

SENATOR OLIVER P. MORTON AND HISTORICAL MEMORY
OF THE CIVIL WAR AND RECONSTRUCTION IN INDIANA

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	1
Chapter One: Morton the Senator (1865-1877)	16
Chapter Two: Morton's Legacy in the Nineteenth Century (1877-1884)	50
Chapter Three: Morton in Twentieth Century Memory (1890-1907)	87
Conclusion	122
Bibliography	127
Curriculum Vitae	

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Bronze monument of Oliver P. Morton by Frank J. Simmons, 1884.....	85
Figure 2: Marble statue of Oliver P. Morton by Charles H. Niehas, 1900	100
Figure 3: Bronze monument of Oliver P. Morton by Rudolf Schwarz, 1907.....	113
Figure 4: Bronze relief on proper left of Oliver P. Morton Monument, 1907	114
Figure 5: Bronze relief on proper right of Oliver P. Morton Monument, 1907.....	114

Introduction

When I arrived in Indianapolis in August 2012, I knew I wanted to add something to the analysis of Indiana's Civil War history. My topic changed several times, but Oliver P. Morton remained a constant thread in every narrative. For a man with such a colorful, divisive history, his commanding presence in Indiana's history of the Civil War is second perhaps only to the common Hoosier Union soldier. Why was such a prideful partisan held in such high regard—and why was he so closely tied to the veterans who claimed ownership of Monument Circle in downtown Indianapolis? How did he establish himself—and how did memories of his deeds and actions change over time?

This thesis examines Indiana's Governor and Senator Oliver P. Morton, using his postwar speeches, public commentary during and after his life, and the public testimonials and monuments erected in his memory to analyze his role in defining Indiana's historical memories of the Civil War and Reconstruction from 1865 to 1907. Morton became famous for his wartime Republican governorship of Indiana from 1860 to 1866. He commanded more national influence as a Senator from 1867 to 1877 advocating for African American suffrage, but the monuments honoring his memory in Indianapolis and Washington, D. C., reflect Indiana funders' desire to remember Morton as a Civil War Governor and to reinforce viewers' awareness of the sacrifices and results of the war. I argue that the combined efforts of Morton's friends, family, political colleagues, and Union veterans—especially influential members of the Indiana Grand Army of the Republic (GAR)—emphasized Morton's governorship to use his legacy as a rallying point for curating and promoting certain partisan memories of the Civil War and, to a lesser extent, Reconstruction, in Indiana.

This analysis highlights the importance of Morton's reciprocal relationship with Union veterans during and after the war, especially the Indiana GAR. As this fraternal organization's political influence increased from 1884 to 1907, its members erected monuments in Indianapolis and Washington, D.C., and held ceremonies to honor Morton's memory. These occasions also allowed them to shape and evoke memories of Morton to reinforce the values and ultimate lessons they thought Hoosiers needed to remember about the Civil War's causes and veterans' services. The editorials, eulogies, and correspondence produced by Morton's friends, family, political colleagues, African Americans and especially journalists during and long after Morton's life capture differing audiences' memories of Morton's deeds and creeds. Together these accounts and monuments contextualize Morton's importance to Hoosiers looking for recognizable figureheads to represent Indiana, and to serve as touchstones in partisan debates about Hoosiers' memories of the Civil War and Reconstruction from 1865 to 1907.

While not the most popular Reconstruction era politician, Morton's important role in Reconstruction politics is well-established in the historical literature. After arriving in Congress in 1867, Morton quickly became the Republican Party's most outspoken Midwestern representative. Three dissertations – Leslie H. Schultz's "Oliver P. Morton and Reconstruction, 1866-1877," Everett O. Johnson's "The Political Speaking of Oliver P. Morton," and Edwin C. Carpenter's "Political Rhetoric of Oliver P. Morton"—have all cogently outlined Morton's major rhetorical themes and explored his motivations for altering his views on the controversial topics of African American emancipation and suffrage, southern Reconstruction, United States currency, and conditions for southern states' reentry into the Union. They also summarize and identify the major rhetorical

themes that defined his speaking: distrust of southern-sympathizing Democrats, the righteousness of the Republican Party, and the need to protect Union sacrifices through appropriate (punitive) southern Reconstruction policies. Schultz, Johnson and Carpenter are also useful for analyzing the rhetorical structure and lines of argumentation inherent in Morton's most influential political addresses.¹ William Dudley Foulke's 1899 two-volume biography helpfully divides Morton's life according to the Governor and Senator's most prominent political actions. Foulke's account is thorough, but perhaps too one-sided and paints him as an eminently selfless political mastermind.²

These works also have limitations in their usefulness. While Johnson's study is the most helpful for those interested in Morton's Senatorial career, it typifies the limited understanding of Morton's place in historical scholarship.³ Although immortalized as the "Great War Governor" in the public consciousness, the above studies have not analyzed in depth the importance of Morton's senatorial actions, policies, and speeches in shaping the way different audiences (African Americans, civilians, veterans and politicians) remembered him. In particular, Morton's lifelong ties to Civil War veterans provide ample opportunity to probe and question the reciprocal relationship between Morton and

¹ Leslie H. Schultz, "Oliver P. Morton and Reconstruction: 1867-1877" (PhD. diss., University of Chicago, 1935); Everett Orville Johnson, "Oliver P. Morton: a study of his career as a public speaker and of his speaking on slavery, civil war, and reconstruction issues," (PhD. diss., University of Michigan, 1957); Edwin Cecil Carpenter, "The Political Speaking of Oliver Perry Morton," (PhD. diss., University of Illinois, 1966).

² William Dudley Foulke, *Life of Oliver P. Morton*, 2 vols. (Indianapolis: The Bowen-Merrill Company, 1899). This study (necessarily) relies somewhat heavily on Foulke's work to contextualize Morton's past, but I have attempted to avoid painting Morton in the same heroic terms.

³ Johnson's analysis of Morton's rhetoric, while well-executed and researched, artificially limits the discussion of Morton's political career by ending in 1868, when Morton reached his political 'peak' with his great defense of congressional Reconstruction. Few of the speeches Morton delivered during his second term from 1872 to 1877 have the same unique, galvanizing effect of his previous speeches, but they are still very important. In the wake of the economic Panic of 1873, Morton maintained his aggressive attacks against the Democrats and the South. This commitment to his central ideals of Republican power and oversight—and proper memories of the war—during the 1870s solidified his valued reputation. The success and popularity of Morton's repetitive speeches highlight the qualities that made him both a powerful politician and a powerful symbol for Hoosier Union veterans.

Union veterans during his lifetime and long after his death, as expressed through eulogies, essays, monuments, memorial speeches, and even gravesite addresses delivered after his death.

Any analysis of Morton's place in Reconstruction and beyond must first provide a (necessarily brief) account of his upbringing and his activities during the war. Born in Salisbury, Indiana, a tiny town just outside of present-day Richmond, Indiana, on August 23, 1823, Oliver Perry Throck Morton made his living as a lawyer. Morton remained a Democrat until 1854, when, to his disapproval, his party supported expanding slavery into Western territories through the newly passed Kansas-Nebraska Act. Together with future Republican Senator Henry S. Lane and several others, he became one of the founding members of the Republican Party in Indiana in 1854.⁴ Although his early speeches were more suited for formal court rooms than the public political pulpit, he quickly asserted himself as the most domineering (and outspoken) member of the new Party, providing the public image of uncompromising stability needed for its political survival.⁵

During his tenure from 1860 to 1866 as Indiana's first native Governor, Morton established many of the political mainstays that made him famous. With his booming voice and uncompromising attitude toward the rebellious South, he quickly became the

⁴ Lorna Lutes Sylvester, "Oliver P. Morton and Hoosier Politics during the Civil War," (PhD diss., Indiana University, 1968), 2-17, 19-20. Morton's political shift coincided with his dissatisfaction with the recently passed Kansas-Nebraska Act, which repealed the Missouri Compromise of 1820 and opened the way for slavery's westward expansion. Although Morton did not advocate for the abolition of slavery, southern-sympathizing Hoosiers still viewed him as "a rabid abolitionist." For a detailed overview of the political, social and economic issues that shaped Indiana and the formation of the Republican Party, see Kenneth Stamp, *Indiana Politics during the Civil War* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978), 2-17.

⁵ Sylvester, "Oliver P. Morton," 20-24, 54-57. At the outset, the Republican Party in Indiana was divided between radicals like George W. Julian, who lobbied for outright abolition, and more moderate members who sided with the nomination of Abraham Lincoln at the Chicago convention of 1860. Republican Governor Henry S. Lane's pleas for compromise with the South would have doomed the Party to defeat. Sylvester credits Morton's calls for definitive, firm action for rallying many Hoosiers to his aid.

bluntest Union war governor in the Midwest, rallying Hoosiers to fight against southern aggression.⁶ A die-hard Unionist, Morton was among the first politicians to prepare his state for the war, organizing 13,700 Union troops for Lincoln by 1861.⁷ Ever the pragmatist, he used the war to bolster his own political ranks, “forging a political machine under his complete control.”⁸ Historian Kenneth Stamp’s description of Morton’s style of wartime leadership is harsh but fairly accurate:

Morton was an extremely capable executive, but he was blunt, pugnacious, ruthless, and completely lacking in a sense of humor. He refused to tolerate opposition, and he often harassed his critics to complete distraction. The men associated with him ranked only as subordinates in his entourage.⁹

Morton’s brand of humorless political pragmatism made him well-suited to lead a state characterized by political instability. Morton’s partisan governorship, single-handed control of the state’s armed forces, and distrust of the Democratic majority frustrated many.¹⁰ Tempers flared following Lincoln’s nationwide suspension of the writ of habeas corpus by official proclamation in September 1862. While most Democrats remained loyal to the Union, Morton faced steadily increasing political opposition from a small but

⁶ Johnson, “Oliver P. Morton,” 132-144. In Johnson’s deconstruction of Morton’s pivotal wartime oration, Johnson notes that Morton’s opening “War Speech” delivered to the public in 1860, was effective but still primitive, and lacking any kind of introduction or “attempt to engage the listener.” Johnson’s selection of speeches highlights how the war tempered Morton’s speaking style.

⁷ Only 3,700 Hoosiers were deployed by August 1861. Morton wrote to Lincoln and arrogantly offered to personally lead the remaining 10,000 Indiana troops into battle. O. P. Morton to A. Lincoln, 6 August 1861, Oliver P. Morton Papers, 1861-1877, MSS SC1117, Folder 1, Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis, Indiana. Hereafter, the Indiana Historical Society is abbreviated IHS.

⁸ Stamp, *Indiana Politics*, 83.

⁹ Stamp, *Indiana Politics*, 82.

¹⁰ Thomas E. Rodgers, “Liberty, Will, and Violence: The Political Ideology of the Democrats of West-Central Indiana during the Civil War.” *Indiana Magazine of History* 92, no. 2 (June 1996): 131-159. Rodgers convincingly posits that partisan differences in Indiana boil down to a definition of liberty as localized governance free from external restraint. Democrats thus viewed increasing Republican federal control as an intrusion on state-localized socio-economic dependence. More outspoken Democrats viewed secession as the lesser of two evils. Crushing this threat to liberty meant creating an easily-abused federal army under centralized Republican control. Violent resistance to the Union was thus born from traditional mistrust of centralized (and inevitably tyrannical) government—a view confirmed by Morton’s refusal to let the elected Democratic Indiana State House majority dictate policy after 1862.

very vocal minority dissatisfied with the war, Morton's control, and efforts to make the war about abolishing slavery.¹¹ These "Peace Democrats" (also known as Copperheads) derided Morton and the Lincoln administration in newspapers, discouraged and harassed Union recruiters, and advocated for a diplomatic compromise with Confederates.¹² Democrats captured the majority in the state legislature in 1862, and in early 1863 attempted to strip Morton of his executive military powers over Hoosier regiments, chiefly his ability to appoint officers and control local militia and arms. Fearing the Democrats would sabotage Indiana's war contributions, Republicans followed Morton's call to flee from the General Assembly, denying the quorums needed to pass legislation, including the state budget. President Lincoln and Secretary of War Edwin Stanton arranged to finance Indiana through federally-approved private loans from Washington and New York. For the rest of the war, Morton circumvented Democrats' control and ran the state treasury out of a vault in his office he called the "Bureau of Finance."¹³

Morton stretched his executive powers even further to combat domestic dissent and unrest. With the aid of Union General Henry B. Carrington, he established an expansive spy network to undermine southern sympathizers, dubbed "Copperheads" for their desire to poison the war effort. Union commanders carried out sometimes arbitrary arrests, suppressed the civil liberties of antiwar journalists, politicians, and civilians, and generally established a repressive control of the state in the name of preserving the war effort. According to Stephen E. Towne, Morton and Carrington disagreed with such

¹¹ Stamp, *Indiana Politics*, 138-142, 152. Stamp notes that while Democrats criticized Morton, the majority still supported a war to save the Union in 1862. But Unionism was not synonymous with abolitionism, and most Hoosiers did not want the federal government to tamper with the state institution of slavery.

¹² Emma Lou Thornbrough, *Indiana in the Civil War Era, 1850-1880* (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society & Indiana Historical Bureau, 1991), 110-114, 181-183.

¹³ Sylvester, "Oliver P. Morton," 157-209.

heavy-handed Army suppression, viewing it as counter-productive to keeping the peace.¹⁴ In this atmosphere, Kenneth Stampf declares, “the virus of war hysteria poisoned the minds of leaders and people alike.”¹⁵ Democrats predictably bore greater scrutiny in this repressive control over state affairs and responded by decrying the arrests and destruction of private property and violation of personal liberties.¹⁶ Others plotted something more serious—open rebellion.

No event captures the political turmoil and complexity of Morton’s wartime actions like the Copperhead Treason Trials of 1864. In September and October 1864, Hoosiers Harrison H. Dodd, Lambdin P. Milligan, Stephen Horsey, and William Bowles were arrested on suspicion of spearheading a plot with the Sons of Liberty, an outspoken anti-war organization birthed by Ohio Democrat Clement L. Vallandigham. Charges included plans to free Confederate prisoners in Indianapolis’s Camp Morton, capture the local arsenal, and then violently overthrow Indiana’s Union government to establish a Northwestern Confederacy.¹⁷ The military court trails coincided with Lincoln’s reelection and Morton’s bid for reelection to the governor’s chair that year, making them a political sensation during and after the war. Enough evidence led to the quartet’s conviction.

¹⁴ Stephen E. Towne, *Surveillance and Spies in the Civil War: Exposing Confederate Conspiracies in America’s Heartland* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2015), 7, 21, 52, 228-229. Towne notes that Carrington supported the right of free speech and discouraged citizens from using pejoratives like “butternut” or “copperhead” to attack Democrats. He suggested “firm measures, decided, but quiet” were best for dealing with journalists. Morton agreed. Democratic editors commended Morton’s public defense of their freedom of speech in the fearful aftermath of Confederate John Hunt Morgan’s raid into southern Indiana in 1863.

¹⁵ Stampf, *Indiana Politics*, 194. Towne contests Stampf’s dismissal, noting that reports from Hoosier soldiers in the field and in camp supported Morton’s suspicions. Towne, *Surveillance and Spies*, 3, 5-7, 21.

¹⁶ Historical scholarship of this turbulent and controversial period of Indiana’s history is vast. A few helpful analyses include Thomas E. Rodgers, “Liberty, Will, and Violence,” 133-159. The following sources illuminate the wartime suppression of civil liberties in Indiana: Stephen E. Towne, “Works of Indiscretion: Violence Against the Democratic Press in Indiana during the Civil War,” *Journalism History* 31, no. 3 (Fall 2005): 138-49; Stephen E. Towne, “Killing the Serpent Speedily: Governor Morton, General Hascall, and the Suppression of the Democratic Press in Indiana, 1863,” *Civil War History* 52, no. 1 (March 2006): 41-65.

¹⁷ Towne, *Surveillance and Spies*, 8-9, 53-59.

Morton and other Republicans eventually secured a remission of the death sentences to life imprisonment at hard labor soon after the war's end in 1865.¹⁸ The trials formed a nexus for heated debate among politicians and historians as to whether Morton was a patriot or an opportunistic demagogue and became a defining aspect of his lasting legacy.

Many disagreed with and criticized his methods and undeniable partisanship, but Morton was an extremely capable executive. Despite his openly political motives for befriending Indiana servicemen, few disputed his genuine concern. In 1862, he established the first State Sanitary Commission to supply Hoosier soldiers with food, blankets, medical supplies, and arms.¹⁹ Morton did not always agree with President Lincoln's policies, and frequently sought to govern Indiana according to his own ideals, but Lincoln considered him a valuable asset.²⁰ When Confederate leader John Hunt Morgan led a raid into southern Indiana in June 1863, hoping to rally the support of Confederate sympathizers in southern Indiana, Morton organized the militia units that drove Morgan into Ohio. Democrats distrusted Morton's singular control of the state militia, but the event encouraged approval from the shaken citizenry.²¹ More outspoken

¹⁸ Stamp, *Indiana Politics*, 231-233, 240-250. Sylvester notes that Morton was initially reluctant to secure a pardon for the two men. Sylvester, "Oliver P. Morton and Hoosier Politics," 269. Literature on the trials and the general threat of wartime treason and conspiracy within the Midwest continues to grow. Historian Frank L. Klement has perpetuated the conclusion that such societies posed no real threat to Union governments in wartime. See Frank L. Klement, *Dark Lanterns: Secret Political Societies, Conspiracies, and Treason Trials in the Civil War* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1984). Towne has convincingly contested Klement in several essays and books. A few notable examples helpful in crafting this thesis include; Stephen E. Towne, "Worse than Valladolid: Governor Oliver P. Morton, Lambdin P. Milligan, and the Military Arrest and Trial of Indiana State Senator Alexander J. Douglas during the Civil War," *Indiana Magazine of History* 106, no. 1 (March, 2010): 1-39; Towne, "The Persistent Nullifier: The Life of Civil War Conspirator Lambdin P. Milligan," *Indiana Magazine of History* 109, no. 4 (December 2013): 303-354; Towne, *Surveillance and Spies*.

¹⁹ Foulke, *Life of Oliver P. Morton*, vol. 1, 158-164. Stamp likewise credits the Sanitary Commission as one of Morton's most admirable acts. Stamp, *Indiana Politics*, 123-127.

²⁰ Foulke, *Life of Oliver P. Morton*, vol. 1, 207; Towne, *Surveillance and Spies*, 47, 49. Morton often wrote Lincoln to offer unsolicited advice regarding military strategy, especially regarding the protection of Kentucky. Towne notes Morton's responses to home front turmoil influenced policies in Ohio and Illinois.

²¹ Foulke, *Life of Oliver P. Morton*, vol. 1, 180-185.

Democrats criticized Morton's suppressive policies and one-man financial rule, branding him an unrepentant tyrant. While the morality of Morton's actions is still debated among historians, three separate postwar investigations proved his wartime administration was remarkably free of grift, a fact Morton never hesitated to mention to the public.²²

Morton's wartime relationship with Democrats defined much of his legacy. By the time the war ended in 1865, his reputation preceded him—and it was not always flattering. Locally, Democrats respected his leadership, but many also hounded him for overextending his executive powers and using the war to unfairly promote his own party while vilifying the opposition.²³ His involvement in the highly publicized Copperhead Treason Trials of 1864 became an important part of heroic and villainous myths. In response, Republican newspapers and other allies trumpeted Morton's unyielding support of the Union—but Democrats' unfavorable memories never entirely faded. Memories of Morton continued to change over time; while political allies, family, and many Hoosier veterans succeeded in painting an overwhelmingly positive picture of Morton, historians must be more critical.

Chapter one analyzes Morton's postwar speeches, exploring Morton's influence over his own image and historical legacy during the postwar period of radical Republican Reconstruction from 1865 to 1877. By relying on speeches, letters, and newspaper articles written to, by or about Morton from just after the war in 1865 until just before his

²² A. James Fuller, "Oliver P. Morton, Political Ideology, and Treason in Civil War Indiana," *Ohio Valley History* 13, no. 3 (Fall 2013): 27-45.

²³ In particular, some Democrats were slow to forget or forgive Morton's hand in allowing Union Army officials to suppress some civil liberties in wartime, including newspapers deemed hostile to the Lincoln administration. While such actions claimed a majority of Democratic journalists and party adherents, Morton butted heads with more than a few Republican papers. For more information about Morton's suppression of the presses, see Towne, "Works of Indiscretion," 138-49. For more information on the Copperhead treason trails and their place in Morton's political ideology, see A. James Fuller, "Oliver P. Morton, Political Ideology, and Treason in Civil War Indiana," 27-45.

death in 1877, I have explored how Morton actively shaped public perceptions of his political image for his personal gain and for the benefit of the Republican Party. His speeches demonstrate which policies, deeds, and invested audiences he capitalized on to build his postwar career. Brevity and directness made his orations controversial enough to spark heated debate in partisan presses. The issues he championed and the means he used to defend his policies lay the foundation for his lasting legacy. Five of Morton's speeches are used including those most representative of his defining characteristics and policies. Previous scholarship also guided my selection, but this thesis includes Morton's later speeches to overcome the chronological limitations of existing scholarship. Analyzing Morton's most influential and controversial addresses also reveals how Morton reflected on and defended his wartime efforts and actions and used his gubernatorial reputation to advance his political career after the war. Political opponents, friends, Union veterans, and other groups often incorporated his speeches into their own works, echoing his messages long after his death.

The major events Morton used to establish his position on key issues were African American emancipation and suffrage and harsh southern Reconstruction. Editorials found in the *Cincinnati Enquirer*, the *Indiana State Sentinel*, the *Greencastle Banner*, the *Indianapolis Journal* and the *New Albany Daily Ledger*, coupled with Congressional records, demonstrate public reactions to his messages across political lines and Morton's expert use of simple, often blunt, rhetoric—especially the warlike language he and his allies and opponents used to describe and defend his policies, speeches, and personal character as he increased in national popularity. Previous studies of Morton's rhetoric help to identify the specific audiences and situational contexts he considered

when designing these key speeches. Critically, these speeches demonstrate that Morton's lasting importance is tied to his determination to keep memories of the war front and center in postwar politics until his death. He used his wartime experiences to promote a pragmatic public image meant to appeal to Northerners like Union veterans who remembered his services and felt obligated to shape and promote his post-mortem legacy.

Chapter two analyzes local and national memories of Morton just before and shortly after his death on November 1, 1877, to see how highly partisan commentators' reactions shaped early memories of Morton in post-Reconstruction America. Republicans hailed him as a champion of Unionism and African Americans remembered him as their staunchest ally. Morton's enemies were just as vocal as his supporters. However, allies recognized the political and historical value of Morton's legacy. Union veterans staked an early claim on his legacy by establishing the first monument to his memory in Indianapolis in 1884. Incorporating both public and private reactions to his death reveals what others thought Morton represented amidst changing memories of the Civil War at what many Americans then viewed as the end of Reconstruction. Analyzing eulogies, poems, and public addresses written about him in partisan newspapers and delivered in both state and national government chambers highlights how the short-term reactions to his death typified the search for consensus regarding remembrance and reconciliation at the end of the nineteenth century at the state and national level.

The letters of condolence written to his wife, Lucinda, and secretary/brother-in-law, William R. Holloway, are particularly revealing. Comparing and contrasting these two distinct sectors of written memory reveals what different authors and audiences urged readers to remember or forget. Indiana presses predictably emphasized Morton's

governorship, lauding or condemning his policies. Privately, friends and family remembered Morton's contributions to the nation and echoed Republicans' messages, while humanizing him as a father, a husband, and a friend. Morton's worsening health and death was discussed in distinctly partisan terms. Extremists on both sides exaggeratedly heralded his death as the end of Republican dominance, and each vied to make their contrasting opinions of Morton heard long after his death. Of particular importance were the people with whom he is commonly compared. Several private and public sources liken the severity of his loss to that of Lincoln, signifying his honored status in the national consciousness. The eulogies, poems, and other written commemorations identify that Morton's most invested stakeholders—Union veterans, Republican allies, African Americans, and family—all held a vested interest in promoting a uniform memory of Morton's legacy to honor his services and promote him as a symbol of Hoosier pride. Morton's early commemoration paved the way for a fuller discussion of his place in Hoosiers' Civil War memories as America moved into the twentieth century. Analyzing these verbal and written memories highlights how these messages galvanized historical stakeholders into actively shaping a specific, positive memory of Morton's political legacy in physical sculptures in Indiana and Washington, D. C., concluding with an analysis of veterans' efforts to successfully immortalize Morton in bronze, in Indianapolis's highly public Circle Park—the site of the Indiana Soldiers and Sailors Monument—in 1884.

The third chapter analyzes how different interpreters—especially the GAR—selectively remembered Morton's deeds to shape memories of the Civil War and Reconstruction in local and national venues, focusing on monuments in particular. As

America prepared to enter the twentieth century, Union veterans reorganized as a political force. In Indiana, the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) commemorated the deeds of veterans with parades, monuments, and Memorial Day ceremonies. The GAR's quest to become the caretakers of Indiana's Civil War memories included controlling local memories of Morton as well, using him to promote their messages. As the GAR gained political and social importance, the group erected bronze and marble tributes to Morton's memory between 1890 and 1907 when the organization's influence on local monuments reached its peak. This analysis focuses on three public sculptures—Frank J. Simmons's 1884 tribute and its reincorporation into the Soldiers and Sailors Monument between 1895 and 1902; Charles Niehaus's marble statue erected in the Capitol at Washington, D.C.,'s Statuary Hall in 1900; and a bronze monument erected on the eastern steps of the Indiana State Capitol Building in 1907. Commission reports, newspaper editorials, advertisements, and dedication speeches give insight into the messages sculptors and funders wanted to convey to the public.

The public monument is a critical, defining force in national and regional Civil War memories. Kirk Savage's *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves* attests to the paradoxical power of the monument, which serves as a conservative tribute to what its creators hold dear.²⁴ James Mayo's *War Memorials as Political Memory*, John Bodnar's *Remaking America*, and Kirk Savage's scholarship about Civil War monuments place these three representations of Morton's legacy in the larger, changing context of

²⁴ Kirk Savage, *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves: Race, War, and Monument in Nineteenth-Century America* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1999), 4-5.

monuments and Civil War commemoration.²⁵ These monuments reveal how invested builders co-opted Morton's memory to reinforce a positive consensus about his deeds by focusing on the shortest and most easily glorified part of his career. The politically revitalized GAR prompted the state to fund many of Morton's future tributes, with costs augmented through the generous donations of GAR members and a few wealthy citizens. Morton's friends and high-ranking GAR officials controlled how money was spent and demanded Morton's lasting bronze and marble likenesses reflect his wartime masculinity and strength and not his postwar paralysis. The proliferation of Morton's image attests to his valued status to the Indiana GAR, whose members used Morton to further their own needs, and to politicians, who, in their dedication addresses, attempted to alter public perceptions of Morton to promote messages of unification and reconciliation, reflective of the nation's emerging nationalist concerns by the early 1900s.

Comparing and contrasting the messages promoted by each of Morton's successive monuments reveals speakers' subtle interpretive differences of Morton's legacy according to venue and audience. In Indiana and Washington, D. C., Civil War veterans and Republicans emphasized his devotion to the troops, his patriotism, and executive ability. Speakers reinterpreted Morton's willingness to step beyond the limits of his constitutional authority to justify necessary sacrifices needed to achieve wartime control of the state, and to ensure passage of Republican legislation during Reconstruction. Through Morton, the GAR and their Republican allies gained the upper hand in shaping Hoosier memories of the Civil War—although Democrats' interpretations were not forgotten. Indiana veterans, lawmakers, and citizens united in

²⁵ James Mayo, *War Memorials as Political Landscape* (New York: Praeger, 1988); John Bodnar, *Remaking America: Public Memory, Commemoration, and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992).

overlooking or reinterpreting Morton's political shortcomings and character flaws in order to use him to promote Indiana's glory. However, as the conclusion will demonstrate, once the principle stakeholders' power and influence over Morton (and the nation's collective memories of the Civil War) waned by the 1920s, making Morton palatable for others eventually meant compromising his legacy.

The plurality and flexibility of historical memories demands one define whose memories are being studied and whose are not. This thesis examines the collective memories of public commentators who shaped Morton's reputation through heated debate and the people responsible for enshrining Morton's memory in patriotic oratory and lasting likenesses of marble and bronze. Historian John Bodnar notes that the monuments like Morton's represent a way to reconcile differences between "official" memories crafted by politicians and others seeking consensus and "vernacular" memories based on "first-hand experiences" of events, prized by specific groups like veterans (or Morton's friends and family.)²⁶ While the primary interest is to view Morton in terms of the memories of local Hoosiers, efforts have also been made to analyze Morton's legacy in a national context for comparative analysis. Veterans' memories in particular are tricky. Not all soldiers venerated Morton, and the members of the Indiana GAR did not agree on all political issues or how and what should be remembered about the Civil War. In this context, the term veterans refers primarily to those inclined to support the Republican Party and, in the future, join the GAR and support members and factions determined to valorize Morton.

²⁶ John Bodnar, *Remaking America: Public Memory, Commemoration, and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), 19.

Chapter One: Morton the Senator (1865-1877)

Indiana has produced many notable public figures, but few were as demonized and deified as Oliver P. Morton during both the Civil War and Reconstruction. Solidly built, Morton's broad shoulders, dark eyes, and booming voice exuded an indomitable will and charisma to match his no-nonsense personality. A blunt, sharp-tongued political pragmatist, Morton served as Indiana's Governor from 1861-1866. He guided Indiana through the Civil War, stretching his executive powers to protect its borders from outside assault and sometimes violent civil unrest among panicked supporters and outraged opponents. The war also allowed him to strengthen Indiana's Republican Party. His policies earned him the scorn of many Indiana citizens (especially Democrats), but his actions during the war secured him the coveted title of "Soldier's Friend" among many Hoosier veterans. Although other Union governors received this title, few enjoyed Morton's degree of postwar political success or long-term influence in his state's historical memory of the Civil War.

Morton's legacy took shape during the Civil War, but many historians overlook the importance of his political influence and popularity as an Indiana Senator from 1867 to 1877 during postwar Reconstruction. In the Senate, Morton became famous for his attacks against Democrats, his advocacy for African American rights, his insistence on punitive Reconstruction policies toward the former Confederacy, and the righteousness of the Union cause. In almost every speech, Morton sold himself as a war-hardened Republican who was ready and willing to continue defending and protecting the Union's political, social, and cultural future and to promote a Union-dominated national history of the war. Bitter northerners (especially veterans) were eager to see the defeated South

punished and the political results of the war protected. Radical Republicans and African Americans respected Morton's ability to sell the controversial push for black suffrage and the protection of rights in terms northerners could accept. His vehement, often divisive, postwar speeches established him as a national presence and contributed to his lasting legacy as one of the state's foremost historical symbols.²⁷

This chapter analyzes the influence of Morton's oratory on his immediate and lasting public image through five essential examples of his postwar speeches: Morton's first Reconstruction address (Richmond, Indiana, 1865), his combative Masonic Hall speech (Indianapolis, 1866), his "Great Reconstruction Address" (U.S. Senate, 1868), the "Amnesty Address" (U.S. Senate, 1871), and a speech to a Union veterans' reunion (Rockville, Indiana, 1875). These speeches highlight themes that defined Morton's public image in the minds of Union veterans and the general populace. Each demonstrates how Morton designed his addresses to convey key messages to his core audiences of northern supporters, to control his public image, and to define what issues he was either willing to compromise or steadfastly defend. Each also probes Morton's personal ideas of what was best for the nation, and how he incorporated newer causes (like black suffrage) to strengthen his existing political ideology.

