and fostering a deep sense of unity (Faimon, 2004; Waziyatawin, 2004; Wilson, 2004, 2006). As Diane Wilson (2004, p. 348) summed up: 'These seven days had drawn together a group of strangers from across this country and Canada who would leave



Figure 8. Exiled from Their Homeland, the Minnesota River Valley Scenic Byway, 2012, Henderson, Minnesota. Photograph by K. Linzmeier. Retrieved from <http://www.hmdb.org> and reproduced in accordance with website's guidelines.

this night feeling like family, like we had formed strong bonds of community in what we had shared'.

The process of healing, which for Faimon (2004) also constitutes a decolonizing effort most emphatically articulated in the practice of placing stakes at each mile along the route, stands out as the principal transformative affect of the DCM. Rather than the mere product of bodily participation, of being there and going through the motions, the DCM is simultaneously emotional and performative. As Dixon and Straughan (2013, p. 37) remind us, '[t]he emotional registers mobilized by these performances are ... part and parcel of affect, rather than innate passions belonging to the corporeal'. By mobilizing the interrupted grieving process and fostering a renewed unity, and through the sharing of stories not only with each other but with the European-American communities along its path, the DCM is an affective participatory process that inspires action and change beyond the event itself. Indeed, for Diane Wilson, the question has become one of what to do with the shared stories and renewed sense of unity, 'having drawn together this absolutely incredible group of people who are now bonded together on a profound level. How do you take that back out into the world and make change with it?' (Diane Wilson, quoted in Waziyatawin, 2004, p. 327). Indeed, the transformative affects of the DCM have been realized not only among the participants themselves, but also in the communities it engages along its route as witnessed in the way the Dakota-US War of 1862, and particularly its aftermath has since been remembered and commemorated in the landscape.

Making change on the DCM and beyond

Discourse related to the organization of and participation in the biennial DCM makes a strong case for the need not only to heal from but also seek redress for the injustices of events surrounding the Dakota-US War of 1862. Indeed, with current social issues of the Dakota understood as stemming from those events, the need for commemoration and healing is inseparable from the need for justice. As conveyed to an audience of college students, faculty,

staff and townspeople at Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter, Minnesota in a presentation by co-organizer Waziyatawin on the first DCM in 2002:

The current social crisis (we have high rates of alcoholism, we have high rates of abuse, we have high rates of depression, high rates of suicide, high rates of chemical dependency), from our perspective, is a consequence ... of having our lands invaded, of being dispossessed from our lands, and having a policy of genocide or ethnocide perpetrated against us in a very systematic way ... And so when we were thinking about all of these problems, our thinking was that we need to do some healing ourselves and we need to come to terms with some of these injustices. (Waziyatawin, 2004, p. 300)

With the quest for healing and justice directed towards current and future generations of Dakota, the DCM is as much about the present and future as it is about the events of the past:

Our hope is that by remembering them, by remembering their suffering, by coming to terms with just how hard it was, just how much they suffered, just how long that walk was, just what it meant when they came to Fort Snelling, we can begin to come to terms with the truth about our past and work towards healing for the future generations. (Waziyatawin, 2004, p. 331)

At the close of the first DCM, there was a strong sense among participants that rather than the end of something, it was just a beginning (Waziyatawin, 2004). According to spiritual leader Clifford Canku, the March was like a seed and could 'follow many different directions' (Clifford Canku, quoted in Waziyatawin, 2004, p. 333). One of the many directions resulting from the DCM has for some been increased political radicalization inspired by the affective qualities of the landscape encountered on the March.

