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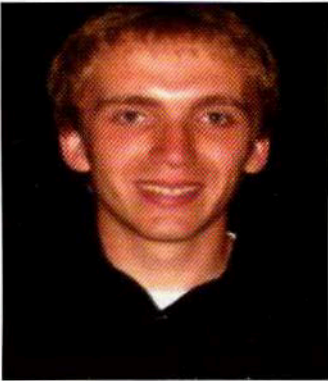
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## SHARING SACRED SPACE: A HISTORY OF ROCKEFELLER PARK

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David Carter

David Carter is a fourth year student studying History and Political Science at CWRU. As well as his academic pursuits, he is a member of CWRU's Men's Varsity Cross Country and Track & Field teams, and brother of the Phi Kappa Tau Fraternity. David is a current member and past president of Case Men's Glee Club and has served as Treasurer of his class for two years. Following graduation, he plans to enroll in law school, and upon receiving his Juris Doctor, he aspires to earn an officer commission in the United States Marine Corps as a Judge Advocate General and practice military law.

Cleveland's government and interest groups have erected monuments and christened memorials in order to shape the way that citizens remember certain persons, events, groups, and eras. However, the meanings of these public monuments may transform after their construction. Just a mile northwest of the campus of Case Western Reserve University, Lower East Boulevard was constructed in the late 1890s in East Cleveland. The engineers and civil servants assigned to this construction job could not have foreseen the symbolic importance the road and the eventual surrounding parklands would come to embody. In the century since its construction, the boulevard has become prized real estate for different Cleveland groups to commemorate their respective causes and memorials. Many veteran groups, cultural and ethnic groups, and civil rights groups have memorialized their own symbols along this road, now known as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard in Rockefeller Park. Different groups of Cleveland residents cooperated in and competed for the same tracts of land to memorialize what each of these groups deems sacred. I seek to analyze these groups' efforts in themselves, and paths they took to cooperation or conflict in the historical landscape of Rockefeller Park. Analyzing the perceptions of these groups in the eyes of Cleveland citizens is important as well, since it is for Cleveland's historical memory that interest groups sought to memorialize their causes. I hope to answer if and how a variety of groups can share the same physical space for their causes. Perhaps there are common threads that run through all the commemorative efforts that are now located in a three mile stretch of road through Rockefeller Park.

The story of Dr. Martin Luther King Blvd. begins in the late 1890s. John D. and Laura Spelman Rockefeller deeded to the city of Cleveland a three mile strip of land running alongside the Doan Brook, and it was named Rock-

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### -Acknowledgments-

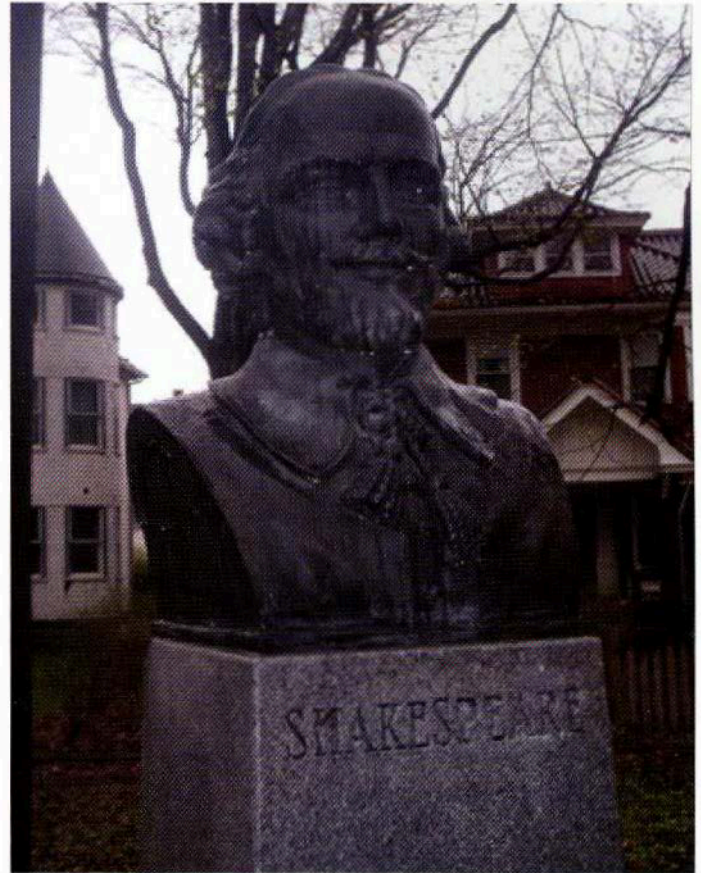
First and foremost, I would like to thank my thesis advisor Professor John Grabowski for guiding me to relevant and useful resources in the beginning stages of my research, and for offering acute yet caring criticism of my paper as I developed my thesis. Also, I would like to thank Professor Sentilles as the instructor of Case Western's History Senior Research Seminar for overseeing myself and a dozen other history majors on our arduous quest to fulfill our independent study requirement. Finally, many thanks to Martin Hauserman, the Chief City Archivist of the Cleveland City Council, and to the staff of the Western Reserve Historical Society for providing veracious direction as I dove into the Cleveland City Council Archives and the collections of the Western Reserve Historical Society.