Three scholarly studies of Morton's speaking—most notably Everett O. Johnson's—have outlined the major themes and stylistic hallmarks of Morton's successful postwar oratory. Morton designed his speeches to be direct, forceful, concise

²⁷ Morton swiftly became the Midwest's leading Reconstruction representative, and his speeches were frequently cited by journalists and colleagues as though he defined his Party's policies throughout the 1870s. His partisan leadership was crucial for passage and ratification of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Constitutional Amendments, especially in Indiana. Fuller, "Oliver P. Morton and the Politics of Historical Memory," 328-330.

and simple enough to be accessible to a wide range of northern supporters.²⁸ Edwin C. Carpenter noted Morton's speeches were often repetitive in construction, themes, and logic, and usually organized around his strong belief that the survival of the nation depended on the Republican Party's continued dominance.²⁹ Leslie H. Schultz noted Morton's pragmatism; he favored cold, hard logic, with little reliance on wit, humor, or dramatic gesture.³⁰ She also noted that he specialized in constructing arguments his opponents could not refute without making themselves look the worse.³¹ Morton seemed bold to the point of arrogance, but political allies respected his willingness to plainly speak his mind on any issue, seemingly without regard for consequences.³² Although his interpretation reflects the opinion of a heavily biased Democrat, historian Claude G. Bowers aptly captured Morton's rhetorical style.

He wanted nothing on his sword but blood—and that he seldom failed to draw. In his more savage moments [on the Senate floor]—and he was never gentle—he had no patience with a sword—he grasped a battle-axe.³³

Every major speech analyzed here exemplifies Morton's continual reliance on blunt, often warlike rhetoric to disparage opponents, glorify allies, galvanize his audience, and justify his policies. Morton broadly structured his most influential postwar speeches around three core subjects: how best to reintegrate the southern states, how to assign and deal with war guilt, and, finally, justifying the need to introduce and integrate

²⁸ Johnson, "Oliver P. Morton," 202.

²⁹ Carpenter, "Political Speaking of Oliver Perry Morton," 208-220. Carpenter notes that Morton's postwar speaking tactics and political ideology represented the culmination of his wartime speaking style and political platform. For a fuller analysis of Morton's wartime political ideology, see Sylvester, "Oliver P. Morton and Hoosier Politics during the Civil War." See also Johnson, "Oliver P. Morton," 202, 205-206.

³⁰ Schultz, "Oliver P. Morton and Reconstruction," 5.

³¹ *Ibid.* This suggestion holds particularly true for his tirades against southern-sympathizing members of the Democratic Party during his first Senatorial term from 1866 to 1871. In his analysis of Morton's education and religious background, Carpenter suggests Morton's bluntness was inspired by the Methodist sermons he frequently heard as a child. See Carpenter, "Political Speaking of Oliver Perry Morton," 12-17.

³² Schultz, "Oliver P. Morton and Reconstruction," 5-7.

³³ Claude G. Bowers, *The Tragic Era: The Revolution After Lincoln* (Cambridge: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1929), 288-289.

nearly four million newly freed African Americans into American society and politics. Morton's opinions on some of these issues swiftly changed from 1865 to 1867—and those he stayed committed to until his death in 1877 came to define his public persona.

The question of black suffrage and citizenship was the most contentious postwar issue facing Morton and the Republican Party. Although scholars remember him as a great defender of African American rights and the Radical Republican's ablest Midwestern representative, many also note Morton did not fully ally with the Radicals until late 1865.³⁴ Morton was no abolitionist; he had justified his support of the Emancipation Proclamation and the creation of Indiana's black regiment as pure military necessities needed to break the will of the South. After the war, increased Republican state and federal power from the 1864 elections allowed Morton and other Republicans to be increasingly open to reforming race relations, starting with the Thirteenth Amendment's call to end slavery.³⁵ But Morton knew his party's dominance was far from assured in the traditionally Democratic state of Indiana.³⁶ Abolition could be easily justified, but the enfranchisement of blacks was still unpopular in Indiana, even among Republicans and Morton needed to word his support for further action carefully.³⁷

Morton established his immediate postwar stance on black suffrage and Reconstruction on September 29, 1865, in Richmond, Indiana. As with many of his

³⁴ Johnson, "Oliver P. Morton," 51; Schultz, "Oliver P. Morton and Reconstruction," 5.

³⁵ Peter Ufland, "The Politics of Race in the Midwest, 1864-1890" (PhD diss., University of Illinois at Chicago, 2006), 31-34. Morton and many others justified their support for the Thirteenth Amendment by echoing earlier themes used to justify the Emancipation Proclamation. Slavery was not just an unquestionably moral evil; it was the defining moral evil of the war and needed to be destroyed.

³⁶ Thornbrough, *Indiana in the Civil War Era*, 226, 242-246. Historian Emma Lou Thornbrough notes the Democrats lacked a comparably triumphant public figure to challenge Morton locally soon after the war. But Republicans did not hold this advantage for long. Widespread racism and disapproval of Hoosier Republicans' support for African American suffrage cost the Party their majority in the Indiana Legislature by 1868.

³⁷ Foulke, *Life of Oliver P. Morton* vol. 1, 577. See also Ufland, "Race in the Midwest," 38-39.

speeches, the setting was carefully chosen. The state Sanitary Commission had held a contest, promising a banner to the county that raised the most money for the relief of sick and wounded Hoosier veterans in 1864. The “soldier’s friend” could hardly have asked for a better occasion to discuss Reconstruction (and remind the public of his wartime services) than at a ceremony to present the citizens of Wayne County with the promised banner.³⁸ While Morton had vaguely alluded to the issues of Reconstruction in an earlier Fourth of July speech, this marked his first major public address on the key issues of Reconstruction.³⁹

Morton used his address to remind the public of his service to Indiana during the war, reaffirm his support for President Andrew Johnson, and to defend his conservatively moderate position on black suffrage. In his defense of Johnson’s increasingly unpopular Reconstruction policies, he cited similarities between Lincoln’s and Johnson’s plans as noble efforts to deny federal Washington elected offices to former Confederates. He stressed Johnson’s determination that no southern state would regain Congressional representation until it ratified the Thirteenth Amendment.⁴⁰

To all appearances, Morton’s position on black suffrage remained conservative. He supported black enfranchisement, but cited widespread lack of education among freedmen as a major stumbling block. He noted that arguing “such [uneducated] men . . . are qualified for the [immediate] exercise of political powers, is to make the strongest

³⁸ Foulke, *Life of Oliver P. Morton*, vol. 1, 446.

³⁹ *Ibid.*; Johnson, “Oliver P. Morton,” 51. Foulke contends Morton first showed a willingness to align with African American suffrage in his State House address in August 1865. While Morton did address the need to destroy slavery, his Richmond address was far more forthright. Johnson convincingly argues a confident, practiced speaker like Morton would have put much greater thought and consideration into a public speech at such a significant gathering—especially when his political allies afterward printed and distributed pamphlet copies across the state.

⁴⁰ Oliver P. Morton, *Reconstruction and Negro Suffrage: speech of Governor O. P. Morton at Richmond, Indiana, on Thursday evening September 29th, 1865*, MSS Pamphlet Collection, E506.M67 R4 1865, IHS, 3.

pro-slavery argument I have ever heard.” To do so would only “pay the highest compliment to the institution of slavery.”⁴¹ Furthermore, northern politicians could hardly demand black enfranchisement from the South without first setting an example.⁴² Giving blacks the right to vote would only lead to their dominance in southern state governments for years to come. Such governments, argued Morton, “are not desirable . . . they would threaten to bring about, and, I believe, would result in a war of races.”⁴³ To avert this crisis, Morton proposed a probationary period of fifteen to twenty years.⁴⁴ This would give former slaves and freedmen opportunities to gain education—and northern whites the time needed to offset the black majority in many southern states. Morton wanted northerners to know he believed that Reconstruction governments should remain in white hands.

In the fiery conclusion of his speech, the Governor attacked his greatest political opponents—the Democratic Party. According to Morton, by passing the Kansas-Nebraska Act to allow slavery’s westward expansion, and then ardently and loudly declaring the war a failure and suing for peace with the Confederacy, the Democratic Party had betrayed the public trust by betraying the nation (and, by extension, the soldiers).⁴⁵ Every Democrat was a Copperhead— a pejorative term for southern

⁴¹ Morton, *Reconstruction and Negro Suffrage*, 5.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 6. Morton specifically lamented that, under Hoosier laws, half of Indiana’s African American troops were denied the right to vote by the Union they had fought to protect.

⁴³ *Ibid.*.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 6-7; Numerous Democratic presses continually reminded readers of this recommendation in attempts to discredit Morton’s increasingly vehement calls for black citizenship and suffrage throughout the rest of his political career. Debaters also frequently used it against him in the Senate.

⁴⁵ In 1854, Illinois Democrat Stephen A. Douglas proposed the Kansas-Nebraska Act, which created the two titular western territories. Violence erupted as pro-slavery and anti-slavery supporters flooded the new territory to decide whether to allow slavery in the new lands through popular sovereignty. Congress upheld the introduction of slavery despite the fraudulent votes and many opponents—including Morton—left the Democrats to join the newly formed Republican Party. The Kansas-Nebraska Act (and Democratic support of the results) is cited as one of the final turning points that led to the Civil War. See Nicole Etcheson, *Bleeding Kansas: Contested Liberty in the Civil War Era* (Kansas: University of Kansas Press, 2004).

sympathizers aiming to ‘poison’ the Union through antiwar propaganda and sabotage. Democrats’ public reputation was now “thoroughly tainted and saturated with the [traitorous] virus of this rebellion.”⁴⁶ The crowd applauded more loudly, and Morton closed with a brief reminder of his services to the state, having recently helped to avert the execution of two men convicted of conspiracy to overthrow Indiana (and assassinate him) during the war.⁴⁷

Morton’s pragmatic, middle-ground attitude proved controversial. Many Republican presses praised his call for moderation, but local Radicals—especially George W. Julian, one of Indiana’s most ardent abolitionists—remained dissatisfied.⁴⁸ The Democratic *Indiana State Sentinel* branded the speech a “Yankee Dodge,” argued that suffrage remained Morton’s ultimate goal and lashed out at Morton’s unfair partisan attack on Democrats.⁴⁹ Ironically, the *Cincinnati Enquirer* declared that Morton’s eloquent Richmond address, so far removed from the wishes of Radical Republicans, had “placed him squarely within the Democratic party.”⁵⁰ Still others proved more colorful in

⁴⁶ Morton, *Reconstruction and Negro Suffrage*, 7-8.

⁴⁷ Fuller, “Oliver P. Morton, Political Ideology, and Treason in Civil War Indiana,” 27-45; Towne, *Surveillance and Spies*, 7-9, 293. Morton referred to the fates of Hoosiers Lambdin P. Milligan and William A. Bowles. The two were arrested and convicted of treason in the 1864 Indiana Copperhead treason trials. Morton and many other Hoosier Republicans quickly asked Lincoln, and then his successor Andrew Johnson to commute their sentence to life imprisonment instead. Republicans feared a postwar execution would make them martyrs and engender sympathy for the former Confederacy to undermine the Republican administration.

⁴⁸ Thornbrough, *Indiana in the Civil War Era*, 229-230.

⁴⁹ *Indiana State Sentinel*, August 2, 1865, 3; October 18, 1865, 2.

⁵⁰ “Governor Morton Delivereth of Himself a Speech,” *Indiana State Sentinel*, October 2, 1865, 2; *Indianapolis Herald*, October 6, 1865, 4; See also Foulke, *Life of Oliver P. Morton*, vol. 1, 451-452. According to Foulke, after reading the speech, President Johnson reportedly deemed it “the ablest defense of his policy yet made public.”

their condemnations.⁵¹ The Richmond address epitomized Morton's immediate postwar position of moderation and compromise.

But this did not last long.

Morton did not become a Radical Republican until a year later, when he delivered one of his most uncompromising and emotionally-affective speeches at the Masonic Hall in Indianapolis. Harsh language was born from harsh circumstances. Shortly after delivering his Richmond address in 1865, Morton had suffered a serious stroke that largely paralyzed the left side of his body. He spent the next several months recovering in Europe.⁵² During his absence, the Republican Party became increasingly impatient when President Johnson's lenient policies toward former Confederate states failed to provide the promised results—namely, southern cooperation with northern demands. Upon returning to the United States in March, Morton discovered a great, irreconcilable divide between Johnson and his Republican Congress over Johnson's veto of Lyman Trumbull's newly passed Civil Rights Act of 1866. Under this Act, Congress aimed to provide all Americans not subject to a foreign power, regardless of color, race, or previous condition of indentured servitude or slavery with guaranteed rights of citizenship, and “full and equal benefit [and protection] of all laws and proceedings for the security of person and property, as is enjoyed by white citizens.”⁵³ Mounting tensions between Republican moderates loyal to Johnson and radicals siding with Thaddeus Stevens—a Pennsylvania

⁵¹ “Morton's Speech,” *Indianapolis Herald*, reprinted in *Sullivan Democrat*, June 28, 1866, 1; “Morton and Richmond,” *Centerville Indiana True Democrat*, October 26, 1866, 1. See also George W. Julian, *Political Recollections: 1840-1872* (Chicago: Jansen, McClurg & Company, 1884), 261-267.

⁵² “Life of Greatest War Governor,” Oliver P. Morton Scrapbook, 1907, MSS SC 3008, IHS, 7-8. Apparently, this paralysis was not unexpected, as similar strokes and resulting health problems had killed his father and brother, and also affected his sister. Morton likely attempted to keep up with developments in the United States while overseas, but it is unknown how frequently news reached him.

⁵³ U. S. Congress, *Congressional Globe*, 39th Cong., 1st Sess., March 1, (1866) 1117. This act served as a basis for both the Citizenship Clause and the Equal Protection Clause in the Fourteenth Amendment.

Republican abolitionist who had served in the House since 1849 and had become the head of the anti-southern radical Republicans—threatened to fatally divide Republicans, leaving an opening for Democrats—especially in Indiana.⁵⁴ Morton tried (unsuccessfully) to convince Johnson to reconsider. By now, the efforts of numerous politicians had convinced Morton and others that the (still young) Republican Party’s political survival depended on their willingness to support immediate African American suffrage.⁵⁵

Historians’ assertions that Morton’s motivations for allying with the Radical Republicans were primarily tied to his political ambitions are unfair. Morton’s Richmond address seems hesitant because he needed to appeal to white Hoosiers openly hostile to black enfranchisement. While the passage of future black suffrage legislation certainly benefitted his party (and his reputation) by promoting a reunion based on the promise of racial equality and the punishment of the South, the persistence of Morton’s vehement defense of black rights indicates his words were rooted in genuine feeling.⁵⁶ It is unfair to write off Morton’s support for black rights as a mere play for political gain, but Morton left behind few personal papers, making it difficult to wholly separate his personal feelings from his political ambition.⁵⁷ If he needed to embrace unpopular stances to ensure his party’s continued dominance during Reconstruction—thereby protecting the

⁵⁴ Carpenter, “Political Speaking of Oliver Perry Morton,” 112-114; Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America’s Unfinished Revolution: 1863-1877* (New York: Harper & Rowe, 1988), 176-184. Thornbrough, *Indiana in the Civil War*, 232-233. According to Thornbrough, most Indiana Democrats, including Daniel Voorhees, rallied behind Johnson’s support of a lenient national reunion based largely on his increasing resistance to radicals’ attempts to pass suffrage legislation, such as the Freedman’s Bureau bill in February 1866, which, among other things, attempted to establish schools for newly freed blacks.

⁵⁵ Ufland, “Race in the Midwest,” 64-67.

⁵⁶ Johnson, “Oliver P. Morton,” 103-106; Schultz, “Oliver P. Morton and Reconstruction,” 66; Carpenter, “Political Speaking of Oliver P. Morton,” 160-164, 235.

⁵⁷ Papers concerning Morton’s personal postwar feelings regarding blacks are largely limited to his carefully prepared public speeches and private congressional correspondence.

Union through increased federal power—he would do so.⁵⁸ Morton’s wartime leadership afforded him the public goodwill needed to echo longtime Republican rival and Hoosier radical George W. Julian without sacrificing his senatorial ambitions. Many northerners may not have agreed with his support of black rights, but he went to great lengths to prove his increasing Radicalism sprung from his steadfast devotion to do what was best for restoring and protecting the country.

Morton needed the right, emotionally-charged banner to rally his troops, and in this next speech, Morton found his calling in “bloody shirt” oratory—a bitter, anti-Democratic and war-centric message that formed the core of his lasting public image. Appealing to northerners’ raw, emotional ties to the war, Republicans sought to unite their splintered party by casting their Reconstruction policies—especially black citizenship—as necessities for forcing the South to answer for the blood of thousands of soldiers—and of former slaves.⁵⁹ Politicians like Morton waved the metaphorical bloody shirt to speak for war victims’ sacrifices as well as ongoing violence perpetuated against blacks and Republicans in the South. Speakers justified their policies and cast themselves (and their voters) as noble champions fighting in the name of Union justice for the dead and oppressed. In contrast, the Democratic Party associated with many Copperhead sympathizers who, having opposed the war and tried to aid the Confederacy, now sought

⁵⁸ Richard F. Nation and Stephen E. Towne, eds., *Indiana’s War: The Civil War in Documents* (Ohio: Ohio University Press, 2009), 191-192; Thornbrough, *Indiana in the Civil War Era*, 241-245. Although history remembers the political payoff of Morton’s shift toward support of Stevens’ Radicals, he made a considerable gamble. Hoosier Democrats had tradition on their side, and now they held a stronger, unified front against African American suffrage. Richard Nation and Stephen E. Towne note the postwar Republican state majority “included many who agreed with the racism espoused by the Democrats.” While Morton expressed his allegiance with the Radicals in January 1867, he did not become a true advocate for black suffrage until after reaching the Senate. Nation, Towne, and Thornbrough all note that this reversal cost Republicans dearly just two years later when state control fully reverted to the Democrats in 1870.

⁵⁹ David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War and American Memory* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 51-52. While the “bloody shirt” became associated with radical Republicans, Blight notes that more than a few Democratic Senators used similar rhetoric when discussing the issues of southern Reconstruction when Morton entered the Senate in 1867.

to poison the Union by opposing these measures.⁶⁰ This kind of oratory became Morton's most iconic and valuable emotional "trump card" in the unfolding battle over Civil War memory.

Morton's mastery of the bloody shirt is best exemplified by a speech delivered before a crowd of thousands on the steps of Indianapolis's Masonic Hall on June 20, 1866. This is one of Morton's most frequently analyzed speeches. In his analysis of Morton's oration, Johnson noted that while logically flawed, the speech's main strength was the simplicity of its two central, interwoven messages: the untrustworthiness and wartime treachery of the Democratic Party contrasted against the righteousness of the (Republican) Fourteenth Amendment.⁶¹ The speech epitomized the vengeful, anti-Democratic, warlike tone Morton usually employed to sell Republican policy in Indiana. More importantly, it represented his adroit understanding of his audience for he spoke directly to the anger many northerners naturally felt towards those they held responsible for instigating such a costly conflict.

The occasion and location were critical. Morton's personal stake in the outcome of the upcoming Indiana election was enormous, since the new state legislature would decide who to send to the Senate in 1867. As Johnson and other scholars have noted, the fact that it was Morton's first major public speech following his return from Europe—and the national Johnson/Stevens split in his party—lent the moment considerable weight. His stroke forced him to speak from a seated position, and even friendly Republican presses

⁶⁰ It is important to note that while Morton seemed to paint all Democrats as treasonous, his ire was distinctly directed at the vocal minority in Indiana who had opposed the war and represented the larger threat of southern Democrats hoping to redeem the South.

⁶¹ Johnson, "Oliver P. Morton," 164.

noted his illness was evident in his voice.⁶² Morton's persistence in spite of his condition spoke to the seriousness of the occasion—and to his determination to continue fighting for a reconstructed nation, no matter the cost to his personal health.

Morton began by saying that although weakened by his recent stroke, national events had compelled him to speak for his Party—and the Union. Morton recounted Indiana's wartime trials and outlined the tenuous state of Reconstruction. Although the military conflict had ended, the nation now faced stiff opposition from former Confederates and their Democratic sympathizers.⁶³ Morton reminded the audience of what these men had already done. He proceeded to systematically recount every disloyal wartime act attributable to the Democrats in what a Johnson calls a "vengeful tirade" that formed the base for his future attacks against southern-sympathizing Democrats.⁶⁴ Democrats, he insisted, were responsible for destroying the public credit and for discouraging Union enlistment.⁶⁵ They had gone to every length to sabotage the war and had even established an Indiana branch of the Sons of Liberty—a widespread, vocal group of quasi-militant southern sympathizers also known as the Sons of Liberty—in a "hellish scheme of conspiracy" to overthrow the state government.⁶⁶ Only Democrats, Morton insisted, would have refused to aid the Sanitary Commission for the relief of soldiers—or murdered Hoosier enlistment officers.⁶⁷ "Every unregenerate rebel in arms against the government . . . Every bounty jumper, deserter and draft dodger, every

⁶² Ibid., 171-172.

⁶³ Johnson, "Oliver P. Morton," 164, 168. Johnson notes that Morton's introductory appeal, while unorthodox, would have engendered sympathy from his audience.

⁶⁴ Foulke, *Life of Oliver P. Morton*, vol. 1, 477; See also, Carpenter, "Political Speaking of Oliver P. Morton," 119.

⁶⁵ Oliver P. Morton, *Speech of Gov. Oliver P. Morton, Delivered at Masonic Hall, Tuesday Evening, June 20, 1866*, MSS Pamphlet Collection, E668 .M75 1866, IHS, 8-10.

⁶⁶ Foulke, *Life of Oliver P. Morton*, vol. 1, 471.

⁶⁷ Morton, *Masonic Hall*, 10.

soldier dismissed for cowardice, every wolf in sheep's clothing who . . . shoots down negroes in the streets, calls himself a Democrat.”⁶⁸

In Johnson's accurate appraisal, Morton's relentless recital of wartime atrocities, policies and actions effectively cast the Democratic Party as a place fit for only the most “detestable and odious” of people.⁶⁹ Morton's final, blunt statement struck this point home. “In short,” he declared, “the Democratic [P]arty may be described as a common sewer and loathsome receptacle, into which is emptied every element of treason North and South, and every element of inhumanity and barbarism which has dishonored the age.”⁷⁰

Having thus decimated the Democrats, Morton espoused the righteousness of the Republican Fourteenth Amendment, addressing each of its four main clauses in terms of overall benefits for the protection of the nation—and the punishment of the South. First, the amendment was democratically sound because it provided for the protection of all basic civil rights for U. S. citizens, black or white. Second, by granting citizenship to the four million newly freed blacks, the amendment forever deprived the South of prewar advantages in Congressional representation. Third, by barring former Confederate officers from positions in Congress, the amendment both punished the betrayers and protected the nation from their influence.⁷¹ The final clause ensured the South could never claim compensation for property lost or damaged during the war (especially

⁶⁸ Ibid., 3.

⁶⁹ Johnson, “Oliver P. Morton,” 171.

⁷⁰ Ibid. Johnson also uses this quote to exemplify the bleak, antagonistic tone of Morton's diatribe. He also notes that Morton's argument—especially his listing of acts committed by those identifying as Democrats—while emotionally effective, is logically unsound, forcing the audience to rely mostly on the speaker's credibility. For further commentary, see Foulke, *Life of Oliver P. Morton*, vol. I, 467-479.

⁷¹ Morton, *Masonic Hall*, 7. In a particularly telling note, Morton justified barring former Confederates from office by saying that “rebellion cannot be discouraged, treason made odious, loyalty encouraged and patriotism rewarded” if “rebels” were allowed to make laws for a government they had taken arms against.

slaves). A Republican victory would prevent sympathetic Democrats from politically undermining the fact of Confederate guilt for the war.⁷² This last point became very important to Morton (and to Union veterans) later in life. Emphasizing the protective aspects of the amendment allowed Morton to downplay the issue of black citizenship, framing each clause as evidence of the Republican Party's commitment to protecting the Union.

The audience applauded Morton's defense, and in closing, Morton ridiculed his local opponents' wartime actions, citing them as proof of Democrats' untrustworthiness. Though initially loyal to the Union, the Democrats had attempted to sabotage the war effort after gaining control of the state Legislature in 1863 by trying to strip Morton of his executive military powers a year later.⁷³ Opponents had formed or aided the Sons of Liberty, plotting "various schemes of insurrection and murder" against Morton and Union loyalists.⁷⁴ Now, according to Morton, this same faction of Democrats longed to force the nation to assume the rebel war debt, award pensions to southern veterans, and continued to support the right of secession.⁷⁵ Speaking directly to the veterans in attendance, Morton remarked that Copperheads, having denounced soldiers as "Lincoln-hirelings, as mercenaries fighting for pay and plunder," during the war, now tried to tempt them away for political ends:

⁷² *Ibid.*, 5-8.

⁷³ Stamp, *Indiana Politics*, 158-185; Sylvester, "Oliver P. Morton and Hoosier Politics," 157-204. Repeated Union losses and a demoralized home front allowed the Democrats to win control of the Indiana legislature in 1862. Many thought Morton wielded too much executive power, especially over the state militia. Democrats unsuccessfully tried to divide direct oversight of the state militia between Morton and the Democratic legislature. Morton and his Republican allies overcame the militia bill by briefly fleeing the state, denying the legislature the quorum needed to conduct business long enough for Morton to circumvent Democratic control with financial support from Washington.

⁷⁴ Morton, *Masonic Hall*, 7, 9.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 7.

How the gallant soldier who periled his life for his country, and has returned maimed and shattered from the battle, must feel dishonored and humiliated when he finds himself treated as a mere mercenary, and is approached by Copperheads with arguments and temptations which stain his manhood and insult the memory of the dead who fell in battle by his side.⁷⁶

Similar to his earlier address in Richmond, Morton's Masonic Hall speech sent the presses buzzing. As Carpenter and Johnson both note, Republican reports were almost zealously complimentary, declaring it one of "the ablest reviews of the rebel-sympathizing copperhead-democracy we have seen anywhere."⁷⁷ Democrats were predictably furious. The *Sullivan Democrat* and other presses attacked Morton for unjustly "hold[ing] the Democratic party responsible for the actions of extreme men."⁷⁸ Others attacked him personally.⁷⁹ However, as a biographer noted "It was a speech to win."⁸⁰ Republican presses embraced the speech's antagonistic tone and cited it as a keynote campaign document that was republished and distributed in pamphlet form throughout the state.⁸¹

This speech had a lasting effect on Morton's public persona and legacy. The vengeful, emotionally-fueled attack on the Democrats' wartime conduct coupled with

⁷⁶ Ibid..

⁷⁷ Quoted in Johnson, "Oliver P. Morton," 178; *Indianapolis Daily Journal*, June 27, 1866, 2.

⁷⁸ Towne, "Persistent Nullifier: Life of Lambdin P. Milligan," 243-246; "What Gov. "Moxa" Morton Says of Us," *Sullivan Democrat*, June 28, 1866, 1. According to Towne, Morton delivered his speech a few days after Lambdin P. Milligan was released from prison. The freed Hoosier had made a speech condemning Morton in Bluffton, Indiana, a few days earlier. Although Morton did not mention him specifically, it is probable he had Milligan's speech in mind. Democrats resented being compared to a man convicted of treason. The scathing rebuttals reprinted in the *Sullivan Democrat* included several of Morton's more colorful Democratic condemnations, asking, "Is there a lower depth of infamy than has been reached by this polluted, loathsomely-diseased old wretch?"

⁷⁹ Foner, *Reconstruction*, 222. Foner notes that Democrats did not take Morton's criticisms lying down. Focusing on Morton's physical ailments, they derided him as a "fetid excrescence on the body politic," "a wretch accursed of God and enjoying a foretaste of hell on earth." See also *Indianapolis Herald*, June 20, 1866, 2; [untitled editorials] *New Albany Weekly Ledger*, June 26, 1866, 1.

⁸⁰ Foulke, *Life of Oliver P. Morton*, vol. 1, 477.

⁸¹ William M. French, *Life, Speeches, State Papers and Public Services of Oliver P. Morton* (Indianapolis: Moore, Wilstach, & Baldwin, 1866), 490. French asserts that almost 2,000,000 copies of Morton's Masonic Hall address were distributed across the United States.

reminders of his continuing patriotic services typified the blunt, war-centric tone that became a staple in many of Morton's most influential postwar speeches.⁸² Such language was not uncommon among more outspoken Republicans and Democrats, but Morton's reminders carried special weight for Hoosiers, since he spoke from first-hand experience about fighting against men who had attempted armed revolution. Although known for his sharp, anti-Democratic opinions, Morton had enough public goodwill from his wartime leadership to be as outspoken as he pleased and as his audiences expected. In his own analysis, Carpenter noted the speech contained "nothing of temperance, gentleness, [or] marginality," and mentioned it provided an influential template for fellow Republican bloody shirt wavers like Robert G. Ingersoll, a Union veteran who spoke at rallies into the 1890s.⁸³ Long after his death, Hoosier newspapers commented on the anniversary of the speech in 1907, citing it as one of the ablest of Morton's career.⁸⁴

Veterans and other sympathetic northerners responded to Morton's increasingly vehement, emotionally-charged calls for reform and greater, coercive southern oversight. Despite opposition from Democrats, Morton remained confident of his election to the Senate.⁸⁵ "I have already had appearances from a majority of the Union Members elected to each house, and believe I cannot be defeated, unless by some very desperate and reckless . . . combination of Copperheads," he confided to his friend Simon T. Powell in

⁸² For similar examples, see Oliver P. Morton, *Speech of Gov. Oliver P. Morton, Delivered at the Union Meeting at New Albany, Wednesday, July 18, 1866*, MSS Pamphlet Collection, E506.M67 S7 1866, IHS. See also Schultz, "Oliver P. Morton and Reconstruction," 36-44.

⁸³ Carpenter, "Political Speaking of Oliver Perry Morton," 115, 117. According to Carpenter, Ingersoll borrowed whole passages from Morton's Masonic Hall address when speaking on behalf of Rutherford B. Hayes in Chicago in 1876.

⁸⁴ "Morton's Speech to War Heroes Classic," Oliver P. Morton Scrapbook, 1907, MSS SC 3008, IHS, 10.

⁸⁵ *Madison Weekly Courier*, December 5, 1866, 4. The *Courier* remained one of the loudest opponents of Morton's Senatorial appointment, since the Republican editor, Michael S. Garber, was one of his strongest Republican critics during the war—and even garnered Morton's attention as late as 1872.

October.⁸⁶ On January 14, 1867, the Indiana legislature chose him over Democratic candidate Daniel Voorhees as the Hoosier state's next Senator. Morton's contributions to Republican midwestern state victories the previous year and his stirring addresses to northern supporters proved essential to his ascendancy.⁸⁷ As Reconstruction historian Mark Summers notes, Morton's bitter, uncompromising attacks against Democrats and support for a more coercive, congressionally controlled southern Reconstruction meshed with increasing national desires for "Union security and protection."⁸⁸ Morton's appeals to northern bitterness succeeded because he, like Thaddeus Stevens, recognized that Reconstruction would be a continuation of the war by other means. The War Governor who had embodied the Union cause successfully sold himself as a ruthless representative of those demanding political securities to protect the results.

Morton's harsh, blunt language effectively galvanized northern audiences to support his Party, and during his first Senatorial term (1867-1871) established himself as one of the Republican Party's premier congressional advocates of African American enfranchisement and, later, universal suffrage. A close reading of several speeches Morton delivered in the Senate and on many state campaigns during this time indicates his justifications for this radical shift often went hand-in-hand with his commitment to coercive Reconstruction policies.⁸⁹ Selective political adaptation defined Morton's first

⁸⁶ Oliver P. Morton to Simon T. Powell, 26 October 1866, Oliver P. Morton Collection, MSS SC 1117, Folder 1, IHS.

⁸⁷ Ufland, "Race in the Midwest," 90-94. Morton went on a great election tour in 1867, speaking throughout Indiana and Ohio, selling the Fourteenth Amendment using the same line of argumentation in his Masonic Hall speech. By making the defining quality of the election about Union protectionism rather than black enfranchisement, Morton and others successfully undermined the Democrat's stronger, racially-bound platform.

⁸⁸ Mark Wahlgren Summers, *The Era of Good Stealings* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 9-10.

⁸⁹ For two examples, see Oliver P. Morton, "The Campaign in Ohio: Speech of Gov. Morton, Delivered at Columbus, August 27, 1867," and "Fifteenth Amendment: Speech of Hon. Oliver P. Morton of Indiana, delivered in the Senate of the United States, February 15, 1871," in Oliver P. Morton Speeches, BV 308

senatorial term. Morton's Masonic Hall address captured his fiery, anti-Democratic oratory, but his Senate speeches symbolized his ability to sell the most difficult of radical Republican policies.