Serving as both the medium for and at times the subject of commemoration on the DCM, places/landscapes along its route are necessarily and dialectically related to affective-participatory processes. For Waziyatawin, as for others, reconnecting with her homeland on the March, for example, has served an inspirational and instructive source in her increasing political radicalization as a Dakota activist and spokesperson:

[W]hat we've been missing since our disconnection from our homeland in 1863, or 1862 for many, is the daily connection and it really became apparent through the Dakota Commemorative Marches, because I realized that even though Minnesota was my home, I had never in my life spent seven days, all day, walking the land. Never. And that was a life-changing, or life-transforming experience. I was overcome with the beauty of the land, but also overcome with the way the land has been affected by colonization, and that was also politicizing as a consequence for me. (Interview with Waziyatawin, 31 July 2014)

Viewing Minnesota's towns and cities as 'ugly' in contrast to the unspoiled beauty of the river valley has led Waziyatawin to question the effects of colonization in the landscape. As she puts it: 'our land was stolen from us, and our people were killed and forced out of our homeland so they could build *this?!*' (Interview with Waziyatawin, 31 July 2014). Following the first DCM, artist Molly Schoenhoff (2004, p. 291) was similarly moved by the apparent desecration of the Minnesota landscape, its 'highways littered with gas stations, garden centers, industrial parks, and strip malls' and proposed the planting of red Native plants along the path of the removal as a living memorial to the 'bloodshed and loss of life' and the 'lifeblood and the life of the people'. Such a transformation in the landscape, she argues, would serve as 'a gesture of reclamation for Dakota people – a means of expressing their heritage and deep connection to place they know as *Minisota Makoce*' (2004, pp. 291–292).

At the same time, however, not all who have participated over the years have been affected in the same way or to the same extent, as Waziyatawin acknowledges:

That first year in 2002 was such a transformative experience, that many of us ... all we could do was talk about the march, focus on the march, work through expressing our experiences on the march in a variety of forms. There was this outpouring of writing, ... of creative work in poetry, art, music, ... and I thought this is the start of something, and quite honestly now I don't think that's what's happening at all. I don't think it's having that kind of impact anymore. I thought it would be radicalizing everyone who participated, and it hasn't. (Interview with Waziyatawin, 31 July 2014)

Marchers have drawn different understandings from the experience. Indeed, as a fluid, immediate, intimate, emotive and complex mode of commemoration, the March is associated with a range of personal experiences and places/landscapes that result in very different and highly personalized responses. As Waziyatawin remarked, 'a lot of people have participated in the march, and I guess I thought it would affect everyone the same way, [but] ... people take different things from it' (Interview with Waziyatawin, 31 July 2014).

So too have transformative affects been variously felt by European-American participants on the first DCM. For Mary Beth Faimon, for example, the event 'triggered and opened up ... an ownership for those of us who are white who are here now and who were there then' (Faimon, quoted in Waziyatawin, 2004, p. 331). Though the impact of the DCM on the European-American communities it passes through and engages is not easily discernible, the public events and associated local media coverage at the very least 'brought into public consciousness a reminder of the events of 1862 in the towns and surrounding communities where the events occurred' (Faimon, 2004, p. 242). More apparent is the way the war and its aftermath have undergone reinterpretation with new markers in some (though notably not all) communities along the path of the DCM. While the 2012 rededication of the Defenders State Monument in New Ulm might suggest a reticence to empathize with the historical trauma of the Dakota ahead of the sesquicentennial of the Dakota-US War of 1862, a number of other sites have actively reinterpreted events surrounding the war, including the forced march.

Approaching the sesquicentennial of the Dakota-US War in 2012, several 'outdated' state historical markers were replaced with new ones with revised text and interpretation at key sites, including Acton (where the conflict began), Fort Ridgely and near Wood Lake (where the war came to a conclusion). Perhaps most notable in the context of this paper is the newly installed interpretative marker (one of two, side-by-side, addressing the 1862 war and its aftermath) at a park along the Minnesota River in Henderson – the town where a nursing baby was snatched from its mother during the forced march in 1862 and thrown to the ground and killed by a townswoman in retribution for the war. Installed by the Minnesota River Valley National Scenic Byway and administered by the Minnesota Historical Society, the 2012 plaque, entitled 'Exiled from Their Homeland' (Figure 8), sensitively narrates the removal of Dakota from the Lower Sioux Agency to the 'concentration camp' at Fort Snelling. Excerpting accounts from first-hand witnesses, it describes in detail the ordeal experienced by the Dakota women, children and elders, 'those who had not engaged in battle', including attacks by residents of Henderson. It also chronicles the subsequent removal and exile of the Dakota from their ancestral homeland, stating: 'Countless numbers died, families were broken apart, and the traditional way of life of the Dakota was largely destroyed. The results of this forced, mass exile are still felt today'. Echoing stories told by participants on the DCM as part of its goal of community education (or 'truth-telling'; Mato Nunpa, 2004; Waziyatawin, 2004), the

Henderson plaque marks a significant departure from past commemorative discourses at discrete place-specific memorials about the Dakota–US War of 1862 and its legacies.