efeller Park (“Rockefeller Park,” *Encyclopedia of Cleveland History* [ECH], 1998). Afterwards, world events set the stage for Cleveland groups to mobilize in order to commemorate three distinct events in American history: America’s involvement in 20th century armed conflicts, the immigrant communities of Cleveland, and the American civil rights movement. Thus, Rockefeller Park became a commemorative site for Liberty Row, the cultural gardens, and civil rights memorials.

Goldberg and Roy (2007) observe that the Greater Cleveland area is the first metropolitan area to dedicate a living memorial – a nine-mile strip of 850 white oak trees – to its fallen soldiers serving in the First World War. Furthermore, Robbins (2003) finds that planting trees as a living memorial to a nation’s deceased soldiers gained in popularity during the early 20th century, following Cleveland’s lead. Cleveland City Council passed Ordinance 47590 in 1919 to change “North Park Boulevard, running through Ambler Park, Rockefeller Park, and Shaker Heights Park from Cedar to Center Road to ‘Liberty Row,’” also known as Liberty Boulevard. A bronze tablet bearing a name of a deceased soldier of the Greater Cleveland area accompanied each sapling oak tree. To the present day, most of the bronze tablets resting at the foot of the oak trees remain intact, although some of the tablets along Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard have been stolen or vandalized by local Clevelanders, or destroyed by vehicles leaving the confines of the road due to automobile accidents. The issue of stolen and vandalized bronze tablets will make an appearance later in this paper, but for the moment it is a safe assessment to say that the oak trees and bronze tablets still serve their purpose of commemorating fallen Cleveland soldiers of World War I.

At nearly the same time, the first “cultural garden” was dedicated in Rockefeller Park in 1916 with William Shakespeare as its main subject. Although the Shakespeare Garden meant to commemorate culture in the sense of “high culture” and not “ethnic culture,” it also served as an American symbol of solidarity with the Britain and the Entente Powers of World War I. However, this idea of a cultural garden later inspired Leo Weidenthal’s idea to prepare similar cultural gardens related to ethnic groups inhabiting Cleveland. Since then, there are now close to thirty cultural gardens in Rockefeller Park that commemorate ethnic groups, foreign nations, the United States, and groups of people such as African Americans. President George Parras of the Cleveland Cultural Gar-



**William Shakespeare, dedicated in 1916.**

dens Federation (2007) believes that “the idea of linking peace to a mutual understanding across cultures was so powerful that it was recognized internationally.” The cultural gardens drew state ambassadors and heads of state, as well as the founder of the then League of Nations and soon to be founder of the United Nations. Furthermore, former Cleveland mayor Anthony J. Celebrezze said, “I hope and trust that the basic concept behind the Cultural Gardens of Cleveland will provide the necessary impetus in the movement for better understanding among all people, and among all nations throughout the world.” Therefore, two memorialization efforts – World War I veterans and Cleveland’s cultural groups – came to fruition on the same tract of public space. Along with this, an arena for debate emerged among proponents of leaving the area as a monument to Cleveland’s World War I veterans that fell in combat and those who wanted to establish more cultural gardens in Rockefeller Park.

Finally, civil-rights campaigns swept through the United States in the period following World War II. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. visited Cleveland in 1956, 1961, 1963,



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1964, 1965, 1967, and 1968, and was highly active in Cleveland promoting black voter registration, fundraising efforts, and bolstering the local nonviolent civil-rights movement (“Martin Luther King, Jr., Visits to Cleveland, ECH, 1997). He was an important figure in the Greater Cleveland civil-rights campaign, and in 1981, Cleveland christened a street after him in a similar manner that cities across the nation embraced him. However, Cleveland elected Liberty Boulevard to be renamed Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard. Three different memorialization efforts now permeated the landscape of Rockefeller Park.