By the time Morton reached the Senate in 1867, tensions between President Johnson and Congress had reached a fever pitch. With the 1867 election strengthening radical Republican power, the nation expected a showdown on the issue of Reconstruction.⁹⁰ State governments established by President Johnson's desire for a swift reunion had proven too lenient, making it easy for former Confederates to control a "redeemed" southern state by simple affirmations of Union allegiance.⁹¹ Southern claims of Republican corruption paled in comparison to these southern redeemers governments' failed attempts to cover up the widespread violence perpetuated against African Americans and open hostility toward Republicans.⁹² Northern emigrants to the former Confederacy could not establish a successful farm or business under these conditions, and the federal government could not enforce the rights of freedmen or protect anyone from violence. Under these conditions, northerners were more open to the firmer measures of radical Republicans.

Tradition called for new Senators to spend their first year removed from debates over major issues. Not only did the political situation make this impossible, but Morton

M891S, Manuscript and Rare Books Division, Indiana State Library. Indianapolis, Indiana. Hereafter abbreviated ISL.

⁹⁰ Ufland, "Race in the Midwest," 90-96.

⁹¹ Foner, *Reconstruction*, 184. Just like Lincoln's proposed plan, Johnson's governmental policy of presidential reconstruction emphasized leniency and a quick reunification, requiring only 10% of white citizens of a state to swear loyalty to the Union in order to be considered for reentry.

⁹² Foner, *Reconstruction*, 425-444; Blight, *Race and Reunion*, 112-116. Both Foner and Blight note that Republican Reconstruction was marred by some corruption, but the bloody violence raging throughout the South—especially the actions of the Ku Klux Klan—was undeniable proof of the need for stronger, sometimes militant federal oversight of rebellious southern states reentering the Union. Rable discusses the bloody reality of southern Reconstruction in great detail. George C. Rable, *The Role of Violence in the Politics of Reconstruction* (Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 2007).

was anything but traditional. After being sworn in on March 4, Morton wasted little time in voicing his opinion about new policies. The newly passed Reconstruction Acts (1867) mandated that the South, among other things, establish schools for freedmen. Having abolished slavery, northern victors were honor-bound to care for these men, Morton argued. More importantly, passage and ratification of the Reconstruction Acts (like the Fourteenth Amendment) represented reunification—through southern acceptance of war guilt and a willingness to submit to northern policies.⁹³ Throughout the 1867 Ohio senatorial campaign, Morton and others had argued in favor of the Fourteenth Amendment on these same principles.⁹⁴ Having so ardently refused Republican olive branches of voluntary compliance, harsher measures were now justified. Morton expressed the radical’s stance perfectly in his reply to Senator Lyman Trumbull. “Coerce them to do it,” he replied bluntly. “Do not wait [for consent] . . . Let us lay down the conditions we expect to demand of them and make them comply with them.”⁹⁵ The South had been given every chance to comply freely, now it was time for the Republican North to insist with all its might.

Morton had the chance to justify Republican policy—and his radical change in attitude regarding black suffrage—when Republican Wisconsin Senator James R. Doolittle questioned his motives on January 23, 1868. Doolittle argued that former Confederate states held the right to determine suffrage policy without federal mandate.⁹⁶ The next day, Morton delivered what reporters later described as his “Great

⁹³ Many of the policies promoted in the Reconstruction Acts became political pillars of Reconstruction. For more information on the Acts and a general overview of the political situation in 1867, see Foner, *Reconstruction*, 271-291.

⁹⁴ Ufland, “Race in the Midwest,” 90. Although Ufland gives credit to several politicians, he uses Morton’s 1867 Ohio addresses as a focal point.

⁹⁵ U. S. Congress, *Congressional Globe*, 40th Cong., 1st Sess., Vol. 1, 69 (1867).

⁹⁶ U. S. Congress. *Congressional Globe*, 40th Cong., 2d Sess., Vol. 1, 704-707 (1868).

Reconstruction Speech” to a packed Senate gallery. He made several key points. At the end of the war, the wartime state governments established under the Confederacy were overthrown by the Union army. The postwar South was still tied to the nation, but without any legal government. Only Washington could provide the structure needed to protect citizens from local anarchy and violence. Instead of cooperating, the new southern state governments run by former Confederates had “contemptuously rejected” the Fourteenth Amendment.⁹⁷ The current system failed to protect the guaranteed rights of loyal men, regardless of color.⁹⁸ In such dire circumstances, Congress had the power to reorganize these governments through African American enfranchisement. Such power should only be used as a last resort, and only with the passage of special legislation. Clearly, in the interests protecting the nation, Morton’s became an even stronger proponent of black suffrage.

Echoing future accusations in Democratic presses, Senator Doolittle had earlier questioned the hypocrisy of Morton’s reasoning, citing his now infamous 1865 Richmond address. How could a man so well-known for his stubborn refusal to bend now alter his position so easily while demonizing Democrats for doing the same? Unperturbed, Morton now replied;

Such was my feeling at that time, for it had not then been determined by the bloody experience of the last two years that we could not reconstruct upon the basis of the white population, and such, also, was the opinion of

⁹⁷ Oliver P. Morton, *Reconstruction, Speech of Hon. O.P. Morton, In the U.S. Senate, January 24, 1868, On the Constitutionality of the Reconstruction Acts* (Washington, D. C.: F. & J. Rives & Geo. A. Bailey, 1868), MSS Pamphlet Collection, E668 .M7 1868, IHS, 9-10. Morton added, since these men had deprived blacks of their rights in the South, it was only fair to continue denying these states congressional representation.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 9; Johnson, “Oliver P. Morton,” 17, 187. Johnson notes that without a full picture of ongoing events in the South to back up his claims of abuse, Morton relied heavily on his own public goodwill to see him through. However, he cites this speech as one of the defining examples of Morton’s support for black suffrage.

a great majority of the people of the North . . . I confess, and I do so without shame, that I have been educated by the great events of the war.⁹⁹

Morton now hoisted the bloody shirt. Any Democrats opposed to these measures on the grounds that such action would sully the Constitution were traitors who “only three years ago were in arms to overturn the constitution and establish that of Montgomery in its place.”¹⁰⁰ Far from being settled, Morton pointed to the bloody unrest throughout the South as proof that “the secessionists of the South are Democrats to-day, acting in harmony . . . with the Democratic Party.”¹⁰¹ Morton dismissed claims that enfranchisement was a means to create governments ruled by “negro supremacy.” If this were the case, radicals would have indefinitely denied voting rights to all disloyal whites.¹⁰² In conclusion, Morton proclaimed the Republican radicals, having failed to execute the rebellion’s major players, now desired to enfranchise the freedmen to protect the results of the war.

Morton’s defense of radical Republican policy—especially his justifications for black suffrage—attracted praise and criticism at home. The *Marshall County Republican* of Plymouth, Indiana, echoed congratulatory Washington reports, saying Morton’s speech was “asserted by Senators on both sides to be one of the most effective speeches delivered in the Senate for several years.”¹⁰³ The *Indianapolis Journal* applauded

⁹⁹ Morton, *Reconstruction*, 9, 14.

¹⁰⁰ Foulke, *Life of Oliver P. Morton*, vol. 2, 34.

¹⁰¹ Morton, *Reconstruction*, 9. Morton used similar language when discussing the need for Republican oversight (and outright coercion) to ensure southern states ratified the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments before being allowed to re-enter the Union. For the full speech, see Oliver P. Morton, *Fifteenth Amendment* (Washington, D. C. : F. & J. Rives & Geo. A. Bailey, 1871) MSS Pamphlet Collection, E668.M67 S7 1871, IHS. See also Oliver P. Morton, *Protection of life, etc., at the South : speech of Hon. Oliver P. Morton, of Indiana, delivered in the Senate of the United States, April 4, 1871* (Washington, D. C.: F & J Rives & Geo. A. Bailey, 1871), ISLO 815 M891 no. 26, Manuscripts and Rare Books Collection, ISL.

¹⁰² Morton, *Reconstruction*, 10.

¹⁰³ “Senator Morton’s Speech,” *Marshall County Republican*, [Plymouth, IN], January 30, 1868, 2.

Morton's argument, and noted correspondents for *The New York World*, New York's leading Democratic newspaper, had declared Morton's claim of Congressional control of suffrage illogical, but nonetheless praised the galvanizing effect of Morton's speech on Congress.¹⁰⁴ Hoosier Democrats were more critical. *The New Albany Daily Ledger* appealed to racial fear mongering in pointing out the "flaws" in Morton's argument; for all his talk of the need for black suffrage in order to "exclude rebel supremacy" in the ten unadmitted southern states, newly enfranchised blacks would easily outnumber "disloyal" whites—a fact Morton deliberately misrepresented in his speech. Morton had previously declared black national leadership "undesirable." But now he used the looming threat of "unrepentant rebels" to justify "negro supremacy" in southern state governments—governments naturally led by "white demagogue" Republicans.¹⁰⁵ According to the paper, despite noble rhetoric, Morton's sympathies clearly remained tied to politics.

While not the most divisive address, Morton's "Great Reconstruction" speech was indicative of his ability to incorporate new doctrines into his central defense of the Union. Morton was willing to embrace new ideals, especially those beneficial to his public image, but the frequency and vehemence of his new advocacy suggests his genuine belief in what he said. Justifying his new position and silencing his critics required a more logical argument than his Masonic Hall address, but Morton adapted his proven anti-Democratic, Union-centric rhetoric to fit the occasion. By divorcing himself from his earlier, more moderate, 1865 position, Morton tried to paint Republicans' willingness to accept and defend black suffrage as the definitive sign of his Party's devotion to creating and protecting a fair and just Union. Republicans could do what needed to be done. Any

¹⁰⁴ "Senator Morton's Speech," *Indianapolis Journal*, January 30, 1868, 4.

¹⁰⁵ "Negro Supremacy," *New Albany Daily Ledger*, January 31, 1868, 1.

Democrats who dared argue the issue remained too sympathetic to southern devotions to “that heathenish . . . appeal of race against race” to adapt for the sake of the Union.¹⁰⁶

This central message set the precedents for Morton’s future defenses of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments from 1869 to 1871. Having successfully justified Congressional openness to universal black suffrage in his Great Reconstruction address, Morton could argue Congress also had the power to make ratification of acts designed to establish and protect freedmen’s rights. Such action was paramount to a Congressional duty to ensure a stable reunion—one friendly to national (especially northern) interests.¹⁰⁷ Without such federally binding qualifications, the South would surely deny African Americans their rights by some other contrivance.¹⁰⁸ Morton solidified his advocacy for black suffrage to defend his vision of a restored nation founded on honoring and protecting the results of the war—even if achieving this change meant applying force.¹⁰⁹

Morton’s Great Reconstruction speech demonstrated several traits that contributed to his legacy. First, he embraced a political flexibility needed to help his party survive.

¹⁰⁶ Johnson, “Oliver P. Morton,” 187-189. In Johnson’s analysis, Morton’s argument hinged on his belief that black enfranchisement was “necessary for the preservation of the fruits of victory.” This message was far from novel, but this may have been Morton’s attempt to justify his reversal to the northern public after running on a decidedly less radical platform of racial reform in the 1867 elections.

¹⁰⁷ Ufland, “Race in the Midwest,” 95.

¹⁰⁸ Schultz, “Oliver P. Morton and Reconstruction,” 23-26; Johnson, “Oliver P. Morton,” 97-108. Historians have questioned Morton’s motives. Schultz suggests that Morton’s support of these two Amendments was more indicative of his unfaltering party allegiance than of any shift in moral conviction about black suffrage, noting “Any constitutional scruples [Morton] may have had were always subordinated to party measures.” Johnson’s conclusion supports my assertion that Morton supported his party, but, like any politician, policy did not totally dictate, or wholly overpower, his personal ideals.

¹⁰⁹ Foulke, *Life of Oliver P. Morton*, vol. 2, 114-119. Force was not exclusive to the South. In May of 1869, Morton helped to ensure Indiana’s ratification of the Fifteenth Amendment. He overruled resistance from the Democratic legislative majority, arguing a state was duty-bound to consider an amendment to the national constitution because of loyalty to the national government, and such considerations could not be deferred for any reason. When Democratic members resigned, the remaining Republicans ratified the bill. Republican presses praised Morton’s ingenuity, but some allies were displeased with his headstrong action. Such boldness confirmed Morton’s confidence and ruthlessness determination to do what he thought best for the nation, even if it conflicted with the desires of Hoosier citizens. See also “The Constitutional Amendment in the Legislature,” *Fort Wayne Weekly Democrat*, May 19, 1869, 3; “An Exhaustive Argument,” *Urbana Union*, June 2, 1869, 3

Secondly, he could justify his new positions in terms northern audiences could accept by wedding black suffrage to the cause of preserving the Union.¹¹⁰ Third, while his motives were political, his postwar advocacy for black rights was also founded in genuine concern. Despite patriotic oratory, African American suffrage and citizenship remained largely unpopular among Indiana voters. Even when the nation began to tire of the issue during his second term, Morton continued fighting for African American rights and even leadership, defending Mississippi's first black Governor, P. B. S. Pinchback in 1876.¹¹¹ Magnified by time, such advocacy became one of the definitive aspects of his lasting public persona, especially for those seeking to use his legacy to promote emancipationist memories of Reconstruction.

Finally, this speech demonstrated the major, war-centric emotional appeals Morton used to sell his new, hard line social and political policies to the northern public. The central theme of reunification in this and similar speeches Morton made from 1868 to 1877 placed both the blame for the war and the possibility of political, social and economic reunion squarely on the shoulders of former Confederates and their northern Democratic allies.¹¹² If the South refused to voluntarily overhaul a society based on racial oppression or curb hostility to northern ideas of industry and education, the North was

¹¹⁰ Morton, *Reconstruction*, 10.

¹¹¹ Morton often used this to attack Democrats and to cast Republicans in more honorable light. See Oliver P. Morton, *Speech of Hon. O. P. Morton: delivered in the United States Senate, January 19, 1876, on the Mississippi Election* (Washington, D. C., 1876) MSS Pamphlet Collection, JK2246.M7 M6 1876, IHS, 2-20.

¹¹² For examples, see Oliver P. Morton, "Speech of Hon. O. P. Morton . . . Before the Soldiers' and Sailors' Union of Washington D. C., on Monday Evening, January 6, 1868," Oliver P. Morton Speeches, BV308 M891S, ISL, 6-11; John Russell Bartlett, *The Soldiers' national cemetery at Gettysburg : with the proceedings at its consecration, at the laying of the corner-stone of the monument, and at its dedication* (Providence, R.I.: Providence Press Co., 1874), accessed October 14, 2014, <http://archive.org/stream/soldiersnational00bart#page/n7/mode/2up>.

duty-bound to pass (and if necessary, force) the change.¹¹³ The North remained ready and willing to rebuild and revitalize the South. But, as Johnson pointed out, Morton always argued the burden of successful political and social reunification rested on the southern betrayers.¹¹⁴ Some concessions could be made, but reunion—on northern terms—was inevitable.

The South resisted bitterly. Confederate veterans and sympathetic civilians rallied around the Ku Klux Klan, a white supremacist, terrorist group determined to preserve the racist backbone of antebellum society. The Klan violently oppressed southern freedmen and openly undermined Federal authority in the South.¹¹⁵ The Klan became one of Morton's prime enemies, and in the fourth address analyzed here, he cited its activities to justify U. S. Government law enforcement and to deny increasingly frequent calls for granting general amnesty to southern veterans.

Morton delivered his fourth address in 1872, amid discussions of the Grant-backed Ku Klux Klan Act, the latest in a larger package of Enforcement Acts meant to force the South to uphold the Fourteenth Amendment by protecting southern freedmen's newly guaranteed rights of representation and equality. The bill also granted the President executive powers to uphold the Acts in the interest of Southern stability, through martial law if need be.¹¹⁶ Democrats declared this a violation of state's rights. In Morton's interpretation, the Klan was merely the latest, most extreme indication of the South's

¹¹³ This was a constant theme throughout many of Morton's senatorial speeches. For example, see Oliver P. Morton, "Record and platforms of the Democratic Party : Speech of Senator Morton, at Urbana, Ohio, Aug. 7, 1875," *Oliver P. Morton Speeches*, BV308 M891S, ISL, 13-19.

¹¹⁴ Johnson, "Oliver P. Morton," 101-104.

¹¹⁵ For more information, see Allen W. Trelease, *White Terror: The Ku Klux Klan Conspiracy and Southern Reconstruction* (Baton Rouge, Louisiana: Louisiana State University Press, 1971, reprinted 1995); Rable, *But There Was No Peace: The Role of Violence in the Politics of Reconstruction* (Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 2007).

¹¹⁶ Foner, *Reconstruction*, 454-459.

lingering resentment—and one more reason to deny granting amnesty to former Confederates. On January 23, 1872, Morton made his opinion very clear.

As I remarked before, universal amnesty removes the last mark of legal disapprobation of this rebellion. It is a declaration to posterity that there was nothing wrong in the rebellion, that it involved no criminality, that it was simply an honest difference of opinion between parties in which there was no criminality on either side.¹¹⁷

Morton added, “If you grant amnesty to the authors of the rebellion, you cannot convince the children twenty years hence that there was anything wrong in that rebellion.”¹¹⁸ Ever resentful of Reconstruction, southerners would be sure to elect former Confederate officers to Congress. Thus armed with political power, these Democratic “rebels” would overrule all Republican policies until the government agreed to provide equal pensions for Union and Confederate veterans—and from there, compensation for property destroyed or taken by the Union army—which, naturally, included former slaves.¹¹⁹ Nor would they do anything to ensure southern states enforced blacks’ basic rights of citizenship. Only through continued Republican rule, Morton argued, could the nation avoid this great calamity.¹²⁰ Ohio Senator Allen G. Thurman, the spokesman for Democratic opposition to Republican Reconstruction, acknowledged Morton’s passionate speech, but dismissed his repetitive message as mere politicking for the upcoming 1872 election.

[Morton] has sounded his note again, and I only regret that in all the years he has been studying music, he has found no new tune, nor even a single new note . . . it is the same frightful array of ghosts, found nowhere

¹¹⁷ U. S. Congress, *Congressional Globe*, 42nd Congress, 2d Sess., 523 (1872).

¹¹⁸ For Morton’s address and Thurman’s reply, see U. S. *Congressional Globe*, 42nd Congress, 2d Sess., 522-529 (1872).

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 532.

¹²⁰ Although Democrats bemoaned Morton’s reliance on old memories to distract from more pressing issues of economic reform, they recognized the effectiveness of his tactics. See “Danger to the Democracy of Indiana,” *New Albany Weekly Ledger*, February 21, 1872, 4.

except in the Senator's imagination, of what is to result to this country should the Democratic party ever get into power.¹²¹

While this was not one of Morton's most influential speeches, it demonstrated the tone and subject matter Morton was known for, and the kind of oratory that formed the backbone of his lasting legacy. His refusal to grant amnesty to Confederates strengthened his image as the champion of the Union veteran's right to social and historical superiority and justified his defense of blacks.¹²² Morton likely recognized the improbability of Democrats overturning any Constitutional Amendment but his call embodied many GAR members' and unaffiliated Union veterans' deepest fear, that in the process of national reconciliation, necessary political bargaining would ultimately undermine Confederate culpability for the war in order to assuage damaged southern pride.¹²³ He also expressed the threat that southern blacks would be left to the mercy of bitter, violent white southerners. Some Republicans lost their radicalness as voters grew weary of the issues. Morton, however, was consistent, and his repetitive messages successfully endeared him to core audiences of veterans and African Americans long after his death.

Morton continued to draw on his personal memories of the war to color and structure his passionate oratory regarding the readmission of southern states in senatorial

¹²¹ U. S. Congress, *Congressional Globe*, 42nd Congress, 2d Sess., 525 (1872).

¹²² Morton often defended his opposition to general amnesty in terms that emphasized the Unionist's moral superiority over former Confederates. Although both sides had fought valiantly, Union veterans were entitled to more public respect, veneration and financial compensation by virtue of having fought for a morally righteous cause (reunion and black freedom). By denying veterans' pensions to Confederates, Federal leaders like Morton reinforced Union veterans' general desire to preserve southern culpability in national war memory. The national economic depression of the 1870s lent a greater symbolic and literal weight to this palpable, monetary divide between Union and Confederate veterans. Only the morally righteous Unionists were worthy of reward—and this reward needed to be protected. This formed the basis for Union veterans' vehement demands for federal financial support during the 1880s and 1890s. See Janney, *Remembering the Civil War*, 109-111.

¹²³ Foulke, *Life of Oliver P. Morton*, vol. 2, 259. Morton's appeals remained rooted in political ambition. He was seeking reelection to a second term. He also hoped to see the Indiana Governor's chair occupied by a fellow Republican to counterbalance the Democratic House majority. This same conviction for Republican dominance led him to decline a position as an American liaison to England from President Grant in 1870.

debates throughout the 1870s. In the wake of the economic Panic of 1873, Democrats renewed their criticisms of Morton's continued reliance on the war, seeking to undercut Republican congressional dominance. Voters demanded greater focus on economic reform and became far less forgiving of the widespread corruption characterizing Republican Reconstruction. Three separate Democratic-backed inquiries into Morton's past and present finances turned up no damning evidence, but his unfaltering support for President Grant (and Grant's notoriously corrupt cabinet) may have somewhat tarnished Morton's reputation.¹²⁴ Morton remained markedly consistent in later addresses to what is arguably the audience most responsible for his place in Civil War memory—Union veterans. And these final orations to the Union cause played a major role in shaping his legacy.

Morton (and his opponents) recognized the galvanizing political power of invoking war memories and his own wartime reputation on the nation, especially Union veterans.¹²⁵ He rarely missed an opportunity to publicly honor their sacrifices and frequently organized and attended reunions in Indiana, especially on May 31, a "Decoration Day," set aside for commemorating fallen soldiers.¹²⁶ His acute awareness of his own reputation, his audience's emotions, and situational context served him well in these speeches—perhaps even better than many of his senatorial addresses.¹²⁷ Morton

¹²⁴ Morton took full advantage of these investigations to flaunt his clean financial record. For the full speech delivered in 1876, see *Indianapolis Journal*, May 4, 1876, 4.

¹²⁵ *Greencastle Banner*, May 4, 1876, 4.

¹²⁶ For example, Morton had his less-inflammatory address in North Carolina in 1875 delivered by a substitute. Morton's less conservative oratory on other occasions inspired harsh commentary. See *Indiana State Sentinel*, September 13, 1876, 2; *Corydon Democrat*, October 9, 1876, 14.

¹²⁷ Morton often used veterans' rallies to define ongoing political debates as battles between correct interpretations of the war. For example see Oliver P. Morton, "Speech of Hon. O. P. Morton . . . Before the Soldiers' and Sailors' Union of Washington D. C., on Monday Evening, January 6, 1868," Oliver P. Morton Speeches, BV 308, 1SL, 6-11, Rare Books and Manuscript Collection. The Democratic

was not above altering his views on these occasions to appeal to a specific audience, especially if the event was widely reported.¹²⁸ But his commitment to the superiority of the northern cause in Civil War memory proved stronger.

This was particularly evident when he delivered his fifth speech at a huge rally in Rockville, Indiana, on September 5, 1875. The occasion was significant. Both parties organized mass gatherings to commemorate the nation's centennial, the Civil War, and to drum up political support for the upcoming, hotly contested 1876 Presidential election. With local presses abuzz with rumors of Morton's potential candidacy, it was the perfect opportunity to rally the troops, defend his reputation and perhaps achieve victory.¹²⁹ As the date of Morton's speech approached, the *Logansport Daily Pharos* astutely predicted the ferocity of Morton's talk. "He will clothe himself again in a garment of gore, and fight again the battles of his more youthful days."¹³⁰

When Morton settled before a crowd of around 20,000 veterans, he did just that.¹³¹ Commenting on the celebratory atmosphere, Morton reminded the audience this reunion was "an occasion of solemn and of awful memories." Lamenting the losses of veterans, he recalled personally escorting many new regiments out of the city with pride.

Greencastle Weekly Press dismissed it as "the speech of a knave or demagogue. It is as full of falsehood as an egg is of meat or as an old cheese is of maggots." "Morton's Speech," January 15, 1869, 2.

¹²⁸ A few days before his Decoration Day address in Greencastle, Indiana in 1875, a local paper noted Morton's tendency to use these occasions to "fire the Northern heart," adding "[now] he has a golden opportunity to raise his voice in favor of a substantial, not simulated, peace and reconciliation. Will he embrace it?" Morton extolled the virtue of the Union man and the righteousness of their (and by extension, the Republican's) cause, but he refrained from disparaging Confederates or Indiana Democrats. Several local papers commended Morton's unusual lack of partisanship. For commentary, see "Morton's Decoration Day," *Greencastle Press*, May 26, 1875, 3; "Governor Morton's Oration at Greencastle," *Indianapolis Journal*, June 5, 1875, 4; "What is Said of Our Decoration," *Greencastle Banner*, June 10, 1875, 1.

¹²⁹ Foes and allies lauded or attacked Morton through accounts of his Governorship. See "Retrospective," *Indiana State Sentinel*, September 9, 1875, 4; "A Bit of History," *Indianapolis Journal*, May 5, 1876, 4.

¹³⁰ *Logansport Daily Pharos*, August 17, 1875, 2.

¹³¹ Attendance estimate from report of *Indianapolis Journal*, September 7, 1875, 2. In 1876, Morton made a similar speech to a crowd of 40,000 veterans in Indianapolis. See Dee A. Brown, *The Year of the Century: 1876* (New York: Scribner, 1966), 243-246.

“I believe men never died for better principles than your comrades who laid their bodies in Southern soil,” he told the crowd of veterans, widows and children. The crowd reportedly applauded his sentiment. He acknowledged the Union’s forgiveness of the South, but added “forgiveness does not imply honor or reward. . . . Personal animosities may be buried, but never will the great principles upon which we put down that rebellion be compromised or forgotten.” Following Morton, Union General William T. Sherman agreed that such sacrifices should never be forgotten and the great “bloody chasm” of Civil War memory could only be closed on Union terms.¹³² Despite poor health, Morton came close to winning the nomination but ultimately lost to Hayes.¹³³ Even so, the addresses he delivered to packed crowds of cheering Unionists during the campaign definitively reinforced his commitment to remembering the war.

Previous studies, most notably Johnson’s examination of Morton’s speaking career, have overlooked the significance of his final speeches from 1873 to 1877. Carpenter and Schultz mention Morton’s Decoration Day speeches, but Johnson omits any, noting they do not contain the originality or arouse public excitement on the scale of his defenses of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments.¹³⁴ While not as unique as earlier efforts, Morton’s later speeches still illuminate his perception of public opinion and his understanding of his audience’s changing political priorities. Most importantly, these works highlight what Morton (and the public) thought about his place during the

¹³² “Fighting their Battles O’er,” *Indiana State Sentinel*, September 9, 1875, 4; “The Object of the Soldiers’ Reunion,” September 13, 1875, 3.

¹³³ Foulke, *Life of Oliver P. Morton*, vol. 2, 398-401.

¹³⁴ Carpenter, “Political Speaking of Oliver P. Morton,” 182. Carpenter examines and deconstructs speeches from the whole of Morton’s career, but he also correctly notes the Senator’s messages were often more repetitive after 1872. Contrastingly, Johnson concludes his analysis with Morton’s 1868 defense of Congressional Reconstruction. His conclusions regarding Morton’s wartime appeals are insightful, but the scale of his study limits the same discussion of Morton’s considerable influence throughout the 1870s.

‘final’ years of Reconstruction, and the effect of his later speeches on immediate reactions to his death, which, in turn, shaped his long-term legacy.

Perhaps more than any other, Morton’s Ku Klux Klan and reunion speeches revealed aspects of his oratory that made him revered and scorned as the nation struggled to reunite. Of course, he was willing to change his address to appeal to his audiences. But exceptions were more indicative of audience awareness rather than genuine feeling. Even when not addressing crowds of veterans on his home soil, Morton’s speeches from 1874 to 1877 ranked him as one of the most committed defenders of the North’s singular claim to moral righteousness in Civil War memory.¹³⁵ Democrats condemned Morton’s reliance on divisive memories they insisted be left alone. One editor complained, “His eyes are so blood-shotted with the war of ten years ago he cannot see anything but the past.” With the nation “groaning” under enormous debt, Morton continually came “with nothing better to offer than a rehash of the war, and like issues which have long since been settled.”¹³⁶

Morton’s adherence to his message of bitter remembrance was both personal and politically convenient. By the 1870s, Morton was likely the most prominent, powerful Republican representative with first-hand experience of the Democrats’ wartime

¹³⁵ Foulke, *Life of Oliver P. Morton*, vol. 2, 491.

¹³⁶ *Fort Wayne Daily Sentinel*, September 3, 1875, 4; “The Meeting Saturday,” *Connersville Examiner*, August 30, 1876, 6. For similar critiques of Morton’s “bloody shirt”, see; [Untitled editorial], *Sullivan Democrat*, January 5, 1876, 1; [Untitled editorial], *Jeffersonville Evening News*, October 3, 1876; *Indiana State Sentinel*, June 13, 1877, 2. Democrats reacted with scorn to the news of Morton’s potential candidacy. The *Fort Wayne Sentinel* carried the following short verse expressing doubt at Morton’s prospects; “Next hobbles up our Morton, the redoubted Oliver P./ With his bloody shirt about him he is bold as he can be,/ He talks much about the ku-klux, and raves about the war,/ Forgetting that ‘tis over now, a dozen years or more./ He expects to get in on his rep as the “great war governor;”/ But the people know his record; the bad peace senator;/ His bloody shirt and savage talk are only shabby tricks,/ That will not elect him president in 1876.” “Our Republican Candidates,” *Fort Wayne Weekly Sentinel*, May 17, 1876, 4. Others deemed him too ill for the position. The editor of the *Goshen Democrat*, a long standing critic, dismissed Morton’s presidential aspirations, for “how would a paralyzed President stand to receive visitors?” [Untitled editorial], *Goshen Democrat*, August 11, 1875, 2.

animosity in the Midwest. With the help of the Union Army, Morton had challenged armed conspirators and succeeded. He enjoyed a unique opportunity to remind audiences of Democrats' Confederate allegiances and reflect on the danger such men posed to a reconstructed nation. During the 1870s, northern Hoosier wartime Democrats united with southern Democrats to fight against Republican congressional dominance. And Indiana Democrats emulated southerners' often violent and bloody resistance to African American enfranchisement.¹³⁷ For Morton, and many other Union veterans, the war remained a powerful, lifetime-defining experience and forgiveness did not imply forgetfulness. Using historical memory as a political weapon, Morton continually advocated the need for political policies to reflect the reality of the Union's moral supremacy and southern guilt. Sacrificing this perspective in the name of political and national unity, he argued, would be the greatest dishonor the nation could do to its veterans.¹³⁸ He embraced African American suffrage for the good of the party but his support arose because emancipation and suffrage aligned with his personal principle of preserving the Union. Morton was a continual irritation to the Democrats because he would not let anyone forget Democratic culpability for the Southern rebellion and Northern conspiracies of treason. With these speeches, Morton established himself as a ready, relatable symbol for Union veterans.

Letters from constituents emphasized Morton's enduring reputation as the same War Governor. When controversy erupted over the disputed election of Republican moderate Rutherford B. Hayes in 1876, mail flooded his office. On January 15, 1877,

¹³⁷ Many thanks are due to archivist and historian Stephen E. Towne for his revealing insights into this important aspect of Morton's postwar career and legacy.

¹³⁸ "The People's Man for President," editorial by J. W. H., *Indianapolis Journal*, May 19, 1876, 7; "The Latest Republican Outrage," *Corydon Democrat*, October 9, 1876, 14.

Michael Scanlan, editor of the *Irish Republican*, urged Morton not to give in to Democratic demands, for “if Republicanism stands aside now to let treason capture our government, the war” was “fought in vain and the dead have died in vain.” “Indiana’s Old War Governor, will be sustained,” E. M. Kimball wrote to Morton on January 18, assuring him “There are tens of thousands of the Old Volunteer Army of Indiana, which you organized there – *ready and willing* to fall into line at your call. *We all pray for peace but that peace must not be bought by a surrender to traitors.*”¹³⁹ Hoosier citizens and veterans respected Morton’s strength and desire to keep reconciliation from being bought at the price of compromising national war memories.