As a highly fluid, intimate, emotive, complex and personal commemorative process, the DCM is not easily reduced to a singular goal, message or affective outcome nor are its transformative effects/affects easy to account for. What is certain is that the March has found relevance as a unique intervention in the memorial landscape to the Dakota–US War of 1862 beyond the sesquicentennial of the original 1862 forced march. Despite initial plans to discontinue it after 2012, in May 2014, it was announced that the biennial March would carry on with a new focus to ‘look to the future and offer it as a way for our people to continue to gather together to heal and to reconnect with relatives’ (www.facebook.com/DakotaCommemorativeMarch). The Dakota Commemorative March, as an affective participatory practice in the landscape and a living memorial in a state of becoming, thus continues to evolve as a transformative, future-oriented, Dakota community-centred event.

Coda

In this paper, we have drawn on and seek to contribute to the ever-growing cadre of scholarship in social and cultural geography concerning commemoration. Recognizing valuable contributions on narrative, performance and scale in relation to a range of place-based memorials and counter-memorials, we have sought to expand the conceptual focus to take account of alternative (including Native) forms and scales of commemoration. As such, we have considered how the Dakota Commemorative March (DCM) has intervened in the landscape of extant monuments and markers to the Dakota–US War of 1862 and its aftermath – a sequence of events that wrought catastrophic and lasting change for the Dakota communities in Minnesota, resulting in their removal and exile from their ancestral homeland. Invoking the concept of affective participation to refer to the intense bodily, emotive and transformative engagement in a community event, we have described how participants on the biennial DCM, first held in 2002, seek to remember their ancestors and bear witness to and heal from the trauma of the past and its ongoing legacies. In so doing, we have sought to pay attention to the emotional and affective qualities of the March and its capacity to effect change among its participants as well as the European-American communities they interact with along the way. In particular, we note that recently erected memorials in the landscape, such as the 2012 Henderson marker, have begun to tell stories strongly echoing those told as part of the March – stories, which until the first DCM, were absent in the spatial narrative of the memorial landscape.

Affective participation in the DCM serves as a means of commemorating, bearing witness to, coming to terms with and healing from the traumatic and violent events in the lives of the ancestors who experienced them and their resultant legacies of dispossession. As part of this process, the role of place/landscape – in this case, that encountered along the route of the March through the Minnesota River Valley – is critical as both the object of Dakota loss and the principal medium for the intense bodily and emotional connection of participants with their collective past and each other. Like many place-based memorials, the March has brought new focus on past events and the previously unmarked and unremarked places/landscapes (at least so far as the Dakota removal and exile is concerned) in which they occurred. Certainly, as Azaryahu and Foote (2008, p. 180) recognize, ‘[s]tories can be told anywhere. Events may be told orally at the place where they occurred regardless of the

existence of commemorative features in the local scene'. Equally, 'it is important to consider seriously those unmarked but not forgotten sites, for these sites speak loudly to the ongoing contestation of the inscription of memory and remembrance on the landscape' (Tyner et al., 2012, p. 856). Affective bodily participation in the landscape is integral to the process of memory recovery (Alderman & Campbell, 2008), and through affective practices on the DCM, participants actively and dialectically engage with the region as a whole to bring about change in how past events and their legacies are remembered, understood and ultimately acted upon. In this way, the DCM has provided 'a temporal as well as spatial corrective' to the ongoing narration of the Dakota-US War of 1862 that looks set to continue into the future (Tyner et al., 2012, pp. 867-868).