Before further investigation, it is important to examine what exactly constitutes “public memory.” The phrase “public memory” – and specifically a public memory of the Cleveland variety – presupposes that there is a singular, all-encompassing polity within Cleveland comprised of hundreds of thousands of individuals, and that the consensus public memory of this polity is the summation of the opinions of these hundreds of thousands of Clevelanders. On the contrary, Bodnar (1992) argues that public memory is not a memory formed on consensus, but rather it is the “intersection of official and vernacular cultural expressions.” The more intersections—or similarities—that different groups with power and influence in a community realize, then the greater agreement there is among what people or events should be commemorated within that community, likely leading to less conflict over what should be memorialized in that society’s sacred space. Therefore, public memory is not a greatest common factor or aggregate of the beliefs of all individuals that comprise a polity; rather, public memory is the least common denominator of what everyone agrees should be included in that public memory. Political and non-political actors can influence the development of this public memory through the resources they possess, amplifying and reducing varying aspects of the public memory to their liking or to achieve their objectives.

Turning quickly to Hungary provides an example of when there is no intersection of beliefs among different groups of people concerning what should be memorialized in public memory. As different groups came to possess power in Hungary throughout the 20th century, each group wanted to shape Hungarian public memory differently. For example, Heroes Square, built in Budapest in 1900, commemorates what Hungarians believe to be the 1000th anniversary of Hungary’s establishment. Levinson (1998) writes that the monument included “Franz Joseph himself,

sharing spaces with angels and other national heroes all incorporated into a satisfying story of national identity and historical progress.” Within twenty years of the construction of Heroes Square, however, proletarians took control of Hungary and smashed many of the monuments of Heroes Square, destroying the established public memory of conservatism and historical reverence, which opposed the progressive objectives of Hungary’s proletarian uprising. These proletarian radicals were “quickly replaced by counterrevolutionaries” and Heroes Square was restored to its original grandeur. Different groups in Hungary found no similarities (intersections) in what they believed should constitute public memory during Hungary’s tumultuous early 20th century history. Thus, the creation of a public memory in Hungary is an example of a conflict over what elites believe their society should revere. Public memory in Hungary was not an aggregate of what all Hungarians believed should be commemorated, but rather that which the leaders in society found suitable to their objectives.

The previous example displays the falsity of the claim that public commemoration creates public memory on which all members of that public agree. Rather, the possessors of power craft their public’s historical memory through the use of the society’s sacred space. Levinson continues on to argue that the act of commemoration is “rooted in the political exigencies of the moment.” Furthermore, “not the mere existence of diversity” but “disparate sources of political power” are the vehicles through which actors can communicate their views. The resulting debate shapes the public memory created for a society, and the intersections found through the dialogue of these political actors establish public memory. Thus, it does not matter what different groups in a pluralist society think should comprise that society’s public memory; political elites and groups with political power are the actors that decide where they agree concerning public memory. This is evident in Cleveland’s history; blacks did not achieve any commemorative gains in Rockefeller Park until the African American Cultural Garden was established in 1977 and the road itself was renamed Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard, both long after the establishment of Rockefeller Park and the Cultural Gardens. Why did it take such an extended period for African Americans to establish themselves in the Cultural Gardens and in Rockefeller Park? Levinson speaks to this situation when he writes, “the changes involve... the entry of new groups into the ambit of those with genuine political clout, with the consequent necessity of responding to the demands of these groups.”



Liberty Row, the cultural gardens, and Martin Luther King Blvd. all came into existence together in the same public space because they are symbols whose intersection of cultural expressions are agreeable to the possessors of political power in Cleveland. My thesis has two parts. First, these leaders and influentials aim to promote peace and understanding in a city that has seen its share of racial and ethnic discord. However, the perceptions and reactions of non-elite Clevelanders call into the question the extent to which harmony exists among the demographic groups of Cleveland. To what extent have Cleveland's political elites used Cleveland's sacred space – in particular, Rockefeller Park – to accomplish their objective of harmony among the people of Cleveland?