Morton continued to wave his bloody shirt until his death.¹⁴⁰ Because he felt so closely tied to Union veterans, he could not accept attempts to forget Confederate culpability. His wartime experiences in Indiana ensured he never allowed Democrats’ willingness to ally with traitors to be forgotten during his lifetime—and his opponents were just as slow to forget his barbs. Morton embraced many new measures for the good of his party. But each was always tied to his central belief in the national Union—a Union whose future depended on preserving the righteousness of the North in Civil War memory.¹⁴¹ Morton’s inability to forget the war, or completely forget the crimes of traitors those responsible mirrored concerns of audiences of veterans, blacks, and Hoosier citizens. We cannot say Morton intentionally crafted these messages with such long-term effects in mind, but he clearly and boldly supported legislation that reinforced his central

¹³⁹ Michael Scanlan to O. P. Morton, 15 January 1877; E. M. Kimball to O. P. Morton, 18 January 1877. Emphasis original. Oliver P. Morton Papers, MSS Collection L113, Box 2, Folder 1, ISL.

¹⁴⁰ “The “Southern Question”, *Fort Wayne Weekly Sentinel*, August 16, 1876, 5.

¹⁴¹ Morton delivered his final speech to a crowd of veterans in Indianapolis’s Crown Hill Cemetery on Decoration Day, 31 May 1877. For the full speech, see *Indianapolis Journal*, May 31, 1877, 1-2 or Foulke, *Life of Oliver P. Morton*, vol. 2, 491-493.

tenants of remembrance, equality, and respect for Union veterans and the protection of wartime gains.¹⁴² Morton's partisan reputation, like his messages, endured after his death. But, as the next chapter will demonstrate, soldiers and citizens alike remembered Morton's services. And different groups readily attacked or defended his career and reputation to advance their own political agendas.

¹⁴² "Honors to Returned Soldiers," *Indianapolis Daily Journal*, June 12, 1865, 3. "Remembrance" is important. At the beginning of the Civil War, the Indiana battle cry was "Remember Buena Vista!" referring to supposed cowardice among Indiana officers in Mexico during the Spanish-American War. By the end of the Civil War, Union veterans (and later the Indiana GAR) wanted ensure the state remembered how veterans' service in the Union army helped Indiana to overcome this shameful reputation. Morton specifically mentioned this in an evening address to returning Indiana veterans in 1865, saying "The reputation of the State of Indiana, when the war began, was a little under par. The 2d Indiana, in the Mexican War, met with misfortune at the Battle of Buena Vista . . . and something of a stain attached itself to the entire State as a consequence. Now, we are proud of Indiana—not as a little municipality in itself, but as an integral part of the nation."

Chapter Two: Morton's Legacy in the Nineteenth Century (1877-1884)

“Lincoln has gone, [Secretary of War Edwin] Stanton and [Ohio Governor John] Brough, and the other giants of [the Civil War] have all passed away. Morton only remains, survivor of an era of great men, great patriotism and great works.”¹⁴³

On November 1, 1877, Oliver P. Morton died. His postwar actions had established him as the combative, aggressively partisan symbol of Republican Reconstruction. Although Morton's political actions were equally revered and scorned, few denied the importance of his divisive legacy. Republican allies, Democratic opponents, journalists, friends, and family recognized Morton's status as the most influential Republican representative in the Midwest. Indeed, the depth and breadth of public and private responses from August 1877 when Morton's health failed to the months after his death that November, included discussions about his character, his politics, and his role in Civil War and Radical Reconstruction. Critics did not forget his caustic treatment of Democrats while waving the bloody shirt of Union war memory; however, political allies, family members, and especially Union veterans ultimately promoted a positive legacy.

Morton's prominent role during the Civil War and Reconstruction made him a valuable figure in a culture that sought men to valorize. The unprecedented scope of wartime losses politicized the deaths and the remembrances of fallen soldiers, military leaders and politicians on an extraordinary national level. In *Arranging Grief*, Dana Luciano posits the trauma of the Civil War fundamentally changed the way Americans were expected to express and deal with grief. The sheer number of dead and unparalleled sense of national loss made intensely personal acts of mourning and remembrance more

¹⁴³ “Senator Morton's Slanderers—The Truth of History,” *Indianapolis Journal*, August 29, 1877, 4.

public.¹⁴⁴ Dignified, public memorialization of dead soldiers and defenses of their causes became a vital, controversial part of American culture, especially for veterans and African Americans.¹⁴⁵ Like Luciano, historian Drew Gilpin-Faust emphasizes the importance of death and memory in wartime and postwar politics. Popular figures whose local and national legacy symbolically belonged to the nation became focal points in the battle over national and regional memories of the Civil War.¹⁴⁶ Morton was no exception; in fact, as historian James Fuller notes, Morton's critical, controversial role in wartime and postwar politics made his death a valuable opportunity for politicians, veterans, African Americans, and others to discuss what to remember and what to forget about the war.¹⁴⁷ Many groups—political allies and opponents, African Americans, and especially

¹⁴⁴ Dana Luciano, *Arranging Grief: Sacred Time and the Body in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: New York University Press, 2007), 12. Luciano posits this change stemmed from the Civil War forcing many Americans to fundamentally revise societal conceptions about the nature of time to embrace a more linear, forward-moving concept of the dead. For more discussion of time in the role of grief in death and commemoration, see 12-16, 20-22.

¹⁴⁵ The honored dead encompassed Union and Confederate soldiers and African Americans who had suffered through slavery and served in the war. The literature on Civil War memory is vast. A few notable examples include: Michael Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture* (New York, 1991); Kirk Savage, *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves: Race, War, and Monument in Nineteenth-Century America* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1999); William Alan Blair, *Cities of the Dead: Contesting the Memory of the Civil War in the South, 1865-1914* (Raleigh: University of North Carolina Press, 2004); John R. Neff, *Honoring the Dead: Commemoration and the Problem of Reconciliation* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2005); Caroline E. Janney, *Remembering the Civil War: Reunion and the Limits of Reconciliation* (Chapel Hill: University of South Carolina Press, 2013).

¹⁴⁶ Drew Gilpin-Faust, *This Republic of Suffering* (New York: Vintage Books, 2009) 153-156. See also Janney, *Limits of Reconciliation*, 169-174. Morton was not a soldier, but his close association with Indiana veterans and Reconstruction inherently made his death a microcosm of late nineteenth century America's shifting memories of the war. In her analysis of Civil War funerals, Faust uses public responses to Andrew Jackson and Abraham Lincoln's deaths to discuss how a nationally respected figure provided a region or nation-wide focal point for grief representative of numerous dead men who fought and died for two radically different causes. As both the "Soldier's Friend" and one of the strongest advocates for black suffrage, and direct, strict federal oversight of a distrustful South, Morton likely provided a similar figure for Hoosier Civil War veterans and blacks.

¹⁴⁷ A. James Fuller, "Oliver P. Morton and the Politics of Historical Memory," *Indiana Magazine of History* 110, no. 4 (December 2014): 324. Fuller's analysis of Morton's place in state and national memories of the Civil War and Reconstruction is broader and more chronologically comprehensive and is an essential companion for both this chapter and the next. This chapter analyzes the short-term responses to Morton's death in order to better study the immediate public written and physical works of commemoration.

Union veterans—likely felt a personal (as well as political) connection to Morton and his wartime deeds. He was ripe to become a symbol for the messages Union veterans wished to popularize—and for critics to tear down.

Morton died at the end of what many Americans at the time (and many scholars today) consider the chronological end of Reconstruction. The nation was reunited, but sectional bitterness of war memories continued to color American politics for decades as political priorities shifted.¹⁴⁸ Public eulogies, editorials, and private correspondence from political allies and opponents demonstrate that many viewed his death as the end of an era. Commentators noted Morton’s skill as an orator and his ability to unite Republicans had made him the natural replacement for former radical leader Thaddeus Stevens, and his death left a Republican vacuum in Congress that could not be easily filled.¹⁴⁹ It is not difficult to see Morton’s death as an indication of the waning Congressional dominance of the radical wing of the Republican Party.¹⁵⁰ Allies and opponents viewed Morton’s death as the symbolic end of a racially and socially radical, combative, and war-centric element that had defined Radical Reconstruction.¹⁵¹ Morton’s death became a focal point for invested stakeholders to publically discuss the successes and failures of

¹⁴⁸ Foner, *Reconstruction*, 388-600, 602-612; Blight, *Race and Reunion*, 135-137. Scholars do not agree when Reconstruction “ended.” Hayes’s presidential ascension and the shift from a federal focus on southern reform to industrial and economic expansion make 1877 significant. The nation was officially ‘reconstructed’ in 1878 when all southern states officially rejoined the Union and the remaining small forces of Federal troops withdrew from the South. Formerly dominant, radical Republicans, associated with an increasingly untenable strong, centralized Federal oversight of state affairs began to lose the long-standing majority in Congress to Democrats.

¹⁴⁹ *Indiana State Sentinel*, August 27, 1877, 3; *Goshen Times*, November 8, 1877, 2.

¹⁵⁰ Foner, *Reconstruction*, 601, 609. While Republicans held the Presidency until 1884, Democrats assumed control of the House and Senate by 1880.

¹⁵¹ *Indiana State Sentinel*, August 17, 1877, 3; *Indianapolis Herald*, November 9, 1877, 2; Fuller, “Oliver P. Morton and the Politics of Historical Memory,” 330-335. Around the time of Morton’s death, several Democratic Indiana newspapers noted Morton’s blunt attacks on the South had negatively colored Reconstruction and prevented a national North-South reconciliation. Morton’s political colleagues contributed to this discussion. Fuller’s analysis of the 1878 senatorial eulogies notes each speaker’s interpretation of Morton’s legacy reflected the message they wished to promote amid shifting national memories of the war and slavery.

Reconstruction and to decide what should be remembered and forgotten in a reunited nation.¹⁵²

Morton's central importance to the Republican Party politicized the coverage of his rapidly deteriorating condition from August until October 1877. Early Republican reports emphasized the pitiable condition of Morton's physical paralysis. "I cannot describe to you the misery of that day," a friend wrote in a letter published in the *Indianapolis Journal*. "The man who a day before was a picture of health, vivacity, cheerfulness and power was a fearful contrast to his then utter helplessness, apathy of mind, and misery."¹⁵³ By October, reporters noted that Morton had not succumbed to the "mercy of mental indolence and semi-stupor." Although too weak to speak much, Morton's mind remained "perfectly clear and vigorous."¹⁵⁴ Morton's strength of spirit, mental clarity, and continual interest in political affairs in spite of his bedridden condition was both commendable and pitiable.¹⁵⁵ Republican editorials throughout September and October tried to remain hopeful, noting Morton's recoveries from previous illnesses and protesting accusations of misrepresenting the severity of Morton's condition.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵² Foner, *Reconstruction*, 602-612; David Blight, *Race and Reunion*, 139; Andrew Slap, *Doom of Reconstruction: The Liberal Republicans in the Civil War Era* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2006); Mark Wahlgren Summers, *The Ordeal of the Reunion: A New History of Reconstruction* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014). Many analyses—especially Foner and Blight—base negative evaluations of Reconstruction on the basis of Republicans' diminishing ability to protect the rights of freedmen in the South. Others, like Andrew Slap, have noted internal Republican divisions were also to blame for the ascendancy of Democrats during the 1880s and the collapse of Reconstruction. Summers' more recent analyses offers a more nuanced perspective of this critical period.

¹⁵³ "The progress of Senator Morton's Sickness," *Indianapolis Journal*, September 17, 1877, 4.

¹⁵⁴ "Morton's Sick Room," *Marshall County Republican*, October 4, 1877, 1.

¹⁵⁵ "Senator Morton's Illness," *Boston Advisor*, reprinted in *Indianapolis Journal*, August 30, 1877, 5; October 17, 1877, 3; *Martinsville Republican*, October 18, 1877, 3. Morton's Washington colleagues also singled out this dogged perseverance as a major, defining attribute of Morton's character.

¹⁵⁶ "Senator Morton's Condition," *National Republican*, [Washington D.C.], September 17, 1877, 1; *Marshall County Republican*, October 4, 1877, 1; *Indianapolis Journal*, October 17, 1877, 6; October 24, 1877, 3; October 27, 1877, 4.

Indeed, Morton's illness seemed to spell doom for Republicans. Well-wishers privately echoed Republican newspaper editorials and declared that to lose a man who had helped lead the nation through Reconstruction and whose council would be needed for the days ahead would be "a calamity" for his party and the nation.¹⁵⁷ "Can nothing be done to avert the impending calamity?" asked Judge M. L. Bundy of New Castle on the eve of Morton's death. "Since the tragic death of Lincoln no event would excite a more profound Sensation in America than the death of Morton."¹⁵⁸ Many—including U.S. Attorney General James Speed— anxiously watched the papers for reports about Morton's health and wished him a fast recovery.¹⁵⁹ Churches and political organizations passed resolutions of sympathy.¹⁶⁰ To friends and allies, Morton's death could not have come at a more inopportune time.

Perhaps the most significant gesture of Republican respect came from President Hayes's private audience with Morton on September 12, 1877. Reporters recognized the gravity of Hayes's necessarily short visit, especially his sympathetic wish to see Morton return to the Senate in December. Public accounts emphasized the limited physical

¹⁵⁷ *Indianapolis Journal*, September 17, 1877, 4. Multiple letters sent to W. R. Holloway and Lucinda Morton echoed the *Journal*. H. M. Atkinson to O. P. Morton, 24 September 1877; John W. Mitchell to O. P. Morton, 30 September 1877; M. P. Kellogg to O. P. Morton, 8 October 1877, William R. Holloway Papers (1795-1903), M0145, Box 10, Folder 3, IHS. Hereafter listed as Holloway MSS.

¹⁵⁸ M. L. Bundy to W. R. Holloway, 31 October 1877, Holloway MSS M0145, Box 10, Folder 3, IHS. Morton and Bundy were long-time political allies and friends. Morton had helped contribute to Bundy's judicial reelection in New Castle in 1872.

¹⁵⁹ Justin S. Morrill to O. P. Morton, 6 September 1877; H. S. Dodd to O. P. Morton, 7 September 1877; Joshua L. Speed to O. P. Morton, 16 September 1877, Holloway MSS M1045, Box 10, Folder 3, IHS. Well-wishers offered advice and gifts. Dodd suggested Morton might find relief by returning to the curative Alabama hot springs he had visited before. Joshua Speed sent Morton grapes all the way from Louisiana. Some journalists disagreed with constant, often contradictory public coverage of Morton's health. See "Personals and Pruriency," reprinted in *Memphis Daily Appeal*, September 25, 1877, 2.

¹⁶⁰ At a September meeting, the Western Methodist Conference passed such a resolution, which was complimented by the *Indianapolis Journal*, September 24, 1877, 2. For the full resolution, see *Madison Weekly Herald*, October 3, 1877, 3. The Women's Temperance League, remembering Morton's limited, but spirited advocacy for women's suffrage, privately wished Morton a speedy recovery. Frances B. Willard to W. R. Holloway, 24 October 1877, Holloway MSS, M0145, Box 10, Folder 4, IHS.

interaction between the two men—a clasping of hands, Hayes’s kiss to Morton’s brow—to symbolize an almost reverential respect the President owed (and showed) to Morton. By embracing his chief rival for the 1876 presidency, Hayes also reinforced Morton’s call for Republican solidarity. The *Indianapolis Journal* noted such an occasion should be both “a pleasure and a duty,” for one who had done so much for the Republican Party—and fought hard to ensure Hayes’ Presidential ascendancy, adding, his visit, “while a personal tribute, becomes in some sense a national one.”¹⁶¹

National coverage made it difficult for fellow politicians to separate gestures of personal support from public politics. Shortly after Hayes’s visit, Hoosier Senator Joseph E. McDonald, a longtime Democrat who had run against Morton in the 1864 gubernatorial election, visited Morton and offered to represent the bedridden Republican in Congress. McDonald had also stood with Morton against the Hoosier “Peace Democrats” who had tried to dominate the Party during the war. He knew that when Morton painted the Democrats as wartime traitors, he referred to the radical faction in the party. Although friendly personal relations between the two were well established in the public mind, a vocal minority of Democratic journalists predictably viewed this as a “humiliating” party betrayal.¹⁶² These responses reflected the partisanship of extreme

¹⁶¹ “Hayes at Richmond,” *Indianapolis Journal*, September 14, 1877, 2; “Hayes at Richmond,” *Decatur Daily Republican*, September 15, 1877, 1; [Telegram] R. B. Hayes to W. R. Holloway, 12 September 1877, Holloway MSS M1045, Box 10, Folder 3, IHS. The Decatur paper noted Hayes’s visit was a matter of convenience, as he also attended a reunion of his Civil War regiment later in the day in Freemont, Ohio. Hayes’ visit also signified Morton’s closest relatives knew the end was close, for when asked by Holloway, the later urged him to come at once rather than defer. For more information on Morton’s deathbed visitors see Foulke, *Life of Oliver P. Morton*, vol. 2, 495-498.

¹⁶² Joseph E. McDonald was an Indiana Democrat who served as a Congressional Representative from 1849 to 1851. After unsuccessfully running against Morton for governorship of Indiana in 1864, he eventually served as a Senator from 1875 to 1881. A lifetime political rivalry with Morton did not prevent their becoming friends. When McDonald visited Morton’s deathbed, The *Indiana State Sentinel*, (October 5, 1877, 4) was among the loudest critics. For McDonald’s reply and journalistic commentary, see; *Indiana State Sentinel*, October 9, 1877, 4; [Untitled Editorial], *Marshall County Republican*, October 11, 1877, 2; Foulke, *Life of Oliver P. Morton*, vol. 2, 497.

Democrats who soon produced harsher commentary on such a politically divisive, but centralized politician.

Indeed, Morton's long-standing critics printed reports of his worsening condition that seemed to cross the line of journalistic good taste. The *Madison Weekly Courier* declared "short of something like a miracle, the days of Oliver P. Morton in the U.S. Senate are numbered."¹⁶³ Others seemed openly eager for Morton's death. As early as August 17, the *Indiana State Sentinel* released an editorial hopefully titled "Will He Die Soon?" The author opined "[Morton] may live to kick up an immense amount of deviltry before he lays down his crutches forever," doubtfully adding that at least death might compel the Senator to be honest with the nation about his personal faults. In a final insult, the editor boldly nominated Democrat Daniel W. Voorhees as Morton's replacement. Morton was merely "a wreck" who had long outlived his usefulness to Republicans and "there is little left for him to do but die" and "take with him a million ship loads of malice."¹⁶⁴ Such crude editorials curtly expressed some Democrats' desire to see Morton—and the aggressive partisanship he represented—die out.

Republican rebukes were immediate and intense. *The Rushville Weekly Republican* deemed the editorial a "specimen of utter heartlessness and disgusting brutality . . . never surpassed by an American journal."¹⁶⁵ "If there is anything in this world that would give Senator Morton a new lease on life," commented the *Indianapolis Journal*, "it would be the thought of having his place filled by Dan Voorhees." Any talk

¹⁶³ *Madison Weekly Courier*, September 19, 1877, 3. The *Courier's* Republican editor Michael S. Garber was one of Morton's harshest wartime critics. For information, see William S. Garber, *Concerning the Quarrel between Oliver P. Morton, Governor and Michael C. Garber, Editor, 1861-1866* (Indianapolis: [s. n.], 1927), ISL. For similar commentary, see *Indiana State Sentinel*, quoted in *Columbia Herald and Mail*, [Memphis, Tennessee], September 28, 1877, 1; *Jeffersonville National Democrat*, October 25, 1877, 5, 8.

¹⁶⁴ *Indiana State Sentinel*, August 17, 1877, 3.

¹⁶⁵ *Rushville Weekly Republican*, August 23, 1877, 2

of replacements while Morton still lived was surely “disgusting to even an ordinary Democrat.”¹⁶⁶ Even some Democrats echoed the *Journal*. Such “brutal” reports “are at best a disgrace to respectable journalism,” declared the *Logansport Pharos*. Attacking a dying man was “evidence of cowardice of the meanest and lowest type—the kind that would strike a woman and strangle a helpless infant. For Morton *politically* we have neither respect nor sympathy, but for Morton *stricken in body* we have both.”¹⁶⁷ Morton’s faults as viewed by Democrats were undeniable, but respect for the dying needed to overcome political malice.

Clashes like these were inescapable because both allies and opponents recognized that Morton’s prominence within the Republican Party increased the gravity of his literal and symbolic death. Responding to widespread criticisms of earlier editorials, the *Indiana State Sentinel* perhaps put it best in an August 27 article titled “He is Not Dead.” While dismissive of Morton’s political achievements, the premier organ for Indiana Democrats recognized his “great force of character” as the nexus of the Republican Party’s national dominance. The *Sentinel* compared his leadership to Napoleon at Waterloo, saying “his word was law. No consideration of consistency . . . trammelled him. While his conscience was elastic his will was iron. Gentle and genial to his friends, he was the embodiment of fierceness to his enemies. Compromise had no place in his policy.”¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁶ *Indianapolis Journal*, August 18, 1877, 4. Further sympathy for Morton’s illness was generated by Democratic attacks on his wartime conduct. The *Journal* vehemently defended Morton’s record in an August 29 article titled “Senator Morton’s Slanderers—The Truth of History,” To “characterize his glorious war record as that of “a selfish and unscrupulous partisan” is a great insult to a dying man.” See also *Indianapolis Journal*, August 8, 1877, 4; August 29, 1877, 4.

¹⁶⁷ “Democratic Newspaper Brutality,” reprinted in the *Rochester Union Spy*, August 31, 1877, 1. Emphasis added.

¹⁶⁸ *Indiana State Sentinel*, August 27, 1877, 1. Responding to critics, the *Sentinel* emphasized its wishes for Morton to die peacefully and noted it had no interest in writing an obituary. Despite this, *The Winchester Journal* of August 29, 1877, 2, remained convinced Democrats would openly celebrate Morton’s death. For more commentary, see Foulke, *Life of Oliver P. Morton*, vol. 2, 495-497.

Many papers predicted that without Morton, Democrats would overtake the Senate and dismiss issues Morton had championed. This was especially troubling for African Americans, who had good reason to regard Morton as one of their most valued Reconstruction advocates.¹⁶⁹ Many realized that without the influence of Republican advocates like Morton, the ongoing debates about the racial future of America (especially in the South) would end unfavorably.¹⁷⁰ On October 2, 1877, Robert McCray wrote to Morton, expressing the respect and admiration the Senator's activism had earned him within the African American community:

God knows we cannot spare you. Who to defend our cause in your absence? Who to look after our welfare like you! Whose great, honest heart, whose every pulsation beats in unison to that of the persecuted and downtrodden and friendless like yours? The deep, reverential love of my [people] goes out to you, for your final restoration to perfect health.¹⁷¹

Morton was not the most important Republican federal figurehead, but his passionate partisanship and aggressive oration had proven critical for unifying his Party's stance on critical issues (notably black suffrage) nationally during Reconstruction.¹⁷²

¹⁶⁹ M. P. Kellogg to O. P. Morton, 8 October 1877, Holloway MSS, M0145, Box 10, Folder 3, IHS. In this thesis, African Americans' personal opinions of Morton are largely based on correspondence, newspaper editorials, and Congressional eulogies delivered in 1878 by African American representatives J. H. Mitchell of Oregon and Blanche K. Bruce of Mississippi compiled in *Memorial Addresses on the Life and Character of Oliver P. Morton, (A Senator from Indiana) Delivered in the Senate and House of Representatives, January 17 and 18, 1878* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1878), 42-46, 51-57.

¹⁷⁰ Blight, *Race and Reunion*, 137; Johnson, "Oliver P. Morton," 103-108. Many recognized that Morton's advocacy for black rights was tied to his support for southern Republican rule. Both Blight and Johnson note that as part of the 1876-1877 compromise granting Republican Rutherford B. Hayes the presidency, Morton and other radicals agreed to unofficially cede state control of racial relations to the largely Democratic South.

¹⁷¹ R. McCray to O. P. Morton, 2 October 1877; John M. Harlan to O. P. Morton, 7 October 1877, Holloway MSS, M1045, Box 10, Folder 4, IHS. John M. Harlan of Louisville, Kentucky, likewise assured Morton of African Americans' support on October 7, saying "Scarcely a day passes that some of that race do not call at my office or stop me on the street to inquire as to your health. I can read in their faces more plainly than most can express that they regard you as their tried and trusted friend. Second, in their minds, the freedom and the political rights they now enjoy are indivisibly connected with your name."

¹⁷² *Sullivan Democrat*, August 22, 1877, 1; *Indiana State Sentinel*, August 27, 1877, 3; Summers, *Good Stealings*, 10. While Morton's oratory frequently rankled his enemies, many recognized and respected his political effectiveness and the causes the public associated with his name. The *Sullivan Democrat's*

Like Thaddeus Stevens before him, Morton's vehement activism and bluntly charismatic partisanship seemed so domineering to 1870s commentators that finding a popular, capable, and similarly unifying replacement suited for a less radical America seemed unlikely. Although his Republican allies Blaine and Conkling remained, "the vacant seat of the great Indiananian seems to form a void that none can fill."¹⁷³ Democrats agreed. "Other and able men remain," said the *Cincinnati Commercial*, "but the party is divided, and in the opinion of many, is in *articulo mortis* [at the point of death] It nowhere presents a solid front to the enemy."¹⁷⁴

Morton's long-time friend, Elijah B. Martindale, editor of *The Indianapolis Journal*, tapped into Morton's political prestige when he published Morton's last editorial

designation of Morton as "the balance wheel of the Senate," was exaggerated, but it and other newspapers like the *Sentinel* expressed both parties' recognition of Morton's influence. Summers notes Morton was a remarkably (financially) clean politician during an era of several high-profile Republican scandals.

Historian A. James Fuller's forthcoming biography offers the most the most balanced interpretation of Morton's political life and importance. A. James Fuller, *The Great War Governor: Oliver P. Morton and the Politics of Power in the Civil War and Reconstruction* (Ohio: Kent State University Press, 2017).

¹⁷³ "Letter from Washington," *Marshall County Republican*, October 25, 1877, 2. Thaddeus Stevens was the foremost Radical Republican in the House from 1849 to 1868. He embodied the faction's desire to make abolition a central thrust of the war and then to harshly reconstruct the South. He reportedly heralded Morton's 1868 defense of Reconstruction in the Senate as the Republican Party's finest postwar appeal. Maine Senator James G. Blaine was a staunch Republican moderate whose 1876 presidential nomination was undone by exposure of his involvement in fraudulent railroad stock activities. Blaine was locked in competition with Morton and Roscoe Conkling of New York. While both were influential voices in the Senate, neither enjoyed Morton's degree of widespread postwar political prestige.

¹⁷⁴ "Morton's Death," from the *Cincinnati Commercial*, reprinted in the *Jeffersonville National Democrat*, November 8, 1877, 4; Foner, *Reconstruction*, 581-601. From 1866 to 1868, Morton helped unite Republicans in Indiana when divisions over Johnson's lenient standards for the readmission of southern states and his pardoning of many influential southerners threatened to fatally undermine Republican federal unity. His 1868 defense of congressionally-controlled Reconstruction and subsequent addresses led many to identify him as the face of the Republican Party in the Midwest. By 1877, Republicans' Reconstruction era advantages seemed to be fading. Historians like Eric Foner point to the spread of industrial labor throughout the 1880s and 1890s as the driving force behind the majority of Republicans focusing on cracking down on labor and business disputes over enforcements of Reconstruction Amendments in the South. For newspaper editorials supporting this perspective, see *Indianapolis Journal*, August 30, 1877, 5; November 3, 1877, 3-6. The symbolic importance of Morton's death is coincidental. Despite poor health, he was a prime candidate for the 1876 Republican presidential nomination. If he had been in better health, he may have adapted to the needs of a rapidly industrializing nation. But any conclusions regarding Morton's place in a post-Reconstruction America must remain speculative at best. Many eulogies recognized Morton's importance in crafting (and often forcing) important Reconstruction policies, especially Republican prioritization of protecting new African American rights. For examples, see J. M. Harlan to O. P. Morton, 7 October 1877, Holloway MSS M1045, Box 4, Folder 10, IHS.; Adams, "Address of Mr. Bruce, of Mississippi," *Memorial Addresses on the Life and Character of Oliver P. Morton*, 51-57.

on October 23, 1877. Echoing the same call for Republican solidarity that had made Morton famous, the essay defended President Hayes's recent policy of returning defacto control of the South to Democrats, trying to rally Republicans behind the President. Through Morton, Indianapolis Republicans urged fellow party members not to abandon the President and allow Democrats to triumph. Although Morton was too sick to write the essay himself, the use of his name lent credence to its message.¹⁷⁵ Martindale (and others) recognized (and freely capitalized) on popular sympathy for Morton's plight, casting renewed, united Republican support for Hayes as a means for loyal Republicans to honor a last symbolic request from a great Party leader.¹⁷⁶ Even before Morton's death, his allies were already looking for ways to use and defend his legacy.

On November 1, 1877, Morton died. Newspapers across Indiana expressed sorrow for the death of such a prominent and influential politician. Morton's last words—"I am dying; I am worn out"—became a focal point for commentators who praised Morton's energy and dedication to reconstructing the nation divided by war. The immediate reactions of friends, family, political allies and opponents, and veterans demonstrated the many different ways these audiences remembered Morton.

Family and friends' need to assuage the pain of personal loss influenced early public and private commemorations of Morton. Personal letters of condolence sent to his wife, Lucinda, and his brother-in-law, William R. Holloway, reveal well-wishers' efforts to help forge a positive legacy in order to stave off sorrow. Public editorials mourned Morton's loss to the Republican Party as a harbinger of political disaster, but friends

¹⁷⁵ Foulke, *Life of Oliver P. Morton*, vol. 2, 498. According to Foulke, Morton provided verbal suggestions to Martindale, with both men allowing the article to stand for Morton's public opinion. For the full essay, see "Senator Morton on President Hayes," *Indianapolis Journal*, October 23, 1877, 4.

¹⁷⁶ The *Journal* used similar tactics again on November, 15, 1877, with the posthumous printing of a speech Morton had purportedly been set to deliver in Oregon that echoed his final editorial.

interpreted his loss in a (relatively) more positive light. “If . . . one must yield him up, it will be with no hope of filling his place, perhaps forever,” Tennessee Judge Horace Allison wrote Lucinda, adding, “Like Sumner, and a few others his seat, through ostensibly filled must be, forever vacant.”¹⁷⁷ William H. Foster, a longtime friend of Morton’s, echoed the *Journal*’s sentiments, saying “When [Morton] is gone, they may succeed him but they will never fill his place. He will stand alone in the history of this country of his day and generation in its peculiar qualities which have made him so useful to our nation.”¹⁷⁸ Letters from both political allies and family members refer to Morton in honorific terms such as “the nation’s greatest statesman,” “faithful husband,” and “a true friend” who regrettably died in the prime of his career, but left behind a valued legacy.¹⁷⁹ Indeed, the depth of nationwide, shared grief was further emphasized by frequent comparisons to Republican leaders like Lincoln. Family members took comfort in knowing the rest of the nation shared their grief.¹⁸⁰ Lastly, these letters focused on Morton’s dedication as a father and husband—an aspect often overshadowed by his political career in later accounts of his life. These and other letters allowed his friends to express their grief while also comforting his family with reassurances of the nation’s unified respect for Morton’s great services. Private correspondence reflected individuals’ memories of Morton, but public commentary in newspapers and several eulogies played an even larger role in shaping his legacy.

¹⁷⁷ Horace Allison to L. Morton, 31 October 1877, Holloway MSS, M0145, Box 10, Folder 4, IHS.

¹⁷⁸ John W. Foster to W. R. Holloway, 30 October 1877, Holloway MSS, M1045, Box 10, Folder 4, IHS. Emphasis original.

¹⁷⁹ Johnathan J. Randolph to W. R. Holloway, 31 October 1877; M. L. Bundy to W. R. Holloway, 31 October 1877; John A. Burbank to L. Morton, 31 October 1877; P. P. Henderson to L. Morton, 8 November 1877, Holloway MSS, M0145, Box 10, Folder 4, IHS.