Notes

1. An alternative acceptable name for the conflict is the US-Dakota War of 1862. Others, used historically by Minnesotans and which are now largely out-of-favour, include the Dakota War of 1862, the Sioux Uprising (*The Great Sioux Uprising* being the title of an historically inaccurate 1953 B-Western) and, perhaps most offensive of all, the Sioux Indian Massacre. Following Westerman and White (2012), we've opted for Dakota-US War of 1862.
2. The 38 + 2 refers to the 38 men hanged on 26 December 1862 in Mankato plus two more, Sakpedan (Shakopee or Little Six) and Wakanozhanzhan (Medicine Bottle), captured in Canada and hanged at Fort Snelling on 11 November 1865 (Carley, 1976).
3. Use of the term 'forced march' to describe the removal of Dakota women, children and elders in 1862 is consistent with how the historical episode is understood by many Dakota people today. While many rode in wagons, others walked, and both contemporaries who witnessed the procession and historians since have consequently documented it as a march (e.g. Bakeman and Woolworth, 2008). Equally, there can be no doubt that the Dakota, as prisoners, had little choice in their removal.
4. Methodologically, we draw primarily on textual accounts by (and some interviews with) participants in the Dakota Commemorative March (DCM), particularly those collected in a special 2004 double issue of *American Indian Quarterly*. We especially highlight the perspectives of DCM co-organizer, writer and Dakota activist Waziyatawin, whose own work on the March has recorded the views of fellow marchers. This approach is preferred by the authors over first-hand participant-observation for several reasons: first, it permits an unobtrusive engagement with the object of research (see also Modlin, Alderman, & Gentry, 2011; Pile, 2010); second, the use of textual sources and interviews forefronts the voices of those who participated in the DCM *ex post facto*, thus permitting reflection on its emotional impact and significance in ways that might not have been immediately apparent or communicable during the March itself – at least to the extent that affect and emotion possess the capacity for representation (see Pile, 2010); and third, participating as non-Native researchers and academics would not be in tune with the intention of the March as a determinedly Dakota ceremonial practice focused on remembering and healing from a particularly traumatic episode in their collective past. Observing the solemnity of the ceremony prior to and departure of the 2014 DCM from the Lower Sioux Agency as a bystander reaffirmed for the first author the above rationale.
5. Following Gregson and Rose (2000) and their reading of Butler (1993), we understand performativity to be fundamentally spatial, such that 'performances do not [only] take place in already existing locations' they 'bring these spaces into being' (Gregson & Rose, 2000, p. 441).
6. Considerable work has been done examining the role of parades, such as St. Patrick's Day Parades (Marston, 1989, 1991, 2002), in the maintenance of and contest over cultural identity (see also Brickell, 2000; Browne, 2007; Harvey, Brace, & Bailey, 2007; Moss, 1995; Mulligan, 2008; Nash, 1997; O'Reilly & Crutcher, 2006; Veronis, 2006).
7. Alderman and Inwood (2013, p. 195; citing Till, 2005) write that the term 'memory-work' highlights the labour of assembling memorial landscapes and 'recognizes the political and

cultural creativity needed to create public spaces through which citizens can debate their understandings of the past, question dominant regimes of memory, and work through historical losses and trauma. These 'public spaces' needn't, we argue, be limited to site-specific markers and monuments; indeed, processes of debating, questioning and working through can also occur elsewhere and still constitute an important component of memory work and memorialization that necessarily interacts with place/landscape.