### The Establishment of Rockefeller Park

Parallel to the Second Industrial Revolution and urbanization in America during the 19th century, an increasing awareness of the importance of preserving parks and establishing park systems arose among city politicians and urban planners. Responding to this trend, in 1871 the State of Ohio enacted legislation to allow for “the improvement and control of all parks in cities of the first class having a population of more than one hundred and fifty thousand inhabitants, shall be vested in a board of park commissioners.” Cleveland caught onto the park-establishing trend a little later than the rest of the nation's metropolitan areas. In the Park Commissioners' Report to the Cleveland City Council (1891), the city's Park Commissioners found that “the city of Cleveland stands to-day at the foot of the list of cities in the United States having a population of 200,000 and upwards in the matter of parks.” Cities such as “New York, Boston, Brooklyn, Philadelphia, Chicago, Baltimore, Detroit, and Buffalo” have experienced “very material benefits” from “the establishment of a well-devised park system.” Public parks “have passed beyond the domain of luxuries and may be justly classified not only as useful, but as profitable adjuncts to a populous, prosperous and thriving city.”

The report determines that “the wild and romantic valley through which Doan Brook takes its sinuous way from Doan Street to the Lake, a distance of 3 miles, is a natural park as nature has formed and adorned it; a comparatively small expenditure would render it one of the very finest parks in the country.” The Park Commissioners moved to acquire immediately this land that would eventually become Rockefeller Park and the home of Liberty Row,



Doan Brook winds its way through Rockefeller Park.

the Cultural Gardens, and Martin Luther King Jr., Blvd. “It is believed that this property can now be secured at a reasonable cost, and that its improvement would so very materially increase the value of contiguous property as to bring back to the city a handsome profit on the expenditure. This valley is so park-like in its natural state that the construction of a driveway and foot-path throughout its length would constitute the only immediate improvement necessary; further betterments and embellishments can be made covering a long series of years. Its improvement might well be made a matter of time; but its purchase should be affected at once” (Park Commissioners Report to the City of Cleveland, Office of the Park Commissioners, 1891).

Five years later in 1896, Cleveland's City Council accepted the generous donation of the above described parkland from John D. Rockefeller, who “tendered to the City of Cleveland for the benefit of all people, tracts of land and money for park and boulevard purposes, which could not be duplicated for a million dollars.” The park was dedicated as “Rockefeller Park, so that his name may go down the ages in the hearts of the present and unborn generations as one of the great names in American history who knew how to plant money where it will be immortal in culture and character” (Park Commission Record, 1893-1896). Neither Cleveland's Park Commission nor the City Council of Cleveland knew the degree to which their predictions would come true concerning the eventual importance of Rockefeller Park.



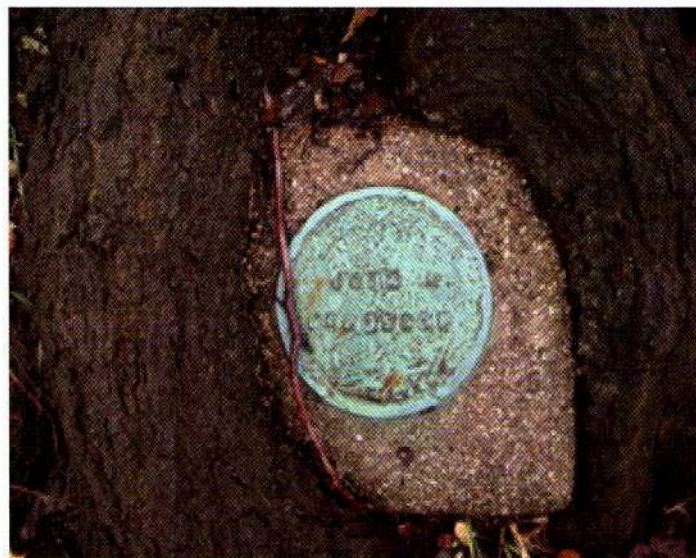
## The Dedication of Liberty Row

In a 1919 Plain Dealer article entitled “An Altar of Sacrifice,” it was reported that “Memorial Day this year takes an added significance from the nature of America’s recent activities in war and peace. Cleveland is to dedicate its Liberty Row and Altar of Sacrifice—emblems of the community’s appreciation of the magnificent service performed by her own sons.” The scenic boulevard became the home of two parallel lines of oak trees—a line of oaks on each side of Lower East Boulevard that weaves through Rockefeller Park. A bronze plate bearing the name of a fallen World War I soldier and his date of death accompanied each oak tree. The Plain Dealer goes on to write, “This is a people’s demonstration of loyal approval for what Cleveland’s soldiers, sailors, and marines did upon the battle fields of Europe.” Furthermore, a 1918 Plain Dealer article entitled “Victory Oaks” describing the victory achieved in death of the American soldiers that each tree represents; these trees would be a symbol to “Clevelanders of coming generations who shall contemplate the long rows of venerable and majestic oaks.”