¹⁸⁰ Winslow S. Pierce to W. R. Holloway, 1 November 1877; David P. Holloway to W. R. Holloway, son, 1 November 1877; R. A. and K. M. Ker to L. Morton, 6 November 1877, Holloway MSS, M0145, Box 10, Folder 4, IHS.

Morton's public career meant his legacy was largely developed, attacked and defended in the public forum. The divisiveness of Morton's legacy is typified in the partisan accounts of his life and career after his death. Initial reports of his death attempted to eschew political divides in favor of emphasizing the nation's unity in mourning. Expressing statewide reactions to Morton's loss, the *Decatur Daily Republican* noted Democrats who "oftenest felt the power of [Morton's] political blows" might not "mourn . . . as those who loved him [but] they lay upon his coffin the testimonials of their respect for his masterful abilities."¹⁸¹ In many early reports, commentators expressed the respect for Morton's abilities as a speaker and seemed to embody the unified sadness Morton's friends and family used to reassure one another. But differences between Republicans' and Democrats' memories soon became more prevalent.

Public commentary soon inspired conflicts over clashes in tone and interpretations of Morton's policies and character. Republicans generally sang Morton's praises. Predictably, many reporters focused on Morton's gubernatorial career. Espousing his dedication to the Union war effort, patriotism, and executive ability in a state, and later, a nation characterized by great political turmoil, the *Indianapolis Journal* dubbed his wartime conduct the pinnacle of "executive vigor, disinterestedness and success."¹⁸² A meeting of Indiana representatives in Washington declared, "His term as Governor of Indiana will always stand on the pages of history as a most brilliant and important era in

¹⁸¹ *Decatur Daily Republican*, November 2, 1877, 3; "A Nation in Mourning," *Fort Wayne Morning Gazette*, November 2, 1877, 1; "Oliver P. Morton," *Indianapolis Journal*, November 2, 1877, 2. The *Gazette* likened Morton's loss to the state as a father's loss of his favorite son. The *Journal* put it more plainly; "Republicans were not more earnest or sympathetic in their remarks than the adherents of the Democratic party who joined in these reminiscences and regrets [held at the local hotels]." For additional commentary, see "Dead: The Great Statesman Has Passed Away," *Logansport Daily Star*, November 2, 1877, 1; "Dust to Dust: Impossible Tribute to Morton," *Decatur Daily Republican*, November 5, 1877, 3.

¹⁸² "Our Loss," *Indianapolis Journal*, November 3, 1877, 2.

the existence of the State.” His conduct in the Senate had made him the “protector of the freed men”—a title equal to “the soldier’s friend.”¹⁸³ Republican sympathizers recognized Morton’s political centrality as one of the dominant party leaders, and equated the effects of his death on the nation to the shocking loss of Lincoln’s leadership at the close of the Civil War. Numerous publications listed him among the great Union heroes of the Civil War and credited him for his executive ability.¹⁸⁴ Both Republican and Democratic tributes compared Morton’s leadership of the Republican Party to great men like Napoleon and Henry Clay, especially in his forceful, convincing manner of speaking.¹⁸⁵ Having lost their most able representative, many of Indiana’s Republican newspapermen fought to espouse the best of Morton’s character (and by extension, the Party and partisan principles his legacy represented).

Societal calls for respect for the dead did not keep Democratic critics from discussing what they saw as Morton’s faults. Many Democratic politicians and presses acknowledged and respected Morton’s executive abilities and paid honors to his skill as a speaker. But some were less forgiving of his often blatantly antagonistic anti-Democratic partisanship. While recognizing its commentary was perhaps “ungentlemanly,” The *Elkhart Democratic Union* stated “[Morton’s] abusive and viperous course to disparage and defeat his political opponents will not soon be forgotten.”¹⁸⁶ Some more extreme

¹⁸³ “The Dead Senator,” *Fort Wayne Morning Gazette*, November 3, 1877, 1.

¹⁸⁴ “He is Gone,” *Decatur Daily Republican*, November 2, 1877, 2; “Gone Home,” *Fort Wayne Morning Gazette*, November 2, 1877, 1; *Logansport Daily Star*, November 5, 1877, 3; “An interview with General Erkin,” *Jeffersonville Evening News*, November 3, 1877, 2, 3. Morton’s many obituaries ranked him among Civil War figures like President Abraham Lincoln and Secretary of State Seward.

¹⁸⁵ “He is Not Dead,” *Indiana State Sentinel*, August 27, 1877, 3; “Oliver P. Morton,” *Decatur Daily Republican*, November 2, 1877, 3; November 3, 1877, 3. See also Fuller, “Oliver P. Morton and the Politics of Historical Memory,” 335-336.

¹⁸⁶ *Elkhart Democratic Union*, November 9, 1877, 3. See also “Death of Senator Morton,” *Corydon Democrat*, November 5, 1877, 3; *Brownstown Banner*, November 8 1877, 3.

Democratic presses labeled Morton “the most formidable foe the Democratic Party ever encountered,” blaming his animosity toward the South for hampering reconciliation.¹⁸⁷

Republicans did not deny Morton’s partisanship, but often cast it in more favorable terms. Political inconsistency was interpreted as necessary adaptation, and partisanship became the hallmark of patriotism. Republicans responded to criticisms by reminding readers that Morton had bent over backwards to get along with Democratic opponents “hardly less than openly sympathetic with the rebellion, and [a legislature that had] made trouble . . . with everything it could lay hands on.”¹⁸⁸ Insinuating a lack of Democratic patriotism—both during and after the war—did little to mend the rift between the two parties. The waning political dominance of Hoosier Republicans also may have given the *Journal* and other Republican presses a stake in exaggerating the insulting nature of some Democratic editorials on Morton. With Morton dead, Democratic commentators might have felt liberated to express long-standing grievances about his policies and personality more plainly than was socially acceptable.

Hoosiers discussed Morton’s longer congressional career in less detail, but his postwar services inspired ripe debate. Public eulogies and private correspondence demonstrated that many African Americans saw Morton as their staunch supporter.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁷ *Jeffersonville Evening News*, November 3, 1877, 3.

¹⁸⁸ “The Dead Senator,” *Indianapolis Journal*, November 3, 1877, 3, 4; Stampf, *Indiana Politics*, 87, 174-176, 185; Syllvester, “Oliver P. Morton,” 213. Republican defenders referred to wartime political clashes between Morton and the Democratic Indiana Legislature of 1862, which had attempted to severely limit Morton’s executive power over Indiana regiments in the Union Army in 1863. This is likely exaggerated for affect. Early analyses of Morton’s wartime activities, most notably the scholarship of Kenneth Stampf, demonstrate the backlash against this prevailing strain of partisan memories of Morton promoted by monuments and eulogies. Syllvester agrees with my assertion that Stampf’s analysis unfairly paints Morton’s relationship with Democrats as that of an uncooperative, antagonistic autocrat. Morton was indeed a political opportunist, but he directed his attacks towards a specific minority openly hostile to the Union.

¹⁸⁹ “Memorial Meeting of the Colored People on Senator Morton’s Death,” *Indianapolis Journal*, November 8, 1877, 1. The “colored people of St. Louis” also sent Lucinda a resolution of condolence.

Criticisms and defenses of Morton's advocacy for black suffrage were part of a larger debate over his far more consistent dedication to coercive southern Reconstruction and its effects on the nation.¹⁹⁰ Republican presses acknowledged Morton's support of oppressive policies toward former Confederates, but denied any who would "dare lisp the charge that" Morton "was inspired with the spirit of hate."¹⁹¹ While admitting Morton sometimes took his case against the South too far, Republicans defended his motives. "His radicalism was not the outgrowth of hate, as many have charged," stated *The Decatur Republican*, "but of his unswerving devotion to his country."¹⁹² Some critics claimed that Morton's refusal to let the nation forget Confederate and Democratic culpability had sabotaged national reconciliation.¹⁹³ Others hopefully suggested that Morton's death might mark the end of an enmity between North and South. Reporting for the Republican *Winchester Journal*, J. S. Davis remarked that, with Morton's death "the time has fully come to bury the hatchet; and remember the past errors of our southern brethren only with sorrowful hearts that they should have been led off into such a wicked

James P. Smith to L. Morton, 6 November 1877. See also E. H. Anderson to Mrs. O. P. Morton, 7 November 1877, Holloway MSS, M1045, Box 10, Folder 4, IHS.

¹⁹⁰ In Indiana, Morton's postwar dedication to the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments established him as one of the public figureheads of Radical Reconstruction's two central tenants, altering racial norms through black empowerment and harsh punishment of former Confederates. This is exemplified in a speech delivered at Indianapolis's Masonic Hall in 1866. Even before his death, many criticized Morton's crusade. Likely referring to this speech, they reminded others Morton had only wholly embraced abolitionism and black suffrage after the war—and asserted that he had only supported the cause as a means to punish the South and unbalance political opponents at home during critical election times. Morton certainly justified the former as a means for achieving the latter through continued Republican power. See Morton, *Reconstruction . . . Constitutionality of the Reconstruction Acts* (Washington, D. C.: F. & J. Rives & Geo. A. Bailey, 1868) MSS Pamphlet Collection, E668 .M7 1868, IHS.

¹⁹¹ *Greencastle Banner*, January 31, 1878, 1.

¹⁹² *Decatur Daily Republican*, November 2, 1877, 3. Echoed in "Gone Home," *Fort Wayne Morning Gazette*, November 2, 1877, 1; *Indianapolis Journal*, November 3, 1877, 2. This sentiment was likewise echoed by his funereal eulogizers on November 8, 1877.

¹⁹³ [Untitled editorial], *Indianapolis Herald*, November 9, 1877, 2. The *Herald* spoke for many resentful Democrats when it emphasized Morton's unwillingness to forgive or forget wartime animosities for the sake of furthering his own position within the Republican Party, noting "To save the party he ignored the urgent cry of the South for peace, and has kept the public mind inflamed toward the south, campaign after campaign. The party, in his judgment, demanded it."

rebellion by their hated political leaders.”¹⁹⁴ Such hopes were hurt by a few southern commentators. While many Democratic editors noted Morton’s faults, few celebrated his death as openly as several southern papers. “That he has died is a blessing to mankind,” reported the *Danville News* in Virginia. *The National Republican* commented that if “modern reconciliation” encouraged such talk, “much time and effort has been wasted upon the placation of mere hyenas in human form.” Such behavior was “unbecoming [of] the commonest rites of civilization,” adding that President Hayes was a fool to waste his time on “a people who are ready to insult him through the memory of a dead friend.”¹⁹⁵

Fewer Indiana presses were so harsh, yet some partisan eulogizers felt the need to address Morton’s flaws as well as his merits. At an unorganized memorial service in Elkhart County, Rev. W. J. Essick offered an extemporaneous eulogy to Morton that local Republican newspaper editors described as a “ghoulish” attack on Senator Morton’s memory.¹⁹⁶ Others commended Essick’s honesty. “Was Morton a God, that to hint at his peculiarities [is] a sacrilege?” asked the *Elkhart Review*.¹⁹⁷ Essick’s eulogy was likely not as venomous as those reports expressed in some southern states, but these men spoke for those unwilling to allow prevailing positive recollections to completely ignore (or at least justify) Morton’s flaws when shaping his immediate legacy.

¹⁹⁴ *Winchester Journal*, November 7, 1877, 4.

¹⁹⁵ Eulogies and commentary quoted and published in “A Demoniatic Spirit,” *National Republican*, November 6, 1877, 2. “Let the Maligners Stand Aside,” *Seymour Weekly Times*, November 10, 1877, 2; *Indianapolis Journal*, November 7, 1877, 4; *Rochester Union Spy*, November 16, 1877, 3. Supporters in the *Times* and the *Journal* called out those who used the event of Morton’s illness and death to speak against him, dubbing them “gallows cheating” maligners, shaming his critics for focusing on Morton’s physical ailments through use of the nicknames “Moxa Morton” and Sitting Bull

¹⁹⁶ To my knowledge, no exact transcript or detailed report of this eulogy is available. The clearest report suggests that Essick’s extemporaneous address was the finale of an unorganized city-wide memorial service.

¹⁹⁷ *Elkhart Democratic Union*, November 23, 1877, 4; *Goshen Times* (November 14, 1877, 1. According to the *Times*, some citizens were apparently “incensed” enough to start a petition for Senator Schuyler Colfax to make an “appropriate” eulogy.

However, most Hoosier Democrats paid less partisan tributes to Morton. Some prominent Democrats recognized open criticisms of Morton were unwise. In a speech delivered at a memorial meeting of the Indiana Bar, Governor Thomas Hendricks, said, “As one of the citizens of this State who, by the circumstances surrounding us, has been thrown somewhat into conflict with [Morton], I am happy to say that all that is disagreeable, all that would disturb pleasant memories, I chose to forget altogether.”¹⁹⁸ The *Crawford County Democrat* acknowledged Morton’s faults, but reminded readers it was unfair to so openly criticize the recently dead.¹⁹⁹ The *Indianapolis People* admired Morton’s executive capabilities adding, he “was also, no doubt, the subject of bitter enmities. Let us hope that these latter will be buried in the grave with the Great War Governor, whose body now lies cold in death.”²⁰⁰

Morton’s funeral exemplified the issues complicating interpretations of his immediate post-mortem legacy in Indiana. From November 4-6, Morton’s body was displayed at the Indiana State Capitol Building. Thousands of mourners attended the final services at Roberts Park Church on November 7. Reverend J. B. Cleaver (Lucinda Morton’s pastor) provided the sermon. He likened Morton’s life and effect on the nation to that of Saul, a mighty ruler who, like Morton, led his people through a destructive war to unite his nation.²⁰¹ Openly responding to Democratic criticisms with Republican justifications, Cleaver admitted Morton’s faults, but defended Morton’s ambition and

¹⁹⁸ “Commemorations of the BAR,” *Indianapolis Journal*, November 3, 1877, 2.

¹⁹⁹ *Crawford County Democrat* [Leavenworth, IN], November 8, 1877, 2.

²⁰⁰ *Indianapolis People*, November 3, 1877, 2.

²⁰¹ 2 Sam. 2:1-7. According to the Bible, Saul was the first King of the united Israelites. He was later deemed unworthy by God and, rather than surrender, he attempted to kill his replacement, David. When he was finally defeated, Saul committed suicide by falling on his sword. God commended David for burying the ruler with honors rather than allow his men to desecrate the body. This comparison can be interpreted to infer Morton was a dishonest, perhaps even mentally unstable leader who was too warlike to politically survive in post-Reconstruction America.

ruthlessness as the hallmarks of a man “ambitious to assume responsibilities from whose weight other shoulders shrank.” Discussing Morton’s inconsistent defense of African Americans, Cleaver stated that “to preach a cause one lately persecuted [or more accurately, opposed] is Paul-like.”²⁰² Morton’s coercive Reconstruction policies had earned him a reputation as an “apostle of hate.” Cleaver dismissed this as an exaggeration, reminding listeners Morton’s animosity stemmed from a loyal Unionist’s refusal to forget southern culpability for the war just to achieve a swifter national reunion. “While he was desirous that the lion and the lamb should lie down together, he preferred that the lion should not be on the inside of the lamb.”²⁰³ Cleaver’s partisan tribute echoed Morton’s policies and the Senator’s penchant for blunt oratory.

Following Cleaver’s sermon, Dr. John H. Bayliss delivered a eulogy acknowledging Morton’s political prowess in more personal and less divisive terms. Briefly addressing Morton’s inconsistent dedication to African Americans, Bayliss said “inconsistency is only the epithet by which one’s enemies sometimes try to stigmatize his progress.” Only “the bigot and the fool” would refuse to adapt his policies to serve the changing political climate of Reconstruction. However, Bayliss focused most of his eulogy on the statesman’s private life, reminding his audience that Morton was a man as well as a politician. In particular, he stressed Morton’s devotion to his family, his political courage during the war, and his kindness—especially towards Indiana soldiers.

²⁰² Cleaver uses Paul to illustrate rebirth. The pre-conversion Pharisee persecuted Christians as Saul before becoming Christ’s apostle and taking the name Paul. Cleaver’s comparison invokes memories of Morton’s postwar rebirth from a cautious moderate to a radical advocate for African American suffrage and enfranchisement. Cleaver’s address confronts the emerging problem of what to prioritize when constructing Morton’s legacy, noting “we are too near to him to see with perfect eye the measure of his nature.”

²⁰³ For the full address, see “Senator Morton’s Funeral,” *Greencastle Banner*, November 15, 1877, 1; for commentary, see *Decatur Daily Republican*, November 6, 1877, 2. Hoosier veterans responded to Morton’s post-war appeals, which supported Union veterans’ desire to promote an ideal war memory that did not overlook southern guilt.

He highlighted Morton's unique fiscal honesty, which, even in his last days was "as scrupulous as a puritan and as sensitive as a woman"—and urged others to follow Morton's example.²⁰⁴

Many Republican eulogies were just as complimentary as Cleaver's tribute, but most newspaper editors tried to follow Bayliss's far less politically inflammatory example. Cleaver's openly confrontational address received less praise or attention than Bayliss's. Several Democratic presses dismissed Cleaver's sermon as a "disgusting political harangue" designed to glorify Morton's tyrannical wartime record and postwar political antagonism of Democrats.²⁰⁵ By comparison, the public appreciated Bayliss's more balanced tribute, which eschewed Cleaver's pointed political antagonism in favor of demonstrating Morton was more than just a politician. His account of Morton's governorship emphasized recalling Morton in the context of memories of a victorious Union war without antagonizing the South, or Indiana Democrats.²⁰⁶ Additionally, by purposely avoiding any subject that might alienate the Democrats—such as suggesting a politically-motivated lack of sincere mourning—Bayliss's eulogy can be seen as more politically inclusive and perhaps carried an underlying call for political reconciliation in Indiana.

Shortly after Morton's funeral, his congressional colleagues underscored defining aspects of the statesman's national legacy in a series of eulogies in Washington on

²⁰⁴ For the full text, see "Senator Morton's Funeral," *Madison Daily Courier*, November 8, 1877, 2.

²⁰⁵ For more commentary on the funeral, see Thornbrough, *Indiana in the Civil War Era*, 306; *Goshen Democrat*, November 8, 1877, 2; *Elkhart Democratic Union*, November 9, 1877, 2; November 7, 1877, 2; November 14, 1877, 2.

²⁰⁶ *Goshen Times*, November 15, 1877, 2; *Indianapolis Journal*, November 9, 1877, 2. "Morton's Funeral," *Indiana State Sentinel*, November 10, 1877, 4. Bayliss's eulogy was echoed by Ohio Senator Thurman in his remarks to the Senate, and by Ohio's James A. Garfield in the House of Representatives in 1878. See Adams, "Address of Mr. Garfield," *Memorial addresses on the life and character of Oliver P. Morton*, 18-22, 101-105.

January 17, 1878. Speakers emphasized, sidestepped, or advocated new interpretations of bitter memories of the recent past. Historian James Fuller notes that these wildly different recollections emphasized a growing debate between the need to remember the hardships of slavery and war and the desire for a national reconciliation.²⁰⁷ For the South, reconciliation meant a partial acceptance of institutionalized white supremacy. In the opening address, Senator McDonald of Indiana noted that any commentary would be necessarily limited, for Morton's role in recent politics was still too fresh for Democrats to overlook his faults.²⁰⁸ Echoing earlier journalistic commentary, McDonald noted that Morton's "combative and aggressive" patriotically-driven partisanship unsurprisingly "held together his friends and followers with hooks of steel," but earned him many enemies and was an undeniable part of his successful prosecution of Reconstruction.²⁰⁹ And, to Morton's credit, for every "hard blow" he dealt against political opponents, he was ready to receive one in kind and "when the strife was over . . . to sink, if not forget, the past." McDonald urged others to exercise the same kindness in recounting personal memories of Morton.²¹⁰

Every participating Senator spoke favorably about Morton's political ambitions and skillful oration. They noted that his messages were harsh, but they admired his logical, passionate arguments and tireless devotion to the causes he championed. Even when "oppressed . . . by bodily infirmity, his mind never faltered or flagged," noted

²⁰⁷ Fuller, "Oliver P. Morton and the Politics of Historical Memory," 329-331.

²⁰⁸ Adams, "Address of Mr. McDonald," *Memorial addresses on the life and character of Oliver P. Morton*, 8. McDonald's sentiment was also echoed by several other Senators, most notably Morton's steadfast Democratic rival (and replacement) Daniel W. Voorhees. McDonald repeated this sentiment again at the dedication ceremonies of the first Morton monument in Indianapolis in 1884.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 9.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 13.

Roscoe Conkling of New York.²¹¹ Many noted Morton's consistent fiscal honesty in a time of seemingly widespread Republican embezzlement.²¹² Several praised Morton's wartime stewardship of Indiana as the defining moment of his patriotism, and his dedication to the Union Cause. Some, like former Union General Ambrose Burnside of Rhode Island, one of the appointed Congressional attendees at Morton's funeral, emphasized the Senator's wartime actions, paying special homage to Morton's care for Hoosier soldiers both during and after the war.²¹³

Southern representatives did not totally conceal their negative memory of Morton's coercive Reconstruction policies. Alabama's John Tyler Morgan, a former Confederate General and acting Ku Klux Klan Grand Dragon in his home state, freely admitted he did not share the "great love" for Morton shared among northern statesmen. "When others thought that the sword [of Civil War] had served its full purpose . . . he held to [it] with a firmer grasp. . . . While he held the sword suspended the South had no shield for its uncovered bosom. It was natural that [the South's] heart should chill toward him."²¹⁴ However, Morgan added that while Morton's words were harsh, history would respect his effectiveness. And by 1877, "no man was more ready than he was to

²¹¹ Adams, "Address of Mr. Conkling," *Memorial addresses*, 14-15.

²¹² *Ibid.*, 30.

²¹³ Adams, "Address of Mr. Burnside of Rhode Island," *Memorial addresses*, 25; *Ibid.*, "Address of Mr. Hanna," 62-67. Many Hoosiers in the House of Representatives—particularly Republican John Hanna of Greencastle—echoed Burnside's praises. However, Fuller notes Democrats offered less commentary. The resulting remarks, while overwhelmingly partisan and frequently celebratory of Morton's wartime service to the Union cause, nonetheless "reflected the many ways in which Democrats chose to forget the past." Fuller, "Oliver P. Morton and the Politics of Historical Memory," 335.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, "Address of Mr. Morgan of Alabama," *Memorial addresses*, 26-27. Fuller, "Oliver P. Morton and the Politics of Historical Memory," 333. Fuller's analysis notes the implausibility of Morgan's appraisal of the nation and Morton's own well-established political mantras; "Morton's war to save the Union and his support of Radical Reconstruction became a misunderstanding that, in a different context, might have been avoided."

recognize the new order of things. Almost his dying words attest the fact.”²¹⁵ He added the reputation and legacy of such a controversial man “should be left to a more impartial generation.”²¹⁶ Morgan’s eulogy expressed southerners’ desire for a reconciliation founded on rivals’ embracing the Lost Cause, downplaying southern war guilt and diverting focus away from past crimes of slavery and the continuing violence against southern blacks.

Others emphasized Morton’s postwar advocacy for African Americans to call attention to what they viewed as the unfinished work of Reconstruction. As Fuller notes, these men argued against sacrificing southern culpability and memories of slavery in the name of reconciliation.²¹⁷ Echoing observations from earlier eulogies, Oregon’s J. H. Mitchell declared; “[Morton] was the friend of the colored race, as the record of his public life will abundantly testify; and in his death their cause in the national Senate has lost one of its ablest champions and most valiant defenders.”²¹⁸ Blanche K. Bruce, a black Republican from Mississippi recalled Morton’s initial reluctance to embrace the cause of black suffrage. However, like Cleaver, Bruce insisted that the public should judge Morton’s according to his later actions, especially his support of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments. “No public man of his day, with the possible exception of Abraham Lincoln and Charles Sumner, was better known to the colored people of the South than Oliver P. Morton, and none more respected and revered.”²¹⁹ In Fuller’s

²¹⁵ Ibid., “Address of Mr. Morgan of Alabama,” 27-28; Here, Morgan is likely referencing the last editorial attributed to Morton before his death.

²¹⁶ Ibid., “Address of Mr. Morgan,” 30.

²¹⁷ Fuller, “Oliver P. Morton and the Politics of Historical Memory,” 333-334.

²¹⁸ Adams, “Address of Mr. Mitchell of Oregon,” *Memorial Addresses*, 44.

²¹⁹ Adams, “Address of Mr. Bruce of Mississippi,” *Memorial Addresses*, 54. This section largely paraphrases Fuller’s superior analysis.

analysis, Bruce “offered a far more radical recollection of Morton than the one that focused on the Unionist war governor and friend of the soldiers.”²²⁰

Time gave his enemies the chance to become somewhat more objective. Indiana Republican George W. Julian, a dominant force in Indiana’s Republican Party from 1840 to 1872, had clashed several times with Morton. The extreme abolitionist had disagreed with Morton’s wartime moderation and considered him a political opportunist.

Accordingly, in his 1887 memoirs, *Political Recollections*, he singled out Morton for special, unfavorable consideration. He emphasized Morton’s inconsistent attitude toward black suffrage as a point of contention, noting such “inconsistencies, in a study of his character, form the most charming part of it.”²²¹ He added that

[Morton] was made for revolutionary times, and his singular energy of character was pre-eminently destructive; but it can not be denied that his services to the country in this crisis [of civil war] were great. . . . [But] When the history of Indiana shall be written, it might fitly contain a chapter on “The Reign of Oliver P. Morton.” He made himself not merely the master of the Democratic party of the State and of its Rebel element, but of his own party as well.²²²

While a long-standing political rivalry ensured Julian was an ardent critic of Morton’s inconsistent post-war defense of black suffrage, long after Morton’s death even Julian grudgingly admired Morton’s ambition, wartime leadership, and his political adaptability.²²³

²²⁰ Fuller, “Oliver P. Morton and the Politics of Historical Memory,” 334.

²²¹ George W. Julian, *Political Recollections: 1840 to 1872* (Chicago: Jansen, McClurg & Co., 1884) 269.

²²² Julian, *Political Recollections*, 270. For more information on Julian’s commentary on Morton’s 1865 Richmond speech, see 260-271. Julian attributes his rivalry with Morton to a long-standing political feud in Indiana, but a scarcity of revealing personal correspondence between the two men makes it difficult to analyze the intricacies of Julian and Morton’s rivalry beyond their differences of political opinion.

²²³ *Ibid.*, 341-342. Morton supported Grant for the Republican presidential nomination in 1874 over Democrat-supported Liberal Republican Horace Greeley. He aggressively alleged Greeley and his supporters meant to undo the work of Republican Reconstruction, especially black suffrage. Julian described Morton’s rhetoric as kindling “the spirit of war” to the degree that it apparently nearly incited

Morton's political career affected tributes to his memory for several years after his death. Some of his positive qualities such as his great dedication to the Union cause, his care for Indiana troops, and his advocacy for black suffrage, gained greater prominence over time. In the immediate aftermath of his death, his political allies, family, and Union veterans worked hard to forge the consensus needed to overcome his critics. Many influential individual veterans like Lew Wallace and Benjamin Harrison likewise had a vested interest in defending and using Morton's record for their own political purposes as well as those of Indiana veterans' by the 1880s.²²⁴ Morton's life was controversial—but veterans were ultimately influential in perpetuating a positive legacy.

Morton's death affected these men on a personal level. Some reinforced their connection in private condolences to Lucinda Morton and Colonel Holloway. D. M. Williams regretted being unable to attend the funeral and said he felt "it [is] my duty as well as the duty of all [former] Soldiers to say their last respects to him that was a father to them at all times. Tell my comrades though not present, I will be with them in spirit, [that] he was always my Friend and there is no one [who] regrets his death more than I." D. C. Casey, a three-year Hoosier veteran, wrote Holloway, "I feel that I have indeed lost

armed violence against Democrats by a group of African Americans who attended one of Julian's speaking engagements during the 1874 campaign in Indiana.

²²⁴ Lew Wallace served under Morton as Indiana's first Adjutant General during the Civil War before leaving to lead the 11th Indiana Infantry. He was an active postwar political figure and the author of the famed novel *Ben-Hur*. Harrison was likewise politically involved with Morton during the 1870s as a rival Republican. Both men became important figures in the Indiana GAR and served as featured speakers at large reunions and monument dedications. For general information, see Robert E. and Katharine M. Morsberger, *Lew Wallace: Militant Romantic*. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1980) and Charles W. Calhoun, *Benjamin Harrison: The American Presidents Series: The 23rd President, 1889-1893* (New York: Times Books, 2005). For information on Wallace and Harrison's activities within the GAR, see Sacco, "Igniting the Fires of Patriotism: The Grand Army of the Republic in Indiana," (master's thesis, Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis, 2014), 22-23, 49, 75. Other historians have noted that Harrison was an active player in 1880s legislation over the increasingly contentious (and politically important) issue of Union veterans' pensions. According to Stuart McConnell's analysis of the GAR's nineteenth century activities, such concerns were "never far from the minds of those hoping to capture the soldiers' vote" when addressing increasing pension concerns. McConnell, *Glorious Contentment*, 149.

a friend for I am indebted to his great care for sick and wounded soldiers for my life.”²²⁵

The German Veterans’ Association also sent Lucinda their sympathies, saying, “we mourn his loss not as a statesman alone but as the best friend of the soldiers, and one of the greatest men in the darkest hour of our nation’s history,” adding they had ordered a desk specially inscribed with a passage honoring Morton as a private monument.²²⁶

While these few surviving letters do not speak for all Hoosier veterans of either party, it is significant that the authors identify themselves as soldiers. They probably speak for the greater number of veterans who chose to remember Morton’s role in their lives in comparative silence or limited themselves to mass, public displays of respect.

Veterans publically displayed their affection and respect for Morton in the months after his death. Spurred on by suggestions from local presses, veterans’ groups across Indiana made plans to send attendees to the funeral and organized memorial meetings.²²⁷ A massive meeting of Union veterans gathered at the District Court House in Indianapolis on November 3, where they appointed a committee to draft a resolution honoring Morton. The veterans recounted the hardships of war, emphasizing the importance of Morton’s services to comrades at the front and families at home—all while dealing with home front southern sympathizers and Hoosier citizens disheartened by military losses. During the war “no soldiers were better equipped for the field, none better cared for in service, in sickness, in death. . . . Wherever an Indiana soldier served, the name of Morton was cherished and beloved.” As an act of commemoration, the

²²⁵ D. M. Williams to W. R. Holloway, 3 November 1877, emphasis original; D. C. Casey to Holloway, 5 November 1877. See also, B. P. Scribers to W. R. Holloway, 20 November 1877. Holloway MSS M1045, Box 10, Folder 4, IHS.

²²⁶ Max Rosenberg to L. Morton, 5 November 1877, Holloway MSS M1045, Box 10, Folder 4, IHS.

²²⁷ “Preparations for Funeral,” *Fort Wayne Morning Gazette*, November 3, 1; “Governor Morton,” *Madison Daily Courier*, November 3, 1877, 1. In particular, the German Veterans Association of Indianapolis passed a resolution in the *Courier* calling for all ex-soldiers to organize for attending Morton’s funeral.

committee drafted a prospectus for the erection of a monument to Morton.²²⁸ As Judge W. A. Cullen stated, “Whatever others may do, the name of Morton will be fondly and gratefully remembered by every Indiana soldier. . . . No wonder the soldiers at Indianapolis, immediately upon his death, determined to erect a monument to his memory.”²²⁹

Although named and funded with Morton in mind, the monument committee organizers hoped to honor all Indiana soldiers.²³⁰ With Hoosier notable Lew Wallace serving as the first acting President, the Morton Monumental Association planned to build a grand memorial hall, described as a “depository of things of historical interest” to the State’s past and future, including “busts, portraits, statues of historical figures and public men, arms, flags, military trophies, legislative volumes and works of our citizens in science, literature and exploration.” Special honors would be paid to veterans, with the names of “every good [Hoosier] soldier, regardless of rank or position” displayed for visitors to see. “And in the center of it all, under a fitting dome, it is our special desire to erect the statue in bronze or marble of Oliver P. Morton,” adding any “future competitors” could be honored on surrounding pedestals. Situated in the Governor’s Circle, the monument would essentially serve as the heart of Indianapolis. The estimated

²²⁸ *Indianapolis Journal*, November 5, 1877, 2.

