

The Power of Place

Urban Landscapes as Public History

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3 Place Memory and Urban Preservation

What is contained in place is on its way to being well remembered.

Edward Casey, *Remembering*

A look at the fields of public history, architectural preservation, environmental activism, and public art suggests that in the 1990s there is a growing desire to engage urban landscape history as a unifying framework for urban preservation. Many practitioners in these fields are dissatisfied with the old narrative of city building as "conquest." There is broad interest in ethnic history and women's history as part of interpretive projects of all kinds, and a growing sympathy for cultural landscapes in preference to isolated monuments. There is a concern for public processes. But there is not often a sense of how, in practice, the public presentation of historic urban landscapes might become more than the sum of the parts.

Different kinds of organizations may find it difficult to work together on large urban themes. Often, groups simply ignore the other areas of activity. In the worst case, they criticize each other's points of view: social historians are baited as overconcerned with class, race, and gender; architectural preservationists are attacked as being in the grip of real estate developers promoting gentrification; environmentalists are lampooned as idealists defending untouched nature and unimportant species while human needs go unattended; commemorative public art is debated as ugly or irrelevant to social needs. There needs to be, and there can be, a more coherent way of conceptualizing and planning the work each group is able to contribute to the presence of the past in the city. Cultural landscape history can strengthen the links between previously disparate areas of practice that draw on public memory. And conscious effort to draw out public memory suggests new processes for developing projects.

"The relationship between history and memory is peculiarly and perhaps uniquely fractured in contemporary American life," writes public historian Michael Frisch. His colleagues, Jack Tchen and Michael Wallace, observe "historical amnesia" and "historicidal" culture. Urbanist M. Christine Boyer writes of architectural history manipulated for commercial purposes. Geographer David Lowenthal wryly calls the past a "foreign country." Citizens surveyed about history will often speak disparagingly of memorized dates, great men, "boring

stuff from school" disconnected from their own lives, families, neighborhoods, and work. And certainly there are many people for whom the past is something they want to escape. Yet every year tens of millions of Americans travel to visit historic sites and museums (including some of doubtful quality), as well as historically oriented theme parks and "theme towns."¹ If Americans were to find their own social history preserved in the public landscapes of their own neighborhoods and cities, then connection to the past might be very different.

Place Memory

"We all come to know each other by asking for accounts, by giving accounts, and by believing or disbelieving stories about each other's pasts and identities," writes Paul Connerton in *How Societies Remember*.² Social memory relies on storytelling, but what specialists call place memory can be used to help trigger social memory through the urban landscape. "Place memory" is philosopher Edward S. Casey's formulation: "It is the stabilizing persistence of place as a container of experiences that contributes so powerfully to its intrinsic memorability. An alert and alive memory connects spontaneously with place, finding in it features that favor and parallel its own activities. We might even say that memory is naturally place-oriented or at least place-supported."³ Place memory encapsulates the human ability to connect with both the built and natural environments that are entwined in the cultural landscape. It is the key to the power of historic places to help citizens define their public pasts: places trigger memories for insiders, who have shared a common past, and at the same time places often can represent shared pasts to outsiders who might be interested in knowing about them in the present.

Place memory is so strong that many different cultures have used "memory palaces"—sequences of imaginary spaces within an imaginary landscape or building or series of buildings—as mnemonic devices.⁴ Many cultures have also

attempted to embed public memory in narrative elements of buildings, from imperial monuments in Augustan Rome to doctrinal sculptural programs for Gothic cathedrals. The importance of ordinary buildings for public memory has largely been ignored, although, like monumental architecture, common urban places like union halls, schools, and residences have the power to evoke visual, social memory.

A strategy to foster urban public history should certainly exploit place memory as well as social memory. (For example, place memory might include personal memory of one's arrival in the city and emotional attachments there, cognitive memory of its street names and street layout, and body memory of routine journeys to home and work.) According to Connerton, cognitive memory is understood to be "encoded" according to semantic, verbal, and visual codes, and seems especially place-oriented because images are "much better retained than abstract items because such concrete items undergo a double encoding in terms of visual coding as well as verbal expression."⁵

Because the urban landscape stimulates visual memory, it is an important but underutilized resource for public history. While many museum curators concerned with artifacts have long understood the strength of visual memory, social historians often have not had much visual training and are not always well equipped to evaluate environmental memory's component of visual evidence.⁶ For example, one well-known social historian on the Baltimore Neighborhood Heritage Project, Linda Shopes, complained in an account of her experiences that oral history interviewers were always hearing about places, eliciting "descriptions of the area in years gone by." She was looking for abstractions such as "the workings of local institutions or the local political machine, the conditions and social relations of work, immigration and the process of assimilation or non-assimilation into American life."⁷ Yet stories about places could convey all these themes, and memories of places would probably trigger more stories. More sense of the possibilities of place memory is conveyed by historian Paul Buhle in his recent plea that labor historians

turn their attention to photographic collections, as a way to document vanishing working-class neighborhoods developed in the era of industrial capitalism. This could be the beginning of documenting a three-dimensional urban landscape history with a strong social component.⁸

Body memory is also difficult to convey as part of books or exhibits. It connects into places because the shared experience of dwellings, public spaces, and workplaces, and the paths traveled between home and work, give body memory its social component, modified by the postures of gender, race, and class. The experience of physical labor is also part of body memory. In a dusty vineyard, a crowded sweatshop, or an oil field, people acquire the characteristic postures of certain occupations—picking grapes, sewing dresses, pumping gas. In the sphere of domestic work, one thinks of suckling a baby, sweeping, or kneading bread.⁹ Thus, Casey argues that body memory “moves us directly into place, whose very immobility contributes to its distinct potency in matters of memory.” He suggests that “what is remembered is well grounded if it is remembered as being in a particular place—a place that may well take precedence over the time of its occurrence.”¹⁰

Urban Public History

The field of public history embraces many different kinds of efforts to bring history to the public, from blockbuster museum exhibitions to documentary films to community-based projects. Within the field there are many different views of its content and audience, but for urban landscape history, community-based public history is a natural ally. The great strength of this approach to public history is its desire for a “shared authority” (Michael Frisch’s phrase) or a “dialogic” history (Jack Tchen’s term) that gives power to communities to define their own collective pasts