Who the Plain Dealer journalists meant by “the people” and a stereotypical “Cleveland of the coming generation” are murky at best, but there must have been a feeling that there was wide agreement in the sanctity and legitimacy of this act of commemoration. However, even before “coming generations” had a chance to contemplate the memory of fallen soldiers and majesty of the oak-lined boulevard, vandals, youth, and speeding automo-



A row of Victory Oaks along North Park Boulevard



John A. Jacobson, World War I veteran killed in action.

biles were desecrating the commemoration of the fallen World War I soldiers. For instance, a 1936 Plain Dealer article “Vandals Take War Hero Markers in Liberty Row” reports that “six bronze discs, each bearing the name of a soldier who died in France, have been chiseled out of their concrete bases—at a profit to the vandals of nearly half a dollar each.” By 1930, 14 of the 830 bronze plaques were missing from their respective victory oaks (Liberty Row List). In addition to vandals, a 1922 Plain Dealer article entitled “The Soldiers’ Trees” blames adolescent automobile drivers—colloquially known as “petters”—taking their romantic interests to the dark nooks of Liberty Row and “backing their machines to the shadows” and crushing sapling victory oak trees. Although the journalist concedes that they may not “see the little oaks,” he also writes that “probably they would not care if they did see them.” Finally, the same writer also cites speeding automobilists as treacherous to the survival of the frail, young oak trees. In all of these scenarios, the writer says it is necessary to call attention to “the sacredness of the oaks” and to the recklessness of those “speeding through sacred precincts.” A comparable act would be speeding through a cemetery on Memorial Day when American flags and flowers have been brought to the graves of deceased veterans; it was disrespectful and simply was not to be condoned. Thus, in the few years since Liberty Row was dedicated, it had already captivated some Clevelanders as sacred, as well as fallen to the realm of indifference in the minds of other Clevelanders.

Even though certain groups of Cleveland society felt un-





A vandalized memorial rests in front of a Victory Oak.

bound to the sanctity that enveloped Liberty Row, there were thousands of Clevelanders who celebrated memories that Liberty Row inspired. For example, in 1921 the *Plain Dealer* reports that nearly 50,000 Clevelanders were on hand to witness the 10,000 veterans and participants in a Memorial Day Parade along Liberty Boulevard in the presence of the memorials of oak trees and emblazoned bronze plates. Also, “Helen” wrote in distress to the *Plain Dealer*’s “Miss Joy” column (1920) to ask “why are so many of the name plates missing?” Furthermore, *Plain Dealer* writer Henry Bailey (1920) wrote that flowers planted in the vicinity of the oaks and bronze plates added both to the beauty of Rockefeller Park and affixed another “living” component alongside the oak trees to commemorate the fallen soldiers: “From every point of view—patriotic, symbolic, aesthetic—the planting of those flowers of living green and lustrous gold is exactly right.” Finally, Cleveland’s dedication of Liberty Row inspired other cities in the United States to pursue similar methods of commemoration. *Plain Dealer* articles excitedly announced that Tiffin, Ohio planted trees “in Front Park as a memorial to soldiers who died in World War I” (1922), Mayor Couzens of Detroit “favors the erection in Detroit of an “altar of sacrifice” similar to the one under way here [in Cleveland]” (1922), and Fremont, Ohio had Buckeye trees engraved with the names of their hometown fallen soldiers planted on both sides of the Memorial Parkway (1920).

#### Beginnings of the Cultural Gardens

A few years following the dedication of Liberty Row as a living memorial for deceased veterans of World War I, another commemoration effort was afoot in Rockefeller Park: “The Cleveland Cultural Garden Federations was founded in 1925 as the Civic Progress League by Leo Weidenthal, who, during the dedication of the Shakespeare Garden in Rockefeller Park in 1916, felt that similar sites should be prepared for each of the city’s nationality communities” (“Cleveland Cultural Garden Federation, ECH, 1998). With the dedication of the Shakespeare Garden in 1916, there was no conception or precedent for a collage of parklands running along a parkway that celebrated the diverse ethnic makeup of a metropolitan area. However, in a short decade, the idea of a cultural garden coalesced in the mind of Leo Weidenthal, and the Hebrew Cultural Garden came to fruition in 1926.