²²⁹ For the full text, see *Rushville Weekly Republican*, November 8, 1877, 2.

²³⁰ Oliver P. Morton Monument Association, *Subscription Book of the Morton Monument Association: organized November 16, 1877*, MSS Pamphlet Collection E506.M67 M6 1877, IHS, 3-4. Morton had suggested erecting a monument to Indiana’s Civil War soldiers in Crown Hill Cemetery by as early as 1867, and Indiana veterans revived calls for a monument by early as 1873. We cannot know for certain if the proposed hall was intended to exclusively honor Indiana Civil War veterans. While veterans of the Mexican-American War (1846-1848) may have been included, Morton’s war governor status (and the unprecedented economic and human cost of the more recent conflict) would have prioritized public remembrances of the sacrifices of Civil War veterans.

\$200,000 bill could, organizers believed, easily be filled by subscriptions if every soldier donated one dollar.²³¹

Although a scarcity of association sources forces an over reliance on newspaper reports covering the project's history from 1877 to 1884, this monument marks Hoosier veterans' first concentrated efforts to remember and physically honor Morton. Their initial plan inexorably tied remembrance of Morton's life to the sacrifices of the veterans he supported both during and after the war. The Hoosier veterans closely involved with the project clearly had great respect for Morton, but they were equally eager to use his death to unite the state—and its history—behind the broader goal of honoring those who had fought in the war.

These early efforts to memorialize Morton occurred during the emergence of Americans' increasing desire for (and ability to fund) monuments—specifically, Civil War monuments. This also coincided with the rise of politically active, regional cultures of Civil War veterans. In the intensifying postwar struggle for influence over the nation's collective memory of the conflict, Union and Confederate veterans became equally invested in seeing their fallen comrades—and leaders—honored through public monuments.²³² Historian James A. Mayo analyzed the essential purposes and layered meanings of two broad categories of American war memorials which became popular

²³¹ *Ibid.*, 4.

²³² The defeated South needed monuments more desperately than the North in order to support the emerging regional myth of “The Lost Cause,” a highly revisionist interpretation of both the war and the institution of southern slavery that was vital for assuaging southern pride. For more information see Gaines M. Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy: Defeat, the Lost Cause, and the Emergence of the New South, 1865-1913* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987); Gary W. Gallagher and Alan T. Nolan, eds., *The Myth of the Lost Cause and Civil War History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000). On monuments, battlefields, and Civil War memory, see Kirk Savage, *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves: Race, War, and Monument in Nineteenth-Century America* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1999); Thomas J. Brown, *The Public Art of Civil War Commemoration: A Brief History with Documents* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2004); Janney, *Remembering the Civil War* (2013).

after the Civil War. American war memorials are either a building (e. g., a hospital named for a famous general) or are standalone shrines of artistic sculpture.²³³ A building, (such as the one originally suggested for Morton) emphasized both remembrance and utility. Shrines—such as the Lincoln monument in Washington, D. C.— “emphasized sacredness but not utility,” stripping away distractions to focus the viewer’s mind on the fallen dead.²³⁴ Although the Memorial Hall was never completed, it incorporated what is, essentially, a shrine to Morton within a memorial building.²³⁵

Morton’s legacy as the “Great War Governor” who became “the Soldier’s Friend” became a valuable symbol for Indiana in the broader, ongoing battle over control of Civil War memory. Part of the impetus for the project came from Indianapolis’s lack of any suitably grand, public monument to the Civil War—or any war—when similar monuments were already underway in other states, especially in the South.²³⁶ Monuments allowed living veterans to erect lasting public testaments to the causes of dead comrades, anchoring the deeds and creeds of soldiers (and their political supporters) in shifting American memories of the war.²³⁷ In letters to local newspapers, Monument Association managers pitched the project not simply as a memorial to Morton, but rather as a monument to the wartime sacrifices of soldiers and their families. It would mark

²³³ James Mayo, *War Memorials as Political Landscape* (New York: Praeger, 1988), 4.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*, 5-9. This is only a brief summation of Mayo’s analysis of the differing political and social utilities of a few kinds of war memorials. For a fuller discussion, see 2-15 and, for the role of public, geographic space in intended messages and interpretations of built memorials, see 17-21.

²³⁵ Mayo, *War Memorials*, 4-7.

²³⁶ Neff, *Honoring the Civil War Dead*, 107-109. Many southern monuments faced the same funding roadblocks that plagued Morton’s, but some veterans worried southerners appeared more dedicated to remembering the sacrifices of former Confederates than northerners were to those of Union veterans and leaders. By the 1870s, Union domination of national battlefields began to soften—and by the turn of the century, Gettysburg would cede space and public recognition to Confederate dead. If this trend continued, the North risked losing valuable symbolic ground in the battle to be the dominant force in shaping public perception of the war. This fear formed a core component of veterans’ organizations across the nation. For veterans’ reunions and anti-reconciliatory sentiment during the 1870s and 1890s, see Janney, *Remembering the Civil War*, 169-173, 191-196.

²³⁷ Neff, *Honoring the Civil War Dead*, 6.

Indiana's pride and reverence for these men. As John W. Linck noted in his open letter to the people of Rushville, "It will awaken a broader deeper, truer patriotism in the hearts of the young. Its beauty and grandeur will have an elevating and refining influence, and will be an ornament to our elegant capital. . . . Indiana, although one of the foremost states in the Union, stands almost solitary and alone in her supreme poverty in this respect. She is awake and alive to her duty to herself and her children."²³⁸

Several important factors delayed the monument's creation. First, although Morton's death made the public more emotionally receptive to the memorial, \$200,000 was too expensive, especially with Indiana in the grip of a severe economic downturn. A procession of Democratic Governors, notably Thomas A. Hendricks, James D. Williams, and war veteran Isaac P. Gray, left the Indiana Legislature less receptive to any requests for state assistance. A few Democratic papers, including the *Indiana Sentinel*, criticized appropriating public funds for a monument when the city had already paid for Morton's funeral.²³⁹ Noting Morton had left behind \$50,000 to his family (and that the state had already contributed \$500 to funeral expenses), the *New Harmony Register* similarly balked at the notion of a monument. If Morton's family needed aid "we would advocate contributing money . . . but for erecting a costly monument, not a dollar."²⁴⁰ Financial objections were also frequently grounded in placing a divisive partisan in the city's public epicenter. Geography formed the linchpin of the debate. The proposed site, Circle Park, was formerly the site of the Governor's Mansion, situated at the center of a massive

²³⁸ "The Morton Monument Association; To the people of the 4th Congressional District," *Rushville Weekly Republican*, December 13, 1877, 1.

²³⁹ *Indianapolis Journal*, November 20 1877, 2; A member of the Monument Committee, Colonel B. C. Shaw noted the citizens of Indianapolis had not protested this appropriation, adding "as a public man, [Morton] did enough for Indianapolis to entitle him to this amount of consideration."

²⁴⁰ [Untitled], *New Harmony Register*, November 23, 1877, 3.

public intersection at the center of Indianapolis. A monument here symbolically grounded the city in public remembrance of Morton's (and the veterans') services.

While this made it an ideal spot for veterans hoping to use the Governor's legacy for an ideological rallying point, Morton's critics loudly protested. In an editorial about the monument, a newspaper editor in Franklin whose printing presses were sacked by furloughed Union soldiers during the war, had no objection to erecting a monument, for it was "fitting that bloody-shirt radicals should perpetuate [Morton's] memory." However, as a piece of city property, the Circle belonged to Democrats as well as Republicans, "and there are but few of the public acts of Governor Morton that any Democrat desires should be green in the public memory." Major Slater added "let these acts sleep in oblivion, but do not ask us to consent that they be honored at the public expense."²⁴¹ Democrats' memories of Morton remained powerful, but were also affected by the passage of time. Slater's editorial twisted myth and historical facts, assigning guilt to Morton for others' actions—and omitting Morton's wartime defense of the Democratic Indianapolis *Sentinel*, his harshest journalistic critic. The monument symbolized Hoosiers' early attempts to find consensus.

In early 1878, the organization abandoned the costly Hall in favor of a \$25,000 bronze statue of Morton to be erected over his grave in Crown Hill cemetery.²⁴² By

²⁴¹ Quoted and criticized in *Indianapolis People*, December 1, 1877, 2. Many Democratic journalists suffered similar losses in Indiana during the war when Union troops on furlough to their home state assaulted presses they deemed too openly sympathetic with the South. Stephen E. Towne convincingly argues that Morton sought to limit Republican newspapers encouraging attacks on Democratic competitors and did not object to the harsh punishments the Union Army dealt to guilty soldiers. See Towne, "Works of Indiscretion," 138-49; "Killing the Serpent Speedily," 41-65.

²⁴² *Rushville Weekly Republican*, October 31, 1878, 2. The association did originally intend to honor Morton's grave in addition to building a monument. Morton's grave likely proved more a financially viable location until the 1880s. For more, see "The Morton Monument," *Indianapolis Journal*, November 1, 1879, 4; *Indianapolis People*, May 15, 1880, 4. For a brief history of the monument, see "In Honor of Morton," *Indianapolis Journal*, August 8, 1889, 3.

December, progress was still slow, with roughly \$1,500 collected. The lengthy delay was likely closely tied to widespread economic hardship as well as lingering political resentment, but some chose to interpret lack of public support as indicative of public opinion.²⁴³ An editorial from the *Cleveland Leader* noted Morton was worthy of tribute, but “such expressions usually come later when all men, irrespective of party or creed, gladly unite in the tribute. Great and able as all admit he was, this can hardly be expected now in the case of Governor Morton.”²⁴⁴ The Monument committee eventually decided on an \$8,000 monument funded largely by subscription and private donations.²⁴⁵ The monument association also organized a series of public lectures throughout the state from 1877 to 1879.²⁴⁶ Numerous local petitions also raised money for the monument. Former Union General George Sheridan delivered several successful public lectures on “The Life and Times of Oliver P. Morton” during 1877 and 1879.²⁴⁷ Funding proceeded surely—but slowly.

Morton’s monument was also a product of the growing culture of using art for public commemoration. By the 1880s, veterans groups like the Grand Army of the Republic were beginning to amass actionable political power—and monument building

²⁴³ Thornbrough, *Indiana in the Civil War Era*, 307-309, 313, 316-317. By 1878, Hoosier farmers and businessmen had still not recovered from the Panic of 1873. During the 1870s and early 1880s, Indiana weathered a series of violent labor strikes, mostly carried out by Hoosier railroad workers and farmers. Given the economic unrest, it is more surprising the monument succeeded at all.

²⁴⁴ “The Way we Remember our Great Men,” reprinted in *Rushville Weekly Republican*, December 12, 1878, 2; *Anderson Herald Bulletin*, May 5, 1882, 4.

²⁴⁵ *Fort Wayne Daily Gazette* January 16, 1884, 10. The *Gazette* listed the monument’s final price as \$12,500 when unveiled in 1884, claiming “every bit of it [was] raised by subscription.”

²⁴⁶ R. G. Ingersoll to W. R. Holloway, 26 December 1877, Holloway MSS, M1045, Box 10, Folder 5, IHS. Holloway asked Union veteran Robert G. Ingersoll to eulogize Morton, but he declined, saying he was not familiar enough with Morton’s activities to do the Senator’s life justice.

²⁴⁷ *Goshen Times*, January 17, 1879, 3. Attendees at Sheridan’s lecture paid 50 cents per ticket. Sheridan’s elegiac speeches touted Morton’s great war record and upstanding moral character. For the contents of Sheridan’s speech, see *Indianapolis Journal*, January 26, 1878, 4.

became a popular, critical expression of American war memories.²⁴⁸ In 1880, the Association held a contest for potential statue designs, and several local Hoosier artists competed.²⁴⁹ On September 10, 1880, after reviewing several proposals, the committee commissioned Maine artist Franklin Simmons to sculpt the monument.²⁵⁰ Simmons was a talented sculptor who had crafted the Army and Navy monument on Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington, D. C.²⁵¹

The monument's final location remained in flux until 1880. Although the Association had planned the smaller monument to accent Morton's gravesite, the completed piece was installed in Circle Park, likely as part of the city's effort to beautify the spot.²⁵² The *Indianapolis Journal* celebrated the monument's approaching completion and approved of the new placement, noting, "as a work of art, it will combine city ornamentation with a tribute to a worthy man," and would surely appeal to both friends and enemies. Critically, the editor added "as a work of art, it would be an educator of the millions here, while [at Crown Hill] it would fail in this design almost entirely, and as a historical tribute it would be read [and seen] by a thousand [in Circle Park] to one [in Crown Hill]." A monument to Morton would not be worthwhile to the city unless it could

²⁴⁸ The Grand Army of the Republic was a fraternal organization of Union veterans with a strong presence in Indiana. For general information on the GAR in Indiana, see Dearing, *Veterans in Politics*. Sacco's "Igniting the Fires of Patriotism: The Grand Army of the Republic in Indiana," is the most cogent analysis of the GAR's Indiana branches during the early twentieth century.

²⁴⁹ *Indianapolis People*, June 26, 1880, 1.

²⁵⁰ *Indianapolis Journal*, September 10, 1880, 5.

²⁵¹ Mary Q. Burnet, *Art & Artists of Indiana: with Illustrations of the Work of Indiana Artists and Sculptors*. (Indiana: Unigraphic, Inc.. (1921); 1981 Reproduction), 91. Burnet mentions India Underhill Kirkland as a competitor. Her likeness was apparently the best, but Simmons's experience and renown likely made him more appealing.

²⁵² *Indianapolis People*, November 17, 1877, 1; J. A. Tyler to L. Morton, 5 November 1877, Holloway MSS, M1045, Box 10, Folder 4, IHS. Crown Hill cemetery managers readily offered and approved a plot for Morton's heavily decorated grave located close to Indiana soldiers' final resting place as early as November 17, 1877, but James A Tyler (with assistance from Holloway) likely dissuaded Lucinda from agreeing, emphasizing the need for ownership of Morton's physical resting place to remain in family hands.

be easily and readily viewed by the citizens. Morton was a public figure, and should therefore have a public memorial.²⁵³

The completed monument was revealed in Circle Park on January 15, 1884. Various speakers, including Indiana Senator and Union veteran Benjamin Harrison and Morton's old friend Senator McDonald, spoke to a packed audience in the Opera House, which did not have room enough to seat the thousands of attendees. Each recounted Morton's services to Indiana, with multiple speakers noting how Morton's deeds cemented his place in Hoosier memory far better than any statue. Historian J. C. Ridpath of Greencastle read a lengthy poem that honored Morton's dedication to the northern cause, the Union troops, and his efforts to politically protect the results of the war.²⁵⁴ McDonald largely repeated his earlier 1878 address on Morton's character, adding that he was still indeed worthy of honor.²⁵⁵ Richard W. Thompson, a former Republican Representative who had delivered the nomination speech for Morton's 1876 presidential bid, spoke at great length and in glowing terms about Morton's career.²⁵⁶ In a nod to the contributions of Morton's family, his nine year-old grandson, Oliver P. Morton, unveiled

²⁵³ *Indianapolis Journal*, August 21, 1882, 2. The *Journal* also repeated earlier suggestions that Morton's statue be placed at one of the Park's four gates to leave room for other similar monuments to other great Hoosiers, such as William Henry Harrison. For more information on Simmons's statue, see Glory-June Greiff, *Remembrance, Faith, and Fancy: Outdoor Public Sculpture in Indiana* (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society Press, 2005), 12, 163-164.

²⁵⁴ *Indianapolis Sentinel*, January 16, 1884, 2. Ridpath's poem was apparently the subject of playful public ridicule in several papers. For more information, see Ernestine Bradford Rose, *The Circle: The Center of Indianapolis*. (Indianapolis: Crippin Printing Corporation, 1971), 45-50. Rose contends that the monument was dedicated in June, but numerous newspaper editorials date ceremonies in January.

²⁵⁵ A few newspapers found enough in this address to criticize. For the full speech, see *New Albany Public Press*, January 30, 1884, 3. For commentary see *Lawrenceburg Register*, January 31, 1884, 2.

²⁵⁶ Mark E. Neely Jr., "Richard W. Thompson: The Persistent Know Nothing," *Indiana Magazine of History* 72 no. 2 (June 1976): 95-122. Thompson was an influential Republican who represented Indiana in the House of Representatives from 1841 to 1843 and again from 1847 to 1849. He supported Lincoln and helped recruit soldiers as a provost marshal during the Civil War but protested the Emancipation Proclamation. After the war, he remained active in Hoosier politics and served as the Republican Party's Platform Committee Chairman during the 1868 Republican National Convention. He also delivered the nomination speech for Morton's presidential candidacy at the Republican National Convention in 1876. Rutherford B. Hayes selected him as Secretary of the Navy from 1877 to 1888.

the monument. The event reportedly attracted over eight thousand attendees, including members from eighteen Indiana GAR Posts.²⁵⁷

Morton's bronze visage stands at eight and a half feet. Although Simmons reportedly suggested a classical toga in his initial proposal, the final work depicts Morton in a nineteenth century suit, right hand raised in the act of speaking (Figure 1). A local stone mason was commissioned to craft an eight foot granite pedestal inscribed with the word "Morton" for the base.²⁵⁸ Reporters declared it a "genuine work of art," and commended the statue's representation of Morton as "a strong, aggressive, and resolute man." The effect was reinforced by depicting Morton as he appeared in the prime of his political career and physical health.²⁵⁹ The statue represents the determination of invested public groups—most notably Union veterans—to overcome Morton's political partisanship and preserve a positive, enduring tribute to his memory. This would be reinforced in the coming decades.²⁶⁰ More importantly, its completion coincided with an increasing GAR presence in Indiana, which adopted Morton as an important symbol in attempts to shape remembrances of the Civil War in Indiana and beyond.²⁶¹ Simmons's statue marks Morton's symbolic induction by Union veterans into the culture of physical Civil War remembrance in Indiana. Benjamin Harrison, acting President of the Association, used the occasion to pay tribute to Morton—and declare veterans' intentions

²⁵⁷ "The Unveiling," *Brazil Clay County Enterprise*, January 17, 1884, 5. See also *Rochester Tribune*, January 17, 1884, 1; *New Albany Public Press*, January 30, 1884, 5.

²⁵⁸ *Brazil Register*, July 12, 1883, 6. Indianapolis stone mason W. C. Whitehead crafted the original 1884 granite base. However, it proved too simple and a new, larger pedestal was commissioned in 1891.

²⁵⁹ *Logansport Daily Journal*, January 16, 1884, 8; *Brazil Clay County Enterprise*, January 17, 1884, 5.

²⁶⁰ Fuller, "Oliver P. Morton and the Politics of Historical Memory," 338-347. See also Madison, "Civil War Memories," 209-211.

²⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 345-351. This became particularly evident by the 1890s, when the Indiana GAR helped to organize and heavily attended annual memorial services on the anniversary of Morton's death.



Figure 1. Bronze monument of Oliver P. Morton by Frank J. Simmons, 1884, in its current location on the southeast perimeter of the Soldiers and Sailors Monument, in Indianapolis, Indiana. The inscription reads “Oliver P. Morton/ “The War Governor” of Indiana/ War of Rebellion/ 1861-1865.” Photograph courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

to build a larger, grander monument in the Circle honoring all dead Hoosier veterans.²⁶² It is not hard to see the veterans' efforts to memorialize Morton in Circle Park as the first step toward grounding the city in a larger physical public tribute to all Indiana soldiers.

Morton proved just as divisive in death as he did in life. Republicans and Democrats immediately recognized and capitalized on his death for political ends, and differed radically over what aspects of Morton's character should be remembered. The passage of time complicated his legacy as Republicans and Democrats struggled to find consensus in their conflicting memories of Morton and the Civil War. Public post mortem commentary established conflicting Morton myths, with allies and opponents omitting or embellishing his deeds. His death also provided an opportune moment for Hoosier veterans to organize the state's first monument. This too proved controversial, with Morton occupying a central place in the city's built environment, and by extension, its collective memory. However, the soldiers enlisted Morton—and fought for his legacy—because they recognized and remembered his deeds. Even when the memorial hall was abandoned in favor of a statue, they realized the symbolic importance of the monument. By the 1890s, although Union veterans in Indiana were far from unanimously organized or united in their political movements, the GAR wielded considerable power over Indiana's public commemorations of the Civil War—and they chose to carry their semi-mythical version of Morton's memory as a central standard into the twentieth century.

²⁶² Harrison is quoted in the *Fort Wayne Daily Gazette*, April 1, 1884, 4.

Chapter Three: Morton in Twentieth century Historical Memory (1890-1907)

Morton played a prominent role in Hoosiers' public commemorations of the Civil War well into the twentieth century. By the 1890s, Morton's legacy was firmly established; he was the hero of the Union, the Friend of the Soldier, the defender of a radical Reconstruction, and one of the architects of a reunited nation founded on human equality. Franklin Simmons's 1884 monument established Hoosier veterans as the popular interpreters of Morton's public memory, and ushered new opportunities to commemorate Morton and adapt his legacy to serve the needs of aging veterans and advance the agendas of politicians. Veterans, politicians, and family members routinely gathered to honor Morton and Hoosier combatants at memorial services held on the anniversary of his death. The Indiana Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) adopted the man they soon dubbed "the Great War Governor" as a central figure in local and national efforts to commemorate and preserve their memories of the war. As the nation entered the twentieth century, Indiana used Morton to place a recognizable face on Hoosiers' legacy of wartime patriotism. The GAR reinforced its respect for Morton, honoring him with a central place in the Indiana State Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument in 1889. Legislators and veterans selected him to represent Indiana in Washington, D. C.'s Statuary Hall in 1900. And in 1907, the GAR immortalized its connection to Morton with a third monument, erected beside the Indiana State Capitol Building, with the War Governor facing east toward the Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument.

These actions represent the culmination of Union veterans' reciprocal relationship with Morton. This chapter analyzes how veterans and politicians actively appropriated his memory to advance their political and social agendas and reinforced Republicans' overtly

positive interpretations of his controversial legacy. Through local monuments and ceremonies, these historical gatekeepers built Morton into a mythic embodiment of Union veterans' regional patriotism and pride, and encouraged a new generation of Hoosiers to continue to show public respect for Morton's wartime leadership and Hoosier veterans' sacrifices. Republicans lauded Morton's executive ability, devotion to Union ideals, postwar advocacy for emancipation, and for his fiscal honesty both during and after the Civil War.

Understanding Morton's place in twentieth-century Civil War memory requires a necessarily brief analysis of his direct appeal to soldiers and veterans. During the war, he established the Indiana Sanitary Commission to aid enlisted men and, to a lesser extent, their families. He visited Hoosier troops departing for war as well as the wounded in battlefield hospitals. After the war, he personally welcomed returning soldiers to Indianapolis, reminded them of his services on their behalf, and ensured their sacrifices would not be forgotten. "We can repay the borrowed money, but not the debt we owe our soldiers, for hardships endured, blood spilt, and the sacrifice of home pleasures for the love of country," he told the returning veterans of the 86th Indiana in 1865, adding, "We will, however, do the best we can."²⁶³ He frequently emphasized the veteran's new role as home front political warriors for the Republican Party. The enemy had been vanquished on the battlefield and loyal Hoosiers could now trade their bayonets for ballots—a right the Democrats had denied to Hoosier troops in 1863.²⁶⁴ Morton and

²⁶³ "Honors to Returned Soldiers," *Indianapolis Daily Journal*, June 12, 1865, 3. Morton thanked the veterans for their support when he addressed the Indiana Legislature on January 24, 1867, and called for the erection of a monument to Indiana's Union veterans in Crown Hill Cemetery. See also Foulke, *Life of Oliver P. Morton*, vol. 2, 224-226.

²⁶⁴ In 1863 Indiana Democrats blocked Morton's attempts to legalize absentee voting for Hoosier servicemen in time for the 1864 elections. Morton frequently reminded veterans of that fact. A few weeks after his Masonic Hall speech, the Governor met with Union commander Lew Wallace to present captured

other radical Republicans promised that the rebels had been justly punished and that Union sacrifices would be protected through appropriate legislation—and Federal oversight of the South.

The effectiveness of Morton's appeals lay in the underlying call to the soldiers' sense of reciprocity. Many (but not all) soldiers felt gratitude for Morton's support of men in the field and their families at home. Veterans' fond bonds with comrades in arms also extended to their war governor, and Morton strengthened these ties by actively shaping Hoosier veterans' postwar culture. In collaboration with Hoosier veterans Robert S. Foster and Oliver M. Wilson, he organized Indiana branches of the GAR, a fraternal organization of Union veterans dedicated to preserving the bonds of fellowship and comradery forged between them during the war.²⁶⁵ In November 1866, the GAR held its first national reunion in Indianapolis. In a private evening address, Morton welcomed them, praised the organization's devotion to the orphans and widows of fallen veterans, and reminded them of his similar devotions. Although he regretted that his lack of military service did not permit him to join the GAR's ranks, Morton allowed, "I have such an intimate connection with the army that went forth from our State, that I feel I am

southern battle flags to the respective Hoosier regiments on July 4th, 1866. He stated that "The great question now confronts you and must be answered, whether the heroes in war shall become mere [passive] children in peace . . . [or] whether they shall shamefully and blindly surrender at the ballot-box the great prizes [including the right to control and protect the history of the war] which they conquered upon the field." Foulke, *Life of Oliver P. Morton*, vol. 1, 479. According to historian Joseph A. Frank, Morton campaigned for Hoosier soldiers' voting rights harder than many other governors. Joseph Allan Frank, *With Ballot and Bayonet: The Political Socialization of American Civil War Soldiers* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1998), 130, 132. GAR historian Mary R. Dearing noted the importance of Morton's political ties to veterans. He was not the only one who relied on their support, but the *Indianapolis Sentinel* noted he used the soldiers more handily than most. Mary R. Dearing, *Veterans in Politics: The Story of the G. A. R.* (London: Greenwood Press, 1974), 192.

²⁶⁵ The literature about the GAR and the Women's Relief Corps (WRC) continues to grow. For a broad analysis of the GAR from 1865 to 1900, see Stuart McConnell *Glorious Contentment*. Both Mary R. Dearing, *Veterans in Politics* and Caroline Janney, *Remembering the Civil War* are highly useful for understanding the organization's political goals and place within late nineteenth century Civil War memories. For an examination of the rituals, social concerns and politics unique to the Indiana GAR and the organization's activism within Indianapolis, see Nicholas W. Sacco, "Igniting the Fires of Patriotism."

at least a near relative.”²⁶⁶ Speaking on behalf of the assembled veterans, Major John H. Popp expressed delight at seeing “our most trusted friend” and once again assured Morton they would repay his support by doing all they could to help him “occupy the most eminent position . . . bestowed upon an American citizen.”²⁶⁷ A year later, Morton entered the Senate and fought for African American emancipation and other policies that would become significant touchstones in national memories of the Civil War and Reconstruction.²⁶⁸ Morton’s postwar appeals to veterans benefitted his political career and his ties to the GAR formed a cornerstone of his lasting legacy in Indiana.

The public proliferation of Morton’s legacy and image went hand in hand with the political resurgence of the Indiana GAR during the 1880s and 1890s. Union veteran Dr. Benjamin F. Stephens had formed the GAR in Illinois shortly after the war’s end in 1866. Posts quickly spread throughout the North. The fraternal order prioritized comradery among veterans, but it was also heavily political, and its massive voting base became an important arm of the Republican Party during Reconstruction. However, in the 1870s, Republicans’ decreasing commitment to radically reforming the South left the organization’s core mission ill-defined. The organization’s strength returned in the 1880s, united renewing bonds of fraternity and also forwarded the cause of securing federal

²⁶⁶ “Grand Army of the Republic,” *Indianapolis Daily Journal*, November 21, 1866, 5. The GAR also prided itself on managing and securing funding (both through donation and state assistance) for Old Soldiers’ Homes throughout the nation. For more, see McConnell, *Glorious Contentment*, 125-165.

²⁶⁷ “Morton at Green Mount,” *Indianapolis Journal*, November 3, 1866, 5; November 21, 1866, 5.

²⁶⁸ Dearing attributes Morton’s senatorial ascension in 1867 as a reward from veterans for helping to support the organization’s growth in Indiana. Dearing, *Veterans in Politics*, 109-110. I argue that Hoosier veterans respected Morton’s insistence that southern states rejoin the Union under strict federal oversight and his advocacy for African American emancipation and suffrage. When the GAR reorganized in 1890 to fight for Union veterans’ pensions and preserve a Unionist history of the war, many likely recalled Morton’s congressional opposition to any policy that would pension former Confederates or grant them universal amnesty. See “The Great War Governor, Oliver Perry Morton’s Achievements for the Union Cause,” *Indianapolis Journal*, September 4, 1893, 16.

pensions for Union veterans.²⁶⁹ By the late nineteenth century, GAR members rallied around three important issues: financial compensation for their wartime service, especially pensions for wounded and indigent veterans; establishing a positive, honorific portrayal of the Civil War in popular culture through monuments, parades, school instruction, and other civic activities; and grounding the new generations' sense of American nationalism in the values they had learned through armed service—patriotism, love of country, fellowship, and honor.²⁷⁰ Nicholas Sacco argues that these men “used their memories of the Civil War to act as gatekeepers of the past and authoritative social leaders in the present.” Members used parades, Memorial Day exercises, newspaper editorials, and especially public monuments to preserve their memories and values in an “industrialized society that many veterans believed was becoming increasingly selfish, materialistic, and politically radical.”²⁷¹ Morton’s wartime role and postwar activism made him an ideal figure for preserving and promoting these values, especially in Indianapolis.

In many ways, Morton was an ideal figure for the GAR. Throughout his political career, Morton had advocated for the protective policies reflective of the Unionist memories these aging veterans increasingly cherished.²⁷² His postwar calls for federal oversight of the South and, more critically, the preservation of southern war guilt in the nation’s collective memory of the war, spoke to these intangible but vital desires of

²⁶⁹ McConnell, *Glorious Contentment*, 85. The GAR was much more than a political organization. Members appreciated the unified political advocacy, but socializing and enjoying the emotional companionship and support of fellow veterans was equally, if not more important.

²⁷⁰ McConnell, *Glorious Contentment*, 126, 131, 136. See also Sacco, “Fires of Patriotism,” 4-5.

²⁷¹ Sacco, “Fires of Patriotism,” 4-5, 51-52.

²⁷² The GAR frequently remembered Morton’s deeds and reinforced this shared commitment to Union values several times in annual memorial services on the anniversary of Morton’s death and during the construction of the Indiana State Soldiers and Sailors Monument. See “In Honor of Morton,” *Indianapolis Journal*, August 22, 1889, 6; “The Great War Governor,” November 6, 1889, 8.

Union veterans, especially those belonging to the GAR. His advocacy for African American rights, especially the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments, appealed to black and white GAR members who stressed the need to recognize and honor the services of African American comrades in arms and to cement Union victory in the morally righteous legacy of emancipation.²⁷³ Morton's legacy within Indiana's Civil War past and his prominent status in the collective memory of Hoosier veterans made him a valuable, powerful symbol for those seeking to bring glory to Indiana and to promote a lasting legacy founded on these wartime principles. Politicians also freely recalled Morton's deeds to remind veterans of established allegiances to the Republican Party and the need to continue supporting policies of social and economic reform.

Late nineteenth and twentieth century tributes to Morton emerged in the larger outpouring of memorabilia produced by Civil War veterans. In Caroline Janney's analysis, veterans grappled with "paradoxical feelings of a longing for a national unity and lingering sectional rancor" well into the 1890s.²⁷⁴ Survivors hosted national reunions, published memoirs, and contested the representation of war memories in school textbooks. Public monuments to fallen comrades and glorious causes became a critical means for veterans to reconcile memories of their experiences and to protect and promote their ideals for future generations. In addition to creating monuments at national battlefields and cemeteries, veterans decorated their hometowns with monuments. Highly trafficked urban spaces—town squares, public parks, and public buildings—became

²⁷³ This became an important issue for the renewed GAR. For more information, see Barbara A. Gannon, *The Won Cause: Black and White Comradeship in the Grand Army of the Republic* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 3-7, 9-11.