8. Following Tyner, Inwood and Alderman (Tyner, Inwood, & Alderman, 2014, citing Galtung, 1969), we understand violence in both its physical and direct forms (which refer to the inflicting of actual bodily harm on others) as well as its structural forms (which relate to socially instituted modes of inflicting harm and injury on groups and individuals). Rather than reifying violence as a set of indubitable physical outcomes, the concept of structural violence serves to denaturalize it from being simply an effect and recognizes the importance of its historical and social contexts. This way, we recognize not only the direct forms of violence visited on the settlers and Dakota during the conflict and through punitive measures taken in its aftermath, but also the longer term structural violence of Dakota dispossession and removal, resulting in the loss of their homeland and traditional ways of life. Hence, the need for Dakota people to reconnect and reclaim the landscape through the DCM (see Faimon, 2004).
9. We are careful to note that neither of the co-authors are Dakota or Native American, nor do we presume to speak for or represent a Dakota or any other Native perspective in our scholarship. Indeed, as Erin Griffin makes clear, there is no shortage of non-Dakota and non-Native commentary on this episode of Dakota-US history in print and in the commemorative landscape (Griffin, 2009). Besides the theoretical arguments we set forth, and consistent with Shaw, Herman, and Dobbs's (2006) call to decolonize the discipline of geography by explicitly engaging issues relevant to Indigenous communities, we wish to draw the attention of social and cultural geographers to the existence of such alternative forms of commemoration in the landscape and create an opening for consideration of different (including Dakota) geographical perspectives on the past.
10. Traditionalist Dakota is a term used to refer to those who sought to retain their traditional ways of life, relying on hunting and gathering for sustenance, in contrast to those who to varying degrees were assimilated by European religion, education and even dress codes (Wingerd, 2010).
11. Despite the name of the 1862 conflict implicating all Dakota peoples, it was primarily fought by men from the Mdewakanton and Wahpekute bands; the Sisseton and Wahpeton did not to participate. Furthermore, and as Diane Wilson chronicles in her book *Spirit Car* (2006), many families were of mixed white-Dakota ancestry resulting in torn loyalties and internecine fighting.
12. Prior to its removal for repairs, the monument was rededicated on the sesquicentennial of the Battles of New Ulm in 2012.
13. A plaque in the visitor centre of Fort Snelling State Park entitled 'Dakota Conflict Concentration Camp', forming part of an exhibit about *Bdote*, the spiritual centre of the Dakota homeland, lists those held at the camp by Dakota band, maternal family name and the number in each family.
14. Of particular note is the request by the Dakota Studies Committee, which devised the idea of the Year of Reconciliation in 1987 and co-sponsored many of the associated activities, for an apology from the Minnesota Historical Society (MHS) for its treatment of the remains of Taoyateduta (Chief Little Crow). The MHS, which had displayed and stored them until 1971, refused to issue such an apology (Wazyatawin, 2004).
15. It has been documented that the military escort of 1,700 Dakota women, children and elders from the Lower Sioux Agency to Fort Snelling didn't go through New Ulm and Mankato on the Minnesota River (which is the route taken by the DCM and was the route taken in 1862 by the party escorting some 400 Dakota men for imprisonment at South Bend near Mankato, where 38 would eventually be hanged; Glewwe, 2008). Instead, the escort of Dakota families was directed across the prairie to Henderson, where it met the Minnesota River (Bakeman & Woolworth, 2008). As the theoretical position of this paper makes clear, we do not accept any suggestion that the subsequent commemorative marches are disqualified as memorials because they do not trace the exact same path as the original. Rather than evaluate the DCM as an accurate

reconstruction of the original forced march, the intent of our research is to attend to the more pertinent question of how this series of historical events and their consequences for the Dakota and their ancestral homeland are commemorated in the broader regional landscape today.

16. As Erin Griffin (2009) comments, 'I understood that I would be remembering and honoring my ancestors, but I didn't realize the complexity of that act. Part of that complexity was the fact that we were reestablishing ourselves as Dakota people in *Mnisota Makoce*, our homeland' (pp. 26–27).
17. The anger generated by the acknowledgement of loss through participation in the DCM was at times challenged by townspeople who attended the evening talks. Chris Mato Nunpa relates the indignant reaction in a letter from a Catholic priest and school principal to his address at a school in Sleepy Eye, Minnesota, where participants had received gifts of socks and gloves. Mato Nunpa responded: 'We, as Dakota people, have a right to be angry about the loss of our ancient homeland, about the forced marches, etc. Socks, gloves, and caps are not an even exchange for twenty-four million acres of rich farmland and do not even come close to compensating for the unresolved grief, anguish, and heartache of the Dakota People' (Mato Nunpa, 2004, p. 223). Similarly, in an interview with co-author Kelsey Carlson, Waziyatawin commented on how, after completing four marches between 2002 and 2008, she 'was far angrier than when she had started' (Interview with Waziyatawin, 31 July 2014).

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