A 1929 *Plain Dealer* article “Gardens to Focus on Old World in City” gives an account of The German Cultural Garden recently dedicated, and “steps to establish a chain of cultural gardens throughout Cleveland” started to gain momentum among Cleveland’s nationality communities. At this early date, however, what a cultural garden would mean to various Cleveland citizens already showed signs of divergence. In the same article, Jennie Zwick, who was instrumental in coordinating the dedication of the Hebrew Cultural Garden, recognized that there are differences between ethnic groups which created a distinctive personality in each, creating a distinctive culture in which the souls of their people were represented. However, she hoped “that the entire chain of gardens will represent the search for truth that knows no race or creed.” A celebration honoring Leo Weidenthal and Charles J. Wolfram, both past presidents of the Civic Progress League, celebrated their efforts in establishing the cultural gardens “because they are acting as an inspiration for the national groups and are working to create a better understanding among the groups” (Two Honored for Cultural Gardens, *Plain Dealer* [PD], 1932).

Wolfram, who initiated the German Garden movement, recognized the unprecedented nature of cultural gardens and the grandeur it would bring to the city of Cleveland; the plan was “something new, never having been attempted before anywhere in the world. If the plan is developed up to expectations, the whole world will be looking at Cleveland” (“Gardens,” PD, 1932). On the other hand, the Civic Progress League representative Joseph B. Smolka of the Slovak group believed that a Slovak cultural garden “would be an outward expression of an inward feeling. If



we had a garden, we could take children there, could point out to them things which have been great in Slovak history through the centuries." Although the benefits of the outward-looking, visionary ideal of Zwick and Wolfram and the inward-looking, community-oriented goals of Smolka are not mutually exclusive, the emerging cultural garden movement already possessed different meanings to different persons. Even though the cultural gardens' meaning may not have been universally agreed upon, Cleveland's ethnic communities celebrated the cultural gardens widely after the Civic Progress League instituted them. A spring festival and costume ball of the Civic Progress League had "twelve nations officially represented at the affair, and more than 3,100 persons attended" ("Nations Link Arms in Frolic at Public Hall," PD, 1930).

#### Jewish-American veterans, the German Cultural Garden, and Liberty Row

Early in the lifetimes of both Liberty Row and the Cleveland Cultural Gardens, there were interactions and intersections in Rockefeller Park's sacred space concerning the oak trees and bronze plates commemorating fallen Jewish soldiers. A month prior to Memorial Day 1928, The Jewish War Veterans' "application for admittance" to the Joint Veterans Commission had "been held up because it was thought that to let this group in would result in opening the doors to numerous other groups, thus making the commission unwieldy and less able, therefore, to take care of veterans' needs" ("Jewish Veterans," PD, 1928). Although this effort failed, Jewish representatives were also appointed to approach "the county commissioners in the matter of obtaining grave markers for Jewish service men, and to see the director of parks about obtaining the Star of David for use on Liberty Row for those trees planted in honor of the Jewish fallen." Once Memorial Day arrived, the Jewish War Veterans were permitted to mark the trees on Liberty row with the Star of David ("Jewish War Veterans," PD, 1928). This is one of the earliest signs of cooperation among a Cleveland cultural community and the curators of Liberty Row.

America's involvement in the First World War created a common ground through which ethnic communities could integrate themselves into the Cleveland community and gain acceptance; these ethnic communities' members emigrating from areas affected by warfare strengthened their commitment to Americanize and assimilate. The City Council of Cleveland and Cleveland's various war advi-

sory committees reinforce these immigrants' efforts to assimilate into Cleveland society. For example, in 1918 the Cleveland Americanization Committee hosted "a public meeting in the council chamber of the city hall on Tuesday evening, May 7th, at 8 o'clock, to announce the winners in the prize essay contest, 'Why My Parents Came to America' recently conducted by the Cleveland Americanization Committee. The mayor will distribute the prizes, and there will be music by two national groups."

In order for a Cleveland ethnic group to perpetuate and sustain its cultural heritage inside its own community, its members needed to construct its ethnic identity in this era of intense Americanization efforts during and following World War I. Ethnic immigrants cannot be expected to cleave to patriotic memories of America's founding fathers or other patriotic memories from the colonial era, Revolutionary War, or Civil War. However, American society in general and Cleveland society in particular appreciated similar displays of patriotism to their homelands. Bodnar uses "homeland symbolism" to refer to an ethnic community's efforts to simultaneously please non-immigrant Americans' respect for ethnic patriotism through the commemoration for their ethnicity's historical leaders and symbols. Therefore, ethnic communities placing homeland symbols in their respective cultural gardens pleased both Cleveland political elites that value patriotism and the members of the Cleveland ethnic community.