²⁷⁴ Janney, *Remembering the Civil War*, 165-168, 171-172. Union veterans' groups did embrace reconciliation for political purposes, but public forgiveness did not imply forgetfulness of Confederate culpability for the war. For an analysis of Hoosier Civil War veterans, see James Madison, "Civil War Memories and 'Partnership Forgittin', 1865-1913," *Indiana Magazine of History* 99, no. 3 (September 2003): 198-230.

prized spaces to erect monuments reflective of the events and perspectives its builders held most dear.²⁷⁵ According to Kirk Savage, monuments were at once “high art and architectural landmarks,” and nineteenth century Americans intended their bronze and marble tributes to remain immune to future reinterpretations. These monuments were designed to “yield resolution and consensus, not prolong conflict” by “[molding] history” into what its builders see as “its rightful pattern.”²⁷⁶ The unprecedented scale and cost of the Civil War transformed and democratized the American public monument, reflecting the differing memories of builders. Historian David Blight argues that three avenues of thought emerged in struggle to mend sectional bitterness. Union veterans promoted their victory over the treasonous South; Confederate veterans and Lost Cause advocates urged an emphasis on knightly, military valor—while submerging the importance of slavery and emancipation in war narratives. Emancipationists honored the importance of emancipation and black citizenship.²⁷⁷

In this environment, public commemorations of great men who served in great causes, became inherently politically-charged symbols of local pride in a national

²⁷⁵ Savage, *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves*, 4-5. Smaller, local monuments arose alongside and in response to the controversial early efforts to turn Civil War battlefields into national parks. Deciding who had the right to curate the memories associated with these sacred spaces often led to highly publicized disputes between Union and Confederate veterans’ organizations. See Timothy B. Swift, *The Golden Age of Battlefield Preservation: The Decade of the 1890s and the Establishment of America’s First Five Military Parks* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2008), 78-81.

²⁷⁶ Savage, *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves*, 4-5, 66-69.

²⁷⁷ Blight, *Race and Reunion*, 2-4. Caroline Janney disagrees with Blight. Emancipation was not always the focus—and it was often overlooked or downplayed at battlefield commemorations—but many Union veterans considered race a key component of their narrative of victory over Confederates. Janney, *Remembering the Civil War*, 8, 183-196. Unionists and Confederates did attempt to compromise at national parks, discussing the battle and the war in terms of military valor and mutual bravery and downplaying a deeper analysis of the war’s complicated racial and social causes and consequences. This reluctance had long-lasting effects. See Dwight T. Pitcaithley, “A Cosmic Threat: The National Park Service Addresses the Causes of the Civil War” in James O. Horton and Lois E. Horton, eds. *Slavery and Public History: The Tough Stuff of American Memory* (University of North Carolina Press: Chapel Hill, 2008), 169-186.

narrative.²⁷⁸ According to historian James Mayo, war monuments—in particular, singular obelisks of bronze and stone like the Soldiers and Sailors Monument—transforms a public space, adding a sacred atmosphere and establishing a potential rallying point for rituals of public commemoration and respect.²⁷⁹ John Bodnar’s analysis of American memory and commemorative rituals in urban environments posits another purpose for monuments: twentieth-century monuments and accompanying ceremonies helped to reconcile the competing interests of “official” memories crafted by politicians and others seeking consensus and “vernacular” memories based on “first-hand experiences” of events, prized by specific groups like veterans.²⁸⁰ Honoring Morton’s memory as well as Union veterans’ heroism and postwar activism was thus interpreted by both veterans and a new generation of citizens to reflect a respect for GAR values of patriotism, love of country, and service to the nation within American nationalism.

Frank Simmons’s 1884 bronze tribute to Morton helped to establish Circle Park as a space for Union veterans to begin establishing a physical, artistic presence in Indianapolis.²⁸¹ The Soldiers and Sailors Monument and numerous other veteran-sponsored projects reflected Union veterans’ desires to command public space in large cities.²⁸² In 1887, Circle Park, renamed Monument Circle, became the site of the long-

²⁷⁸ Savage, *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves*, 66-69.

²⁷⁹ Mayo describes the ritualistic power of the monument in public commemorations as most commonly expressed through parades and large public gatherings, especially on Memorial Day. Mayo, *War Memorials*, 50-54, 58.

²⁸⁰ John Bodnar, *Remaking America: Public Memory, Commemoration, and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), 19. The Soldiers and Sailors Monument expressed both “private” and “official” forms of memory.

²⁸¹ Hoosiers were quite active in this regard throughout the state. For basic commentary on the ways in which Indiana veterans’ commemorated fallen comrades and their changing memories of the conflict, see Madison, “Civil War Memories,” 198-206. See also Jennifer D. Born, “A Survey of Indiana Military Monuments,” (master’s thesis, Indiana University, 2000), 23-30, <https://scholarworks.iupui.edu/handle/1805/4957>.

²⁸² Bodnar, *Remaking America*, 21-25, 27-33. Monuments also arose as a means for Union and Confederate veterans to preserve sectionalized memories of the war in the midst of reconciliation. Bodnar notes both

awaited Indiana State Soldiers and Sailors Monument.²⁸³ Morton was remembered here, too. At the celebratory laying of the monument's cornerstone in August 1899, former Union General John Coburn recalled Morton's ceaseless dedication to the nation during a time of unmatched turmoil. "Strong in body and mind, serene in the face of opposition, kind to the unfortunate, watchful and anxious for the welfare of the sick and wounded soldiers and sailors, [Morton's] messages of mercy, comfort, and healing flew to the battlefields and hospitals whenever danger, or disease, or wounds threatened the volunteers of Indiana." Coburn opined that Morton "fell in the midst of his great career, in the prime of manhood, and in the midst of his usefulness, like some mighty oak cut down in the forest while yet the green glories of his crown were waving in the summer air."²⁸⁴ To the Indiana GAR, Morton was a critical figure in its narrative of participation in a glorious cause.

Members echoed Coburn's remarks for a long time afterward. GAR orators remembered and honored Morton's legacy throughout the 1890s and early 1900s at annual memorial services on the anniversary of his death. In 1889, veterans, family, and

northern and southern industrialists desire to promote a national reconciliation aligned with the increasing centrality of federal power needed for sweeping economic and social reform.

²⁸³ Ibid., 74-75, 77-81. On August 18, 1889, Reverend Dr. R. J. Rondthaler championed preserving national memories in "preachers of stone and bronze. They are object lessons to the growing generation. Every child in our city knows more of Oliver P. Morton, Indiana's typical hero, because of his statue on the southern border of the Circle than he would if it were not there." "Dr. Rondthaler's Sermon," *Indianapolis Journal*, August 19, 1889, 8. The Soldiers and Sailors Monument is a core component of Hoosiers' war memories and is thus too complicated to explore in depth here. This thesis is only concerned with analyzing Morton's inclusion in the larger structure to demonstrate his importance in the GAR's public presentation of its members' memories of the Civil War. For a general discussion of the creation of the Indiana Soldiers and Sailors Monument and its importance in shaping Hoosiers' Civil War memories, see Rose, *The Circle: The Center of Indianapolis*; John Bodnar, "Commemorative Activity in Twentieth-Century Indianapolis: The Invention of Civic Traditions," *Indiana Magazine of History* 87, no. 1 (March 1991): 1-23; Glory-June Greiff, *Remembrance, Faith, and Fancy*, 11-13; James Philip Fadely, "The Veteran and the Memorial: George J. Langsdale and the Soldiers and Sailors Monument," *Traces of Indiana and Midwestern History* 18, no. 1 (Winter 2006) (Indianapolis: Indiana Historical Society): 27-35; Nicole Etcheson, *A Generation at War: The Civil War Era in a Northern Community* (Kansas: University Press of Kansas, 2011), 260-269.

²⁸⁴ *Indianapolis Journal*, August 23, 1889, 2. See also, "The Name of Morton, One Man Remembered Above All," *Indianapolis Journal*, August 26, 1889, 4.

friends gathered at Morton's graveside to commemorate his services with poems, flowers and a decorative bust. The GAR established these annual observances as a new tradition.²⁸⁵ At one observance on November 1, veterans marched into a local Indianapolis church and settled beneath patriotic bunting in solemn observance of Morton's deeds. Ceremonies included memorial addresses and sermons, and opened and concluded with the singing of "America" and other Civil War Union hymns. Afterwards, attendees sometimes decorated Morton's monument on Monument Circle with flowers and wreaths.²⁸⁶ The tradition carried on until at least 1905. Organizers freely used the occasion to impress their messages on the public directly, and the GAR sometimes invited local high school students to attend the ceremonies.²⁸⁷

These ceremonies reflected the memories of GAR members. Like many GAR-sponsored functions, honoring Morton served to rekindle the aging veterans' sense of pride in serving the Union cause. Frequent historical highlights included Indiana's wartime domestic and legislative divisions, Morton's struggles against Copperheads, and the governor's care for Hoosier troops.²⁸⁸ Morton's memory became a means for the GAR to celebrate a great leader, honor the sacrifices of soldiers, and promote organizational ideals.

²⁸⁵ "The Great War Governor," *Indianapolis Journal*, November 6, 1889, 5.

²⁸⁶ *Indianapolis Journal*, 1889, October 26, 8; November 1, 1889, 4; November 6, 1889, 6; November 2, 1890, 6; *Logansport Journal*, November 3, 1891, 1; *Goshen Daily News*, November 6, 1893, 4.

²⁸⁷ "Morton Memorial Services," *Indianapolis Journal*, October 28, 1903, 12.

²⁸⁸ Despite the passage of time, in these private ceremonies, speakers sometimes singled out the actions of wartime Democrats for particular scrutiny when recalling Morton's wartime services. See W. P. Fishback, *Address Delivered on the Fourteenth Anniversary of the Death of Oliver P. Morton, to the Members of the Grand Army of the Republic, at Indianapolis, November 1st, 1891* (Indianapolis: Frank H. Smith, 1891) MSS Pamphlet Collection, E506.M67 F57 1891, IHS; "In Honor of Morton," *Indianapolis Journal*, November 9, 1892, 12. Others lauded Morton's commitment to his ideals. Major E. W. Halford, Morton's private congressional secretary, echoed many of Fishback's remarks in his 1896 address to the GAR. "He cared nothing for the consistency, so-called, of his act. His only care was for the consistency of his motives." "In Honor of Morton," November 2, 1896, 5. See also November 4, 1901, 8. For a commemorative poem, see [Souvenir Program] "Gov. Oliver P. Morton Memorial Services Central Avenue M. E. Church, Sunday, November 4th, 1900," Morton MSS L113, Box 2, Folder 15, ISL.

In 1897, Hoosiers echoed the GAR's respect for Morton's legacy when they selected him to represent Indiana in one of the state's two available spaces in Statuary Hall at the U. S. Capitol Building.²⁸⁹ The hall had served as the meeting place of the House of Representatives from 1807 to 1857. In 1864, Congress declared its new purpose as a space to honor state representatives, allowing each state a measure of interpretive control of those who would represent its history in a national space. Enshrining Morton here carried significant political and historical weight.²⁹⁰

Time had already altered Morton's legacy by February of 1897. In the Indiana Legislature, none openly disputed Morton's importance, but debates emerged along party lines. Democrats suggested Morton's memory did not need further enshrining. "No monument can add to the luster of Oliver P. Morton," said Wells County Democrat William H. Eichborn. Speaking to an increased emphasis on social reform, he added, "This is not the time to sink [taxpayer funds] into cold marble or bronze when such money could benefit education." Honoring Morton in a national gallery was noble, but should be done for the right reasons. "I do not want this monument to represent any orphans' cries or widows' groans," Eichborn concluded, to the applause of gallery attendees.²⁹¹ However, Republicans held sway; Morton's influential role in the nation's last great conflict made him the most representative figure of Indiana. The Legislature appropriated \$5,000 for the monument with the approval of Republican Governor James

²⁸⁹ *Indianapolis Journal*, February 20, 1895, 4. The *Journal* had called for Morton's induction, alongside General William Henry Harrison, since 1895.

²⁹⁰ Henry A. Clark, *Legislation Creating the National Statuary Hall in the Capitol with the Proceedings in Congress Relating to the Statues Placed in the National Statuary Hall by the United States* (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1916.) Google Ebook.
<https://books.google.com/books?id=piIUAAAAYAAJ&dq>.

²⁹¹ "Shades of Morton: House Goes into a Hot and Lengthy Debate," *Shelbyville Daily Democrat*, February 25, 1897, 4. Eichborn perhaps worried that Morton's distrust of the South (and frequent reminders of some Hoosier Democrats' wartime Confederate sympathies) during Reconstruction would reawaken lingering feelings of sectional bitterness instead of acting as a unifying tribute to Indiana.

A. Mount on February 27, 1897. Eichborn and others agreed to support Morton rather than be denied the opportunity to bring glory to Indiana.²⁹² Morton's friends and family privately expressed their delight. "You and yours cannot fail to be highly gratified by the abiding interest and affection with which the memory of your illustrious husband is held," Lea Ream wrote to Morton's widow in August 1897, adding, "I thought of him so eminently more worthy of national tribute."²⁹³

The committee hired Washington sculptor Charles Niehaus, who had previously sculpted likenesses of Ohio Governor William Allen and Senator James A. Garfield for Statuary Hall. Some, like Richard J. Bright, son of former Indiana Democratic Senator Jesse A. Bright and the U. S. Senate's acting Sergeant at Arms, debated the artistic worth of such a cheap monument in a national gallery.²⁹⁴ Monument committee member Charles E. Shiveley, admitted the work was "not of as high grade as it ought to be," but added that no major sculptors were interested in the job for less than \$15,000. None of the other state contributions qualified as "great art," but the committee was confident in Niehaus's ability to produce a monument to do Indiana proud.²⁹⁵

Others argued Morton's image was not true to his appearance in the Senate. A correspondent for the *New York Times* noted viewers saw "a man of more than average height, of very distinguished presence, of noble bearing, good clothes and not a little self-consciousness. This makes a very interesting statue, but not a representation of Oliver P. Morton." The author recalled Morton being somewhat less "well-kept" and suggested "a

²⁹² Debates over the bill reportedly roused so much applause and confusion that the galleries had to be cleared before it passed "by almost a Party vote." *Logansport Pharos Tribune*, February 26, 1897, 2.

²⁹³ Lea Ream to L. Morton, 11 August 1897, Morton MSS L113, Box 2, Folder 15, ISL.

²⁹⁴ *Indianapolis News*, September 28, 1899, 1. Richard's comments were likely motivated by Morton's hand in expelling his Democratic father from Congress in 1862 for openly sympathizing with Confederates and being implicated in conspiracy plans.

²⁹⁵ "Mildly Critical Comment," *Indianapolis Journal*, September 29, 1899, 5. Shiveley was one of Morton's personal friends and had sponsored the bill continuously in the Indiana Legislature since 1895.

more faithful likeness of Morton, as most people [in Washington] knew him, would have been produced by propping him up on one crutch and by ironing the creases out of his trousers.”²⁹⁶ In the reporter’s eyes, Morton’s national tribute should reflect his postwar appearance.

Monument Committee member Addison C. Harris responded quickly. It was more fitting to recreate Morton’s image in the prime of his governorship, he argued, for “it was in this period of his life that he showed his sterling quality, and it is as Governor that he is best remembered and most revered by the people of Indiana.” Morton’s son apparently approved of the likeness, too.²⁹⁷ Harris added, “It would have been an insult to [Morton’s] memory to have “propped him up with a crutch,” as your article recommends. [One might] as well put General [Ulysses S.] Grant on horseback with a napkin around his throat as his illness forced on him at Mount McGregor.”²⁹⁸ Although congressional dedication speakers tended to focus on Morton’s postwar career, its Hoosier funders argued that statue was meant to represent Morton at the peak of his executive ardor for the Union. Indiana had won national respect for her Civil War sacrifices. A monument displayed in a national gallery needed to capture Morton (and by extension, Indiana’s)

²⁹⁶ *Indianapolis Journal*, February 26, 1900, 6.

²⁹⁷ *Goshen Daily Democrat*, February 18, 1898, 4. Niehaus produced two designs: one of Morton seated, the other “nobly posed,” standing erect in the act of delivering a speech. According to the *Democrat*’s report, Morton’s widow, Lucinda and his son, Oliver T. Morton, both approved of the latter.

²⁹⁸ *Indianapolis Journal*, February 26, 1900, 6. Harris referred to Grant’s throat cancer, which manifested as a tumorous bulge in his neck. His comparison to Grant can also be interpreted as equating Morton’s importance in Indiana’s memory of the Civil War to the nation’s respect for Grant as the Union’s military figurehead.



Figure 2. Marble statue of Oliver P. Morton by Charles H. Niehas, 1900. Statuary Hall of the U. S. Congress. Photography courtesy of Architect of the Capitol website, <http://www.aoc.gov>.

wartime masculinity and strength.²⁹⁹ Anything less would undermine the intended sense of reverence, respect, and pride Morton's image was meant to inspire in observers.

Morton's appearance was grounded in Hoosier's Civil War memories, but the speeches Indiana Senators and their congressional colleagues delivered in celebration of the statue's acceptance on April 14, 1900, reflected views of Morton and the Civil War through a new national lens. As the nation entered the Progressive Era, Americans sought to expand the nation's political and economic influence, and desired greater social reform to achieve the American Dream of economic and social prosperity. Industrial expansion of the 1890s ignited violent disputes between laborers and management over wealth and power.³⁰⁰ Increasing chronological distance from the realities of slavery accompanied a diaspora of job-seeking southern blacks into the North. In 1896, the U. S. Supreme Court established racial segregation in *Plessy v. Ferguson* under the banner of a "separate but equal" society. In Fuller's analysis, "Many in the North saw the case as legal confirmation of the power of white supremacy and the final abandonment of African Americans freed by the Civil War."³⁰¹ American military victory in the Spanish American war of 1898 instilled a new sense of nationalistic pride. The nation desired messages of unity, rather than perpetual Civil War bitterness.

²⁹⁹ Monuments naturally idealize the figures they represent. This is especially true of nationally renowned figures, like Abraham Lincoln. See Savage, *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves*, 73-79. For more information on the development of Washington, D. C.'s distinct memorial landscape see Donald R. Kennon, and Thomas P. Somma, eds., *American Pantheon: Sculptural and Artistic Decoration of the United States Capitol* (Washington, D.C.: U. S. Capitol Historical Society, 2004); Kirk Savage, *Monument Wars: Washington, D.C., the National Mall, and the Transformation of the Memorial Landscape* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2011).

³⁰⁰ Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory*, 102-106.

³⁰¹ Fuller, "Oliver P. Morton and the Politics of Historical Memory," 339; Janney, *Remembering the Civil War*, 199-211. Caroline Janney notes that Union and Confederate veterans did not openly challenge the white-dominated memory of the war, but they did not unanimously forget African American comrades in arms, or that that four years of warfare predicated on southern refusals to give up slavery.

Morton not only stood for Indiana, but for Radical Reconstruction. Indiana veterans frequently focused on his wartime activism, but in Congress, his colleagues' recollections demonstrated a more nationalist interpretation of his achievements. The local *Logansport Pharos Tribune* noted "Governor Morton seems like a faraway, though heroic figure, to Indianians of the generation which has arisen since the civil war."³⁰² Morton's presence in the Capital's Statuary Hall allowed national representatives to adapt and evoke his memory to address national issues, even if his likeness remained grounded in ideals of wartime strength.

Senator Charles W. Fairbanks grounded his recollection of Morton's service to the nation in emancipation. Morton hailed from Wayne County, Indiana, whose citizens had been "intensely patriotic and liberty loving." Regional disgust for slavery prevailed even before the war, and the Underground Railroad helped "countless colored refugees [find] succor and asylum in their search for liberty."³⁰³ In a state beset by secret schemes of southern sympathizers, Morton's loyalty to Lincoln and the Union shone.³⁰⁴ "When others wavered he was firm, and when others doubted he was certain," Fairbanks said. For Morton, "compromise was impossible" when "freedom and slavery were engaged for the mastery."³⁰⁵ Through Morton's care, Indiana troops became "the pick and flower of the State, and with the sword wrote a high record among heroic men" and after the war,

³⁰² "A Hoosier Exodus," *Logansport Pharos Tribune*, April 24, 1900, 7.

³⁰³ Henry C. Adams, "Address of Mr. Fairbanks on the Acceptance of the Statue of Oliver P. Morton," *Proceedings in Congress from the Acceptance of the Statue of Oliver P. Morton presented by the State of Indiana*, (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1900), 8.

³⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 11-12.

³⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, 12.

“provision was made for the widow and the orphan by a grateful Republic.”³⁰⁶ According to Fairbanks, Morton’s principles were established in a good cause.

Recounting Morton’s time as a Senator, Fairbanks emphasized his postwar advocacy for African Americans on the grounds of racial equality. Fairbanks argued that Senator Morton “possessed convictions, and convictions possessed him,” and that he had proved himself “an aggressive and zealous advocate of the policy of reconstruction.”³⁰⁷ Like others, Fairbanks praised Morton’s advocacy for passage of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Constitutional Amendments. He acknowledged and defended Morton’s partisan loyalty as one who “spoke to the consciences and judgements of men; he spoke from conviction to win converts to a cause which he deemed to be righteous.”³⁰⁸ As Fuller notes, by casting Morton as the friend of soldiers, widows, orphans and African Americans, Fairbanks emphasized the Republican Party’s established commitment to assisting similarly poor and disadvantaged Americans, a foremost concern for voters in the early Progressive Era.³⁰⁹

Albert J. Beveridge spoke for the more religious-minded cast of Republican reformers. Having eulogized Morton before the Indiana GAR in 1897, he was well-prepared to remember the honored statesman.³¹⁰ In a lengthy discussion of Morton’s wartime career, Beveridge cast him as a divinely-inspired Union crusader. Indiana

³⁰⁶ Ibid., “Address of Mr. Fairbanks,” *Proceedings in Congress*, 13. This section necessarily echoes Fuller’s analysis of the monument dedication ceremonies. For a similar interpretation, see Fuller, “Oliver P. Morton and the Politics of Historical Memory,” 338-341.

³⁰⁷ Adams, “Address of Mr. Fairbanks,” *Proceedings in Congress*, 14.

³⁰⁸ Ibid., 17.

³⁰⁹ Fuller, “Oliver P. Morton and the Politics of Historical Memory,” 341.

³¹⁰ Beveridge was the featured orator at the annual Morton memorial services held in Indianapolis in 1897. In Indiana, he emphasized Morton’s leadership, declaring that Morton was “in all but name the deputy President of the nation,” and dubbed him “the flaming sword of the Union.” He included allusions to Morton’s wartime strength, but his Washington tribute was decidedly more nationalistic. For Beveridge’s 1897 memorial address, see “In Memory of Morton,” *Indianapolis Sun*, November 8, 1897, 1.

soldiers prized him but “this Napoleon of patriotism was national in his activity.”³¹¹ Morton’s singular loyalty to the Union and its people marked a “whole career based upon profound belief in the common people. . . . of which he was a part,” making him a worthy Nationalist.³¹² Beveridge’s approval of Morton’s partisanship echoed other eulogies. Morton’s partisan belief “in the sovereignty of an idea,” of a restored Union free of slavery led him to pursue those goals into the Senate. “America to-day needs more partisanship like that,” Beveridge asserted.³¹³ Morton’s postwar advocacy for African American rights and Congressional reconstruction had banished slavery and “on the seat of independence, dignity, and power, free labor [now] sits enthroned.” As Fuller notes, “Morton stood tall in a memory that clearly displayed the continuing vitality of a nationalist memory of the Civil War era amid calls for an American empire in the new age of Progressive reform.”³¹⁴

House speakers discussed Morton’s ardent Unionism, exposing the inherent complications of remembering such a contentious partisan. Each praised Morton’s oration, dedication and ambition. Republicans recalled his wartime struggles against domestic dissent, highlighting the Copperhead treason trials. Almost every speaker praised his role as the Soldier’s Friend and one of the Midwest’s strongest Unionists.³¹⁵ Many echoed Fairbanks’s emancipationist message, emphasizing Morton’s advocacy for the destruction of slavery and determination to reunite the nation under the banner of securing and safeguarding emancipation. “[Morton] was possessed of an intense nature

³¹¹ Adams, “Address of Mr. Beveridge,” *Proceedings in Congress*, 43.

³¹² *Ibid.*, 39.

³¹³ *Ibid.*, 41-42.

³¹⁴ Fuller, “Oliver P. Morton and the Politics of Historical Memory,” 342.

³¹⁵ See in particular the remarks of Indiana Republicans George W. Steele and Abraham L. Brick in Adams, *Proceedings in Congress*, 54-58, 79-84.

and human ambitions, but he was a man of powerful convictions,” recalled Republican Edgar J. Crumpack, adding that the governor had always used his considerable will to further “the cause of human liberty . . . [and] human equality.”³¹⁶ Hoosier House Democrats recalled Morton in a markedly less deific light. Robert W. Miers praised Morton’s leadership and dedication to political ideals in the face of declining physical health but regretted Morton’s penchant for making loving friends and “bitter enemies.” Morton had “at times seemed merciless toward the Southern states . . . but [Morton] always intended to be just.” He went on, “We regret that the conditions of his time made him violent in some of his methods,” but added Morton’s outstanding executive ability would outlast lingering bitterness “while the enmities he engendered have already been buried.”³¹⁷ Fellow Hoosier Democrat Francis M. Griffith echoed Miers’ memories of Morton’s fearsome partisanship. But he assured listeners “old prejudices are forgotten. The sound of hasty words has died away.” Both parties could now “view [Morton] as he really was,” and unite in honoring his services to Indiana and the nation. While Democrats had not forgotten Morton’s partisan animosity, in Congress, at least, the need for reconciliation predominated.

National reconciliation strengthened Morton’s historical value in Indiana. Throughout the 1890s and early 1900s Hoosiers honored Morton with numerous utilitarian monuments and memorials across Indiana. The Indianapolis Republican club was named in his honor in 1890.³¹⁸ A school in Anderson, Indiana, was christened with his name and also received a plaster statue in 1899.³¹⁹ A plaster cast of Niehaus’s

³¹⁶ Adams, “Address of Mr. Crumpack of Indiana,” *Proceedings in Congress*, 99-102.

³¹⁷ Adams, “Address of Mr. Miers of Indiana,” *Proceedings in Congress*, 60-63.

³¹⁸ “Republican Club Renamed,” *New Albany Evening Tribune*, November 24, 1890, 4.

³¹⁹ *Indianapolis Journal*, October 17, 1899, 8.

Statuary Hall monument was given a place of pride in the Wayne County Courthouse for many years.³²⁰ In June 1902, Indianapolis School #20 was named in Morton's honor. It was the first of many. A few months later, Lucinda Morton and Indiana GAR Department Commander Daniel R. Lucas presented the school with a bust of Morton.³²¹ And in 1904, the Indianapolis *Journal* even tried to rally support for a legislative appropriation to preserve Morton's home in Centerville.³²²

Veterans honored Morton again in his home state, firmly christening him "the Great War Governor" in 1907. The Monument was over a decade in the making. Benjamin Harrison's prediction at the 1884 dedication ceremonies of Frank Simmons's bronze monument quickly grew into the massive Soldiers and Sailors Monument. With the larger monument well underway, Lucinda Morton, the GAR, and Hoosier lawmakers agreed to move Simmons's smaller Morton statue. Legislators appropriated \$2,000 for a new pedestal in 1893 and Simmons's work moved to the grounds of the Indiana State Capitol Building.³²³ Simmons's statue, however, was ultimately reincorporated into the Soldiers and Sailors Monument. Claims of artistic asymmetry led to its repositioning from the monument's front to one of four surrounding positions around the circumference of the park in 1898, where Morton represented the Civil War.³²⁴ Commentators noted that the GAR veterans respected Morton "but even their reverence for the great war governor

³²⁰ *Indianapolis Journal*, February 16, 1900, 2; October 10, 1902, 6.

³²¹ *Indianapolis Journal*, June 11, 1902, 10; September 25, 1902, 7.

³²² "Time Lends Appreciation," *Indianapolis Journal*, May 14, 1904, 4.

³²³ Indiana General Assembly, *Journal of the House of Representatives of the State of Indiana*, 58th Sess., vol. 1, January 20, 1893, 303, 1167, 1191. Original proposals for the reincorporation of Simmons' monument into the war memorial date to January 20, 1893. See also "The Morton Monument," *Indianapolis State Sentinel*, January 11, 1893, 3.

³²⁴ [Untitled editorial], *Connersville Daily News*, December 22, 1897, 2. The editor added that this movement had done disservice to Morton's memory, and further condemned the cost of the Soldiers and Sailors monument as a "more of a memorial to the extravagance and folly of the men who build it." Lucinda Morton was reportedly initially dissatisfied to hear her husband's place on the monument was to be filled by "a distinguished Indiana soldier," and suggested this effigy could be placed on the southeastern corner instead. See "Mrs. Morton's Letter," *Fort Wayne Gazette*, November 30, 1897, 2.

must yield to their higher love for Indiana's "Silent Victors."³²⁵ One Morton biographer, William Dudley Foulke, lamented that "supposed claims of artistic beauty" required Morton's removal from the front of the monument. "In his relation to the soldiers of Indiana, Morton was not merely one man out of four, as the monument now seems to indicate. He was alone . . . the pre-eminent protector of Indiana's troops."³²⁶

At the same time as funding for Morton's Washington monument was organized in 1897, the State Legislature, at the prodding of the GAR, approved plans for another monument in front of the east entrance to the Indiana state Capitol Building.³²⁷ The new bronze tribute solidified Hoosiers' preferential focus on Morton's wartime career previously established in Washington. More than any other, this monument would bring glory both to the "Great War Governor" and Indiana veterans. Some journalistic supporters argued their cause in unifying, nationalist terms. The *New Albany Weekly Tribune* noted that Morton represented much more than a great Republican leader: "As the years have passed by he has risen out of and beyond a mere partisan place . . . In erecting a monument to his memory the thought should be to commemorate his deeds as an actor in the affairs of the state and the nation." The editor applauded the honor the piece would bestow upon the GAR, adding if Morton could have addressed the state, "it would be to signify that no tribute could be so grateful as one from representatives of that Indiana soldiery he loved so well, for which he did so much and for which he cared so zealously."³²⁸

³²⁵ "The Morton Monument Controversy," *New Albany Weekly Tribune*, January 14, 1898, 2.

³²⁶ "In Memory of Morton," *Indianapolis Journal*, November 6, 1899, 3.

³²⁷ "The G. A. R. Morton Statue," *Indianapolis Journal*, August 6, 1897, 6. According to some newspaper reports, Hoosier veterans considered funding a monument to Morton on the southwest corner of the State House grounds as early as 1891. See also *New Albany Daily Ledger*, October 7, 1891, 1; "Governor Morton's Statue," *Indianapolis Journal*, August 23, 1899, 4.

³²⁸ [Untitled editorial], *New Albany Weekly Tribune*, September 10, 1897, 2.

The decision to honor Morton near the seat of Indiana government was calculated. Determined to do Morton justice with this latest monument, the GAR considered many different designs. According to the Indianapolis *Sun*, in September of 1897, GAR monument commissioners originally approved designs for a \$45,000 monument crafted by J. F. F. Alexander & Sons of Lafayette, Indiana. This fifteen foot tall monument featured a bronze likeness of Morton perched atop a concrete column with an American flag at his side, and four bronze angelic figures arranged around the base.³²⁹ Disputes over costs and designs stalled the project until June 1904. At the twenty-fifth GAR State Encampment in Winona, Indiana, Department Commander Daniel R. Lucas appointed a committee to oversee the monument's legislation and design. Warren R. King of Greenfield served as President. Lucas acted as Secretary. Other members included prominent Indianapolis businessman, Joseph I. Irwin, who donated the largest amount to the statue, and Judge Elijah B. Martindale, Morton's lifelong friend and former Editor of the *Indianapolis Journal*.³³⁰ After reviewing several designs, the committee finally submitted its proposal.³³¹ On February 17, 1905, amidst eloquent recollections of Morton's service to the state, lawmakers appropriated \$35,000 to honor Morton on the state house lawn, declaring that "no man, in civil life, save Abraham Lincoln, did more

³²⁹ "Statue to Oliver P. Morton," *Logansport Pharos Tribune*, September 16, 1897, 2. See *Indianapolis Sun*, September 22, 1897, 1 for a sketch of the proposed monument. See *Fort Wayne News*, October 6, 1897, 7 for commission president Haggard's commentary. Three other artists' submissions were considered and rejected. "New Morton Monument," *Fort Wayne News* April 6, 1898, 13.