This concept of homeland symbolism is what allowed the German community of Cleveland to assert their presence in the city's cultural sphere so shortly after World War I even though Germany was a wartime enemy. German Clevelanders achieved the first truly ethnic cultural garden in Rockefeller Park—aside from the Shakespeare Garden—in 1926. This achievement is incredible considering the anti-German/Prussian sentiment that remained in Cleveland after the First World War. An example of anti-German sentiment is a City Council of Cleveland ordinance passed in 1918, lambasting the German aggressors: "Whereas, the President of the United States at the beginning of the hostilities between the United States and Germany, solemnly declared that one of the aims of the United States will be the liberation of all Slavic races from the *tyranny* of the Hapsburg dynasty and explicitly named Bohemians and Slovaks as the nations first to be considered among Slavic nationalities of Austro-Hungary to be independent free states" (File No. 46288, Minutes of the Cleveland City Council [MCCC], 1918). Another



example of anti-German sentiment in Cleveland during the First World War is the efforts of the City Council petitioning Cleveland's "Commissioner of Engineering and Construction to proceed at once to furnish the Council the names of all avenues, courts, roads, and lanes in the city of Cleveland having distinctive German names" (File No.



Goethe and Schiller embody Bodnar's concept of homeland symbolism for Cleveland German-Americans.

46668, MCCC, 1918). Later records of the Cleveland City Council show the renaming of "Berlin Road that runs from Syracuse Avenue to St. Clair Avenue changed to E 182nd St" (File No. 47100, MCCC, 1918). A final example of anti-German sentiment that the German Clevelanders overcame was the drama of two City Councilmen, John G. Willert and Noah C. Mandelkorn, being expelled for expressing "German tendencies" and not being considered loyal to the United States during wartime. Their expulsion resulted in a written letter from W. J. Zoul, Adjutant of the Army and Navy Union of Cleveland which lauded City Council for expelling Willert and Mandelkorn, and thus "carrying on and winning this war against

Prussianism and for world democracy" (File No. 46794, MCCC, 1918).

In spite of the widespread anti-German sentiment at the erid of World War I displayed by the city government and Cleveland groups outside of the city government, German Clevelanders achieved the first ethnic cultural garden alongside Liberty Boulevard. The juxtaposition of Cleveland's memorial to World War I veterans with a memorial to German culture could only be achieved through the use of homeland symbolism. The central figure in the German cultural garden are two bronze statues of Johann Wolfgang Goethe and Friedrich von Schiller, German heroes that possess both cultural and patriotic meaning for Germans. Surely, the Cleveland City Council would not have approved of bronze statues of Wilhelm II or Erich Ludendorff in the German cultural garden. On the other hand, both Goethe and Schiller possess two defining qualities of homeland symbols without carrying any egregious connotations; they commemorate German culture, and they embody German immigrants' patriotism. In fact, their patriotic, nationalist backgrounds comply with President Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points with respect to national self-determination. In this way, German Clevelanders overcame Clevelanders' anti-German sentiments by creating an intersection in public memory where their cultural community could reassert themselves into the Cleveland cultural sphere.

#### One World Day and the Hough Riots: Racial-Ethnic Tensions

Racial riots tore through Cleveland's Hough neighborhood in July 1966. A month later, a Plain Dealer journalist framed "One World Day" as an attempt to heal the riot-scars that were still fresh in the minds of Clevelanders ("One World Day's Brotherhood Theme to Replace Riot-Scars," PD, 1966). That year, One World Day saw its 21st annual celebration in the Cleveland Cultural Gardens. One World Day "accentuates the purpose for the creation and existence of the Cultural Gardens: Brotherhood, equality, democracy, and an understanding between peoples." Cleveland Mayor Ralph S. Locher further elaborated the importance of the cultural gardens in healing wounds from Cleveland's race riots and building bridges between peoples; One World Day "serves to remind us of our obligation to preserve and strengthen Cleveland as a living symbol of how people of many nationality backgrounds can join in a common effort of achievement without losing



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their individuality" ("World Day Proclaimed," PD, 1966).