³³⁰ Irwin was an adamant wartime supporter of Morton and Lincoln. Like Morton, he too became a prominent postwar Republican, and served as the former chairman of the Indiana Republican State Central Committee from 1864-1872. The GAR had overwhelming control of the monument, stipulating that members occupied three of five head committee chairs at all times. Henry C. Adams, comp., *State of Indiana Dedication Ceremonies of Morton Statue and Monument and Report of Commission, 1907* (Indianapolis: Indiana State Printing and Binding Office, 1908), 9.

³³¹ "Morton Monument," *Connersville Evening News*, December 8, 1904, 1.

for the Union during the Civil War than Oliver P. Morton, the great War Governor of Indiana.”³³²

The relative ease with which the GAR maneuvered for state funding for another monument is significant. The Soldiers and Sailors Monument had just been completed in 1902 for the enormous cost of \$300,000. Although donations were welcomed and readily submitted, the GAR had amassed enough political power to request direct legislative appropriation with little fear of refusal.³³³ A few journalists complained that allotting \$35,000 for another Morton statue was a waste.³³⁴ Others couched support for Morton in familiar Unionist terms. Save for Lincoln, “no man did more to forward the preservation of the Union,” declared the *Rochester Republican*.³³⁵ Veterans, politicians, and reform-minded journalists recognized the political and social importance of Morton’s monument in Indianapolis.

Morton’s family was likewise pleased. A new monument, close to the seat of Hoosier government, negated the recent controversy surrounding Morton’s placement around the Soldiers and Sailors Monument. Both Lucinda Morton and William R. Holloway actively participated in evaluating the committee’s work. “Kindly express to the veterans my most sincere thanks and appreciation for the successful effort to secure a worthy monument in memory of my husband,” she wrote Lucas in February, 24, 1905. “His efforts to take care of the soldiers in camp and [in the field] and . . . look after their

³³² Adams, *Dedication Ceremonies of Morton Statue*, 6-9. According to the *Logansport Journal*, the Bill passed the Indiana State House by a vote of 76 to 14. *Logansport Journal*, February 18, 1905, 1.

³³³ “A Morton Statue,” *Connersville Evening News*, December 8, 1904, 1; *Corydon Republican*, March 6, 1905, 2. The GAR hoped to raise an additional \$20,000 above the state appropriation. To encourage each veteran to donate \$1.00 or more to the fund, organizers promised an engraved 10” X 14” portrait of the governor.

³³⁴ “The Morton Monument,” *Hartford City Telegram*, February 5, 1905, 6.

³³⁵ *Rochester Republican*, January 15, 1906, 3.

families in their absence surely makes it a fitting tribute.”³³⁶ Sources detailing Lucinda’s relations with the committee are scarce, but she played an important role in helping to legitimize the monument as both a tribute to a husband and a powerful politician. Her public approval and support of the GAR’s actions ensured that Schultz’s work represented both friends’ and family members’ “vernacular” memories of Morton as well as the GAR’s partisan “official” memories that promoted the organization’s values.

In February 1906, after considering proposals from several artists, the committee ultimately accepted the design by Austrian sculptor Rudolph Schwarz, one of the principle artists behind the Soldiers and Sailors Monument. Morton’s first sculptor, Frank Simmons also competed. Although Martindale apparently favored Simmons’s proposal, the committee likely chose Schwarz because of his previous work.³³⁷ Morton’s widow, Lucinda, praised Schwarz’s designs. “I think that the statue is magnificent in every particular, and the likeness is as near perfect as it is possible to make in plaster,” she confided in a letter to D. R. Lucas on September 29, 1906.³³⁸

In Schwarz’s final design, three figures stand atop a three-tiered granite pedestal inset with three bronze plaques, one in front and two in the rear. A twelve foot Morton stands two figures’ height above the viewer, one hand raised in the act of speaking from atop the tallest of three granite pedestals into which is set a bronze tablet with “Oliver P. Morton/ War Governor” above a pair of crossed olive branches. A cavalryman with

³³⁶ L. Morton to Daniel R. Lucas, Department Commander of the GAR, 24 February 1905, Morton MSS L113, Box 2, Folder 15, ISL.

³³⁷ When he visited Indianapolis in 1905, Simmons wrote to Martindale, noting, “I thought the statue of Morton looked well and it seemed so far as I could judge a better likeness than the one in the Capital at Washington that was made by another artist.” This likely led him to compete for the next monument. On March 10, he thanked Martindale for his support, adding, “I think I would have done good work although in the newspaper slip you sent me, someone sought to give the impression that I was getting old, I am not feeling that way and never did as good work as I am doing now.” Frank Simmons to E. B. Martindale, 19 August 1905 and 10 March 1906, E. B. Martindale Papers, MSS SC 1050, Folder 4 and Folder 6, IHS.

³³⁸ L. Morton to D. R. Lucas, 29 September 1906, Morton MSS L113, Box 2, Folder 15, ISL.

carbine and sabre and a rifle-bearing private infantryman flank the Governor's proper right and left (Figure 3). The GAR's decision to honor Morton is recorded on large plaque on mounted on the rear. A similarly sized plaque mounted above it proudly declares, Morton was "in all ways and at all times the friend of the Union soldier, the friend of the country, the upholder of Abraham Lincoln, the defender of the flag and the Union of the States. Patriot, statesman, lover of liberty, heroic in heart, inflexible in purpose, and ever to be known as THE GREAT WAR GOVERNOR."³³⁹ Schwarz created two bronze reliefs capturing the soldiers' most vivid memories of Morton, set into a pair of balustrades flanking the monument. In the south-facing scene, Morton delivers a speech to a rapt audience of civilians and soldiers (Figure 4). In the northern-facing one, Morton, with head bowed and hat in hand, visits wounded Indiana soldiers in a field hospital at Shiloh (Figure 5).³⁴⁰

As the day of dedication approached, newspapers remarked on Morton's services to veterans, and commented on the legacy of the conflict. Lucas invited Governors from every northern state to attend the unveiling saying July 23 should be "a governor's day."³⁴¹ The *Indianapolis Sun* recalled the passage of state war banners from soldiers to veterans in 1866. The passage of 41 years had somewhat stilled "the poignant sorrows of 1866." But "time has passed. More and more each year the impressive results of the war gather weight. Every advancement of our national greatness and prestige; every progression of our prosperity and power for peace emphasizes anew the value to mankind

³³⁹ Henry C. Adams, *Dedication Ceremonies of Morton statue and Monument and Report of Commission. State of Indiana* (Indianapolis: W.B. B. Buford, Contractor for State Printing and Binding, 1908), 11-12. Lucinda Morton voiced "hearty approval" of the inscription. See D. R. Lucas to E. B. Martindale, 8 September 1906, E. B. Martindale Papers, MSS SC 1050, Folder 6, IHS.

³⁴⁰ These figures were the final additions. The committee did not gather to inspect them until January 15, 1907, just a few months before the monument's completion. D. R. Lucas to E. B. Martindale, 9 January 1907, E. B. Martindale Papers, MSS SC 1050, Folder 6, IHS.

³⁴¹ *The Montpelier Evening Herald* [Montpelier, Indiana], June 22, 1907, 1.

of the services of the soldiers, and the untold worth to the country of Morton's loyal energy."³⁴² The new monument honored Morton and the GAR and ensured both a prominent place in twentieth century American memories of the Civil War.

The statue was dedicated on July 23, 1907, before a crowd of thousands. A parade of over 2,000 Indiana GAR veterans marched into the plaza in full uniform, serenaded by three musical battalions of Indiana National Guardsmen, who led the crowd in singing "America."³⁴³ "The Civil War and Reconstruction; the patriotism of a people united; the fuller realization by the younger generation of the trails of 1861-65"—these thoughts came to the minds of thousands whose voices joined in singing America," recalled an *Indianapolis News* reporter. Oliver P. T. Morton, Morton's eight year old grandson, drew back an American flag to unveil the monument. In the words of one reporter, "The veterans must have been struck by the likeness of the bronze to the man who had befriended them time and time again, in ways as several as were the needs. They started the cheering that found response in the cheers of those who knew only hearsay and history of the work of Governor Morton."³⁴⁴ In the words of the correspondent for the *Brownstown Banner* "The scene was one never to be forgotten."³⁴⁵

Dedication speakers extolled Morton's honored place in an early twentieth century memory of the Civil War. Appropriately, Warren R. King, president of the commission began by recalling the sacrifices of the battle-scarred veterans in attendance.

³⁴² "Morton and the Flags," *Indianapolis Sun*, July 9, 1907, 4.

³⁴³ Many distinguished guests were invited, including Robert Lincoln, who was ultimately unable to attend. "Morton Unveiling Attracts Veterans" and "Indiana to Honor her War Governor," Oliver P. Morton Scrapbook, 1907, MSS SC3008, IHS, 13, 14.

³⁴⁴ "Tribute to Morton," *Indianapolis News*, July 23, 1907 in Oliver P. Morton Scrapbook, 1907, MSS SC 3008, IHS, 20.

³⁴⁵ "Tribute to Morton," *Brownstown Banner*, July 24, 1907, 2.



Figure 3. Bronze monument of Oliver P. Morton by Rudolf Schwarz, 1907, on the East steps of the Indiana State Capitol Building, Indianapolis, Indiana. Photograph by author.



Figure 4. Bronze relief on proper left of Oliver P. Morton Monument, 1907. Morton delivers a speech to an audience of soldiers, men, women and children. Photograph by author.



Figure 5. Bronze relief on proper right of Oliver P. Morton Monument, 1907. Morton visits Hoosier soldiers wounded in the Battle of Shiloh. Photograph by author.

Schwarz's work captured Morton as "a man with a splendid physique, a dignified pose" befitting one "who moved others by words and not by striking attitudes."³⁴⁶ King notably thanked both the GAR and the Woman's Relief Corps (WRC) for supporting the monument, and lamented "there is no adequate record of the work and sacrifice of the women of Indiana during the war."³⁴⁷ However, he noted the bronze relief on the northern-facing balustrade of the Morton statue acknowledged women's wartime service. Like many others, King suggested that the monument honored Morton and the men who had fought for the Union, and added it would "perpetuate the fact that the citizens of Indiana who lived at the time of its building did not lack in three of the greatest virtues, love, memory, and gratitude."³⁴⁸ For veterans eager to preserve the solemn traditions of Memorial Day long into the future, Morton's statue was an enduring symbol of respect from a new generation of Americans.

Republican Governor Frank J. Hanly followed King's report with a much longer address. He recalled Morton's personal qualities and career in flowery terms and waxed poetic about Morton's enduring patriotism. Morton's bronze likeness now embodied "a people's crucial trial," symbolic of "a land redeemed; a race set free; of liberty enthroned," in a glorified nation "saved from dishonor and dismemberment" and reconstructed under a new "national authority," where slavery was destroyed by constitutional amendment.³⁴⁹ As Fuller notes, Hanly's treatment of Morton united "Union

³⁴⁶ Adams, "Address of Warren R. King," *Dedication Ceremonies of the Morton Monument*, 16.

³⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 17-18. The WRC frequently decorated Morton's grave in Crown Hill and his statue in Monument Circle. Members raised funds for the 1907 monument through a variety of events, including a high school spelling bee. See *Sullivan Democrat*, December 3, 1905, 1. For further commentary on the significance of Morton's many monuments in Hoosiers' Civil War memories, see Madison, "Civil War Memories and 'Pardnership Forgittin,'" 208-209, and Fuller, "Oliver P. Morton and the Politics of Historical Memory," 338-356.

³⁴⁸ Adams, "Address of Warren R. King," *Dedication Ceremonies of the Morton Monument*, 19.

³⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 21-22.

and emancipation in a nationalist vision of the Civil War.”³⁵⁰ Morton remained the pride of Indiana, but his legacy represented the realized postwar America “in its unity, and in its indivisibility.”³⁵¹ Morton’s willingness to overstep his executive bounds could be forgiven because he had done so “always for public good.”³⁵² Hindsight and a new sense of progressive nationalism allowed Hanly and others to justify and honor Morton and Indiana’s soldiers as noble figures whose leadership and sacrifices deserved respect from new generations.

With the applause of the crowd building, Governor Hanly withdrew and the audience urged Vice President of the United States Charles W. Fairbanks to make an impromptu address.³⁵³ Echoing Hanly’s nationalistic perspective, Fairbanks affirmed Morton’s importance in both state and national history. “We have met to do honor to Oliver P. Morton,” he said, “but in a larger sense we have met to do honor to the people of our state. For we honor ourselves when we honor those who have done arduous service in the cause of liberty.”³⁵⁴ Because Morton symbolized the virtues of liberty and republican government for which so many veterans had fought, the people’s great respect for Morton had not waned in the thirty years since his death. Now, the monument would “be a mecca, the shrine to which patriots will come in the unnumbered years and bathe

³⁵⁰ Fuller, “Oliver P. Morton and the Politics of Historical Memory,” 345.

³⁵¹ Adams, “Address of Governor Hanly,” *Dedication Ceremonies of the Morton Monument*, 23.

³⁵² Adams, “Address of Governor Hanly,” *Dedication Ceremonies of the Morton Monument*, 27. Fuller draws similar conclusions. Additionally, though not explicitly stated, Hanly’s justification of Morton’s actions might encompass the man’s wartime and senatorial career, when he helped to ensure wartime aims of emancipation and reunion were protected during Reconstruction. Hanly’s lack of emphasis on Morton’s postwar career is in keeping with promoting unity and national reconciliation.

³⁵³ Jacob Piatt Dunn, *Indiana and Indianans*, vol. 3, (New York: American Historical Society, 1919), 1221-1225. Fairbanks gained notoriety during his eight years in the Senate from 1897 to 1905. He assisted President McKinley in the Spanish-American War of 1898 and served on the Committee on Immigration and the Committee on Public Buildings and Grounds. His influence in Congress and popularity as a reformer made him a natural Vice Presidential compliment to the more outspoken Republican President Theodore Roosevelt with whom he served from 1904 to 1908.

³⁵⁴ Adams, “Address of Vice-President Fairbanks,” *Dedication Ceremonies of the Morton Monument*, 29.

their souls in its sacred atmosphere.”³⁵⁵ In a patriotic closing of the afternoon’s events, Indiana’s Daughters of the American Revolution adorned the statue with a wreath and the WRC placed a folded American flag before the monument.

Even among veterans, Morton’s memory was used to promote a more unified, emancipationist perspective of the war. In the evening, the GAR paid a more private tribute to Morton’s memory at a ritualistic campfire barbeque and celebration, followed by speeches delivered in Tomlinson Hall, the local marketplace and the city’s largest public meeting house.³⁵⁶ Fairbanks once again took the stage before a crowd of Union veterans and their families and praised Morton’s tireless devotion to the Union cause, crediting him with helping to secure the passage of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments.³⁵⁷

Journalists echoed Fairbank’s message of Morton’s monument serving as a mecca to memory. Noting that the coming generations would rely on the “printed page” to understand the war, the *Connersville Evening Herald* reported, “Through the erection of a fitting monument, [Morton’s] memory has been cherished by every patriotic citizen who lived through those stirring years. But none can outdo the veterans of the civil war in paying homage to the memory of Morton. Today is Morton Day in Indianapolis.” Though

³⁵⁵ Ibid., 29.

³⁵⁶ Campfires were an important part of the GAR’s fraternal culture. Veterans gathered to drink, share war stories, and sing fondly remembered war songs. At larger celebratory gatherings, like the one accompanying the Morton monument, family members often attended as well, partaking in barbeques and picnics while observing their elders’ customs. See McConnell, *Glorious Contentment*, 175-180.

³⁵⁷ Adams, “Address of Vice-President Fairbanks,” *Dedication Ceremonies of the Morton Monument*, 32-34. “Fairbanks Speaks at Morton Campfire,” O. P. Morton Scrapbook, 1907, MSS SC3008, IHS, 22.

their ranks were already thinning, “enough have gathered to show that the Morton of ’61 to ’65 will never be forgotten.”³⁵⁸

The same could not be said for Morton’s postwar career. Hoosiers did not forget their Senator’s deeds, but by 1907, the monuments in Washington and Indiana demonstrated builders’ and speakers’ preference to evoke and immortalize Morton the War Governor in form and legacy. Ironically, Morton enjoyed far greater influence as a Senator, but his congressional leadership was comparatively less dramatic and harder to simplify than his wartime tenure. Valorizing Morton as Indiana’s singular governor aligned with the nation’s tendency to prioritize highly public executive figureheads (like Lincoln), instead of more influential legislators acting as part of a larger political body.³⁵⁹ The repercussions of Reconstruction still proved too complex for many Hoosiers to understand compared to the more dramatic and definitive Union-Confederate contest. In his final years and after his death, most associated Morton with the war as the constant patriot, “soldier’s friend,” and hard but devoted local leader. This included members of the Indiana GAR who prioritized Morton’s wartime actions in annual memorials. Combined with the passage of time, the organization’s influence in the Indiana Legislature strengthened this association and made consensus over Morton’s controversial wartime governorship far easier to achieve. Morton the “Great War Governor” was easier for veterans and politicians to defend and valorize as a

³⁵⁸ “Morton Day at Indianapolis,” *Connersville Evening Herald*, July 23, 1907, 1. The *Plymouth Tribune* celebrated the State House’s new adornment, adding with pride that Morton’s monument was the only one of its kind officially paid for and erected by a state. *Plymouth Tribune*, July 25, 1907, 5.

³⁵⁹ Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory*, 124, 126-131. Kammen does not specifically refer to this distinction, but he notes that Americans’ postwar monuments and myths tended to gravitate toward “remembering romantically instead of historically.” Executives and military leaders like Abraham Lincoln and Ulysses S. Grant lent themselves to the kind of flexible, simple myths suited to a nation struggling to reach a consensus about the Civil War in its collective memory. This same desire for consensus and influence, in part, motivated members of the GAR to use monuments to promote mythical, partisan memories of Morton’s governorship.

recognizable symbol of Indiana's strength. The GAR's memory of Morton made him more useful and more suited as a reminder of patriotic wartime service in a major city.

Schwarz's Morton monument reflects the politics of geography and spatial awareness in monument design. Schwarz's rendering of Morton faces east toward the taller Soldiers and Sailors Monument where Simmons' earlier version stands, visually strengthening observers' mental associations of Morton and veterans' service and sacrifices. Morton's memory is uniquely enshrined close to the seat of Hoosier government. Unlike the Thomas A. Hendricks monument placed on the southeast corner of the Capitol grounds in 1890, Morton and his honor guard occupy the center of a highly trafficked eastern stairway entrance. This ensures maximum visibility of the two by three foot bronze tablet honoring Morton and the GAR. The two bronze reliefs mounted in the stairwell balustrades bracketing the monument further encourage viewers to linger in the space in thoughtful observance and contemplation of the piece's intended messages. By allowing viewers to circle the monument while analyzing multiple images and accompanying text, Schwarz's design embraces viewers as active participants rather than passive observers.³⁶⁰ At once a beautifying piece of public art and an ornate monument, this 1907 monument is the culmination of Indiana politicians and the Indiana GAR's efforts to immortalize their most prized aspects of Morton's long career of patriotism and Indiana's glorious Civil War past.

³⁶⁰ Schwarz's multi-part design overcomes the issue of "directionless circulation," a problem many nineteenth-century sculptors grappled with when designing three-dimensional monuments for a public used to observing likenesses through static photographic angles. The bronze reliefs also further humanize Morton's wartime leadership and compassion by presenting the Governor engaged in easily recognizable activities. Kirk Savage, "The Obsolescence of Sculpture," *American Art* 24, no. 1 (Spring 2010): 9-14, accessed November 4, 2013, doi: 10.1086/652736.

The passage of time did much to elevate Morton's status. By the 1890s, the reverence of local Indiana GAR members, eager to find figureheads from their heroic past to cement their message of respect for the values of patriotism, nationalism, service to one's country in the midst of social reform, helped overrule criticisms of his service. Some Democrats did not easily forget or forgive Morton's continual reminders of Party extremists' wartime sympathy with Confederates, but many influential GAR members preferred and overwhelmingly promoted Republicans' favorable memories to construct an almost mythic legacy for Morton. Tensions between these two trains of partisan recollection manifested when veterans and politicians actively appropriated and co-opted Morton's legacy to represent two separate, distinct historical and social agendas. In memorials hosted by local Hoosier GAR members, Morton stood for Unionism and the veterans' unwillingness to forget Confederate guilt. In Washington, Morton stood for a new nationalism of economic expansion and social reform, rooted in reconciliation. In both cases, dedication speakers paid homage to Morton's postwar advocacy for African-American suffrage to both honor the Senator and to ground remembrance of the Civil War in the language of emancipation and the inherent moral righteousness of the restored Union.

Although the state united in honoring Morton's legacy, tensions between partisan memories of Morton and the Civil War persisted. A year before the state honored Morton, the Capital Building accepted a bust of noted wartime Copperhead and Democratic Senator Daniel W. Voorhees, tellingly positioning it to face South. Indiana and the GAR used Morton to emphasize a victorious memory of the Union, but Voorhees's bust attests that partisan differences between Republican and Democratic

memories of the war remained important to Hoosiers. These same partisan tensions were more evident in Washington but could not obscure Hoosiers desire to evoke Morton's Civil War career to glorify Indiana. Morton's 1907 statue represents the culmination of an influential portion of Hoosier veterans' reciprocal relationship with the War Governor and an almost exclusive emphasis on his wartime career. Immortalizing Morton in Indianapolis marked both a new generation's willingness to honor messages and wishes of aging veterans while also casting one of Indiana's most controversial figures as a means to promote national reconciliation. Morton's monuments have stood the test of time—and continue to inspire nuanced discussions and representations of his—and Indiana's—ultimate place in local and national memories of the Civil War and Reconstruction.

Conclusion

This thesis has analyzed Morton's postwar career and legacy according to his speeches, popular responses to his death, and his depiction in Hoosier monuments erected by veterans and politicians to explore what made him valuable to different audiences. Morton's controversial career and ardent defense of the Union encompassed the turbulence of both the Civil War and Reconstruction. His legacy was malleable enough for politicians and veterans to selectively adapt his memory to suit a variety of audiences, sites, and political messages. For Indiana Republicans and the renewed GAR of the 1880s and 1890s, Morton became a symbol of Union heroism, Hoosier pride, and northern triumph. In 1900, at the nation's capital, Republicans praised his wartime deeds, but emphasized his postwar advocacy for black suffrage to glorify memories of reconciliation, emancipation, and to promote the party's dedication to a renewed nation built on social reform. In Indianapolis, the GAR reinforced and solidified the image of Morton as the Hoosier state's singular war governor, visually emphasizing their memories of Morton as the soldier's friend. Dedication speakers acknowledged and championed Morton's wartime leadership, but also praised his postwar advocacy for African Americans. These messages were not universally consistent and, visually, these monuments prioritized memories of Morton's wartime strength.

In short, Morton's legacy, like his policies, was flexible. But the flexibility that allowed Republicans to use Morton's memory to promote the consensus needed for reconciliation also allowed Democrats to preserve their memories of Morton as a tyrannical wartime autocrat and antagonistic partisan. This duality was expressed as early as 1878 when his congressional colleagues struggled to honor him. Everyone commended Morton's executive abilities: his unflinching passion for the Union, his bold, clear oration,

his unmatched care for Indiana soldiers, and willingness to support and embrace emancipation. But Democrats and southern representatives also recalled Morton's willingness to exceed executive constitutional limits, his one-man rule of wartime Indiana, and his postwar antagonism of the South and public distrust of southern Redeemer Democrats in general. This made Morton a valuable commodity for both allies looking to glorify northerners' wartime triumphs and critical opponents seeking a more nuanced understanding of Morton's effective but controversial actions.

Morton's important role in Reconstruction made his name recognizable across the nation, but many monument builders and dedication day speakers emphasized and glorified his wartime career. By emphasizing his governorship, the politicians and veterans who evoked Morton's memory in Indiana ensured that he remained a distinctly northern symbol of Union pride and leadership. Memories of Morton's Reconstruction career—particularly his advocacy for African American rights—were important, but far more contentious, especially in the South. With the GAR's members dying and the scope of its influence waning, politicians gained control over how to interpret Morton's legacy. Immortalizing Morton outside of Indiana meant reinterpreting and downplaying this divisive aspect of his postwar advocacy in order to align with changing social standards. Perhaps emphasizing Morton's shorter, more clean-cut governorship during the Civil War allowed others to justify reinterpreting his far more influential, but more problematic, postwar advocacy for African American suffrage in other venues.

This is perhaps best demonstrated by Morton's commemoration in Vicksburg National Battlefield Park, Mississippi, in 1926. The site of a pivotal months-long siege punctuated with explosive, costly battles, Vicksburg culminated in a decisive Union

victory that broke Confederate control of the Mississippi River and signaled the beginning of the end of the war.³⁶¹ At the urging of both the Indiana GAR and the Military Order of the Loyal Legion, Indiana lawmakers appropriated \$15,000 for the monument.³⁶² Sculptor George T. Brewster cast a twelve foot likeness of Morton standing at attention atop a five foot granite pedestal. Visually, Morton's wartime image represented the sacrifices of Indiana servicemen and the familiar message of glorifying Union victory. Morton remained the soldier's friend, but speakers refrained from lauding him as the familiar symbol of Union superiority. At the monument's unveiling, Commission member Captain Francis M. Van Pelt recited a poetic address, celebrating all veterans' new willingness to finally cast off any lingering bitterness. In the twentieth century, all remaining veterans were now united under "One country, one Morton, one flag."³⁶³ Van Pelt and other poets celebrated Appomattox as the beginning of a reunion—one solidified by the United States' recent victory over German oppressors during World War I, where Americans fought only for freedom. "While some wore blue and others gray, Thank God, we are friends again."³⁶⁴ Reconciliation demanded that Hoosiers develop new memories of Morton—even if they conflicted with their War Governor's stated policies.

Others compromised Morton's well-known dedication to African American suffrage to further reconciliation. In 1907, Governor Hanly had derided the South's dedication to the evils of slavery and lauded Morton and the Union's righteous victory.

³⁶¹ Christopher Waldrep, *Vicksburg's Long Shadow: The Civil War Legacy of Race and Remembrance* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2005), iv-viii.

³⁶² Oran Perry, *Morton in Bronze: Indiana Circle, Vicksburg Battlefield: The Report of the Vicksburg State Memorial Commission* (Indianapolis: W.B. B. Buford, Contractor for State Printing and Binding, 1926), 32-33.

³⁶³ *Ibid.*, 42.

³⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 42-44.

Now, in a short, potent, speech, Indiana Governor and Klansman Ed Jackson recalled Morton's 1860 address to Hoosiers and a preference to "be defeated in arms and conceding independence to successful [southern] revolution than to purchase present peace" by compromising the ideals of the Union.³⁶⁵ As Fuller notes, Jackson's selection hardly reflected Morton's frequent, lifelong attacks on the South.³⁶⁶ Jackson ludicrously suggested that both North and South had fought for the Union cause. "This Union was preserved by heroes, both from the north and south, who fought on this battlefield. Each made a great sacrifice for what he believed to be right and by their joint sacrifices they cemented the Union forever."³⁶⁷ Speakers carefully avoided any mention of the contentious issue of slavery and emancipation in the name of reconciliation. More importantly, they overlooked Morton's well-documented and contextually warranted postwar distrust of the South and its Democratic supporters, actively altering their memories of Morton to construct a reconciliatory message.³⁶⁸

Geography reflected the more unified message of reconciliation. Vicksburg's important status as a turning point in the outcome of the war imbued it with great symbolic importance for both sides. Placing Morton here implied two things. It signified Union veterans' willingness to entrust future on-site interpretations of a very outspoken Union figure to Confederate veterans and park officials raised to believe in the Lost Cause. More importantly, the Vicksburg monument reflected Hoosiers' willingness to compromise and construct new memories of Morton both to fit the occasion and the southern venue and to reflect the dominant cause of national reconciliation.

³⁶⁵ Ibid., 44.

³⁶⁶ Fuller, "Oliver P. Morton and the Politics of Historical Memory," 351-352.

³⁶⁷ Ibid. 46.

³⁶⁸ Madison, "Civil War Memories and 'Partnership Forgittin'," 229-230.

This thesis has attempted to explore why Morton remained an important figure long after his death while also probing how friends, family members, veterans, politicians and even historians have interpreted his actions. Establishing what Morton did is important, but historians can learn just as much, or more, by asking how Morton's place in Hoosiers' memories of the war changed over time. Hoosiers' memories of Morton remained malleable enough to serve a variety of causes and venues. Politicians did not always remember Morton favorably and his continual attacks on the South and Hoosier Democrats fostered a controversial persona and lasting legacy as a single-minded radical. But his services to Indiana troops during the Civil War and Reconstruction made him a valuable symbol for Union veterans. The GAR ultimately succeeded in promoting Morton as a core component of its mission to shape Indiana memories of the Civil War, but even this well-established legacy was not immune to reinterpretation. Both sides constructed very different memories of Morton—and each used his image and evoked memories of his deeds to forward differing creeds and causes. The War Governor and Reconstruction Senator remains a valuable focal point for historians seeking to analyze Hoosiers' evolving memories of both the Civil War and Reconstruction.

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Curriculum Vitae
Timothy C. Rainesalo

Education

Indiana University – Purdue University Indianapolis

Master of Arts from Indiana University in Public History, February 2016

Ball State University, *Cum Laude*

Bachelor of Science in Public History, July 2012

Professional Experience

Public Programs and Education Assistant. Indiana Historical Society. August 2014 - May 2015.

Collections and Library Assistant. Indiana Historical Society. August 2013 - August 2014.

Collections Assistant. Indiana State Museum. September 2012 - May 2013.

Collections Assistant and Tour Guide. Auburn Cord Duesenberg Automobile Museum. May 2012 - August 2012.

Conferences, Seminars, and Speaking Engagements

Paper. “Dehumanizing the Enemy: British Anti-German Propaganda in World War 1.” Ball State University Undergraduate History Conference. Ball State University, Muncie, Indiana, January 16, 2012.

Publications and Public History Portfolio

“Alan T. Nolan Papers, 1854 - 2003.” Detailed collection guide for papers, photographs, and artifacts included in the Alan T. Nolan Collection for the Indiana Historical Society, Summer 2014. Available at < <http://www.indianahistory.org/our-collections/collection-guides/alan-t-nolan-papers.pdf>>

Co-authors, Jeremy Maxwell and Angela Potter, “We have a (M)app for that: IndyHistorical Evaluation Plan.” Formative evaluation plan for Indy Historical digital tour app, Indiana University - Purdue University Indianapolis, Spring 2014. Available at < <https://indyhistorical.wordpress.com/>>

“Pioneering Engineering at the Indianapolis 500.” Afterschool teaching plan and workshop for the Indianapolis Motor Speedway Museum, Fall 2013.

“Claiming Cultural Control: Nazis & Libraries in World War 2.” Timeline and contextual essays exploring scope and lasting effects of German destruction of libraries. Summer 2013. Available at < <http://wartimelibraries.weebly.com/index.html>>

“Speedway: Racing into History on a Walking Tour of the Indianapolis Motor Speedway and Surrounding Town,” Spring 2013. Available at < <https://speedwayhistorytour.wordpress.com/>>

Other Notable Accomplishments

2015: Judge for Indiana National History Day, State Contest, April 25.

2015: Judge for Indiana National History Day, Central District, March 7.

2015: Judge for Indiana National History Day, North Region, February 28.

2013: Judge for Indiana National History Day, Central District, March 9.

2012: Co-authored successfully funded grant for historic window and door preservation workshop for Noblesville Preservation Alliance.

2012: Wrote revised marker text for Indiana Historical Bureau “Michael C. Kerr” Historic Marker, New Albany, Indiana. Replacement date for current marker text TBD.