In a Report on the Ethnic Task Force to the Commission on Catholic Community Action, Joe Bauer (1970) attempted to connect the experiences of ethnic Americans to black Americans. He argues that the Civil Rights Movement has encouraged the black community's search for their identity; similarly, the act of "making it" in American society has encouraged the ethnic American "to cut himself off from his roots too fast. The emergence of ethnic consciousness is a reaction to the Blacks' search for identity." Similarly, Bishop Cosgrove gave an address to the Annual Dinner of the Catholic Interracial Council of Cleveland, scolding white suburbanites for pitting "the Black and the Ethnics against each other to avoid facing their own suburban responsibilities." Suburbanites (presumably white) parasitically used the facilities, industries, and benefits provided by the multiracial, ethnic city of Cleveland while ignoring the multiple problems of the city itself.

#### Zones of Conflict: The Elite – Non-Elite Disconnect

Although rhetoric of community and peace pervades the speech of elites from veterans groups, ethnic communities, and civil rights groups, the day-to-day reality is often disconnected from the peaceful and unified Greater Cleveland society that these elites imagine. For example, Mayor Ralph Perk received a letter from a Hungarian Cleveland citizen (1969) citing the terror that he or she—the letter was unsigned due to fear of repercussions—felt in his/her neighborhood near Buckeye Road. As Cleveland proper became a more racially integrated area, ethnic Clevelanders resented African Americans destroying the homogenous ethnic identity of their communities. On the other hand, Nicholas A. Bucur (1970), chairman of the Cleveland Industrial Trade Commission, wrote a letter to United States Vice President Spiro Agnew to suggest to him that Agnew could be the leader in a movement "to build bridges between the black community and the ethnic. The nationality movement is fragmented and needs a solid voice." Although Bucur's intentions are certainly well-meaning, the reality on the ground in Cleveland may not be as simple as he makes it appear.

The Cleveland mayoral campaign of 1969 illustrates the disconnect between Bucur's ideal that he writes to Vice President Agnew and the reality that non-elites experienced in Cleveland at the same time. Republican mayoral candidate Ralph Perk's support came from Cleveland's

multiple ethnic communities; incumbent mayor Democrat Carl Stokes' garnered much of his support from the African American community, as he was elected the first black mayor of a major United States city in 1967; and independent Ralph Locher lost the Democratic primary but chose to run for office as well. The week prior to the mayoral election, polls showed Perk a clear favorite as he rallied ethnic Clevelanders votes. However, a whispering campaign was initiated in the final week prior to the elections with the common theme that a vote for Perk would be a vote against Locher—the preferred candidate of Cleveland's non-immigrant white population—and thus a vote for electing Stokes. Votes that would have otherwise been cast for previously ethnic-supported Perk went to Locher, resulting in Stokes barely securing Cleveland's mayoral election of 1969 ("Papers of Mayor Ralph Perk," Container 1, Folder 6, Manuscript #4456). This account of Cleveland's mayoral election of 1969 illustrates the fear that ethnic Clevelanders had of reelecting the African American Carl Stokes as mayor of Cleveland. While political and cultural elites in Cleveland attempted to build bridges between the ethnic and African American communities of Cleveland, the reality of interracial fear was shown in 1969.

#### CONCLUSION

Memorials, dedications, and commemorations are created by societal elites that want to shape a public memory to fit to their objectives and goals. This is evident among the sacred spaces that inhabit Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd. In 1977, an African American cultural garden was dedicated to the cultural gardens along Liberty Row, and in 1981, Liberty Boulevard was officially rededicated as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd. Except for the Shakespeare Garden, previous cultural gardens were dedicated to a particular ethnic group or nationality. Now, the African American cultural garden represents the identity of the African American community that arises from the trials and struggles that Cleveland's African-American community has endured. As all of this has occurred in Rockefeller Park, the mighty Victory Oaks have presided over the boulevard and all of these occurrences for ninety-two years.

My research and analysis points to a disconnect between the efforts and actions of influential elites in Cleveland society and the common persons and publics that elites represent. Elites attempt to construct common themes of peace, justice, and community through situating multiple



memorials in the same physical space in Rockefeller Park, creating a narrative that builds bridges between Cleveland's fractured demographics. This is certainly an admirable goal for the Greater Cleveland area, yet the rhetoric that Cleveland elites employ does not always coincide with the reality that Cleveland non-elites experience daily. Whether or not the end goals of increasing understanding, tolerance, and peace among Cleveland's peoples is achieved, Liberty Row, the Cultural Garden, and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Boulevard create a magnificent three mile long journey for anyone who chooses to take the time to appreciate intersections in public memory that can be found in Rockefeller Park.



The Finnish Cultural Garden and Victory Oaks reside together along Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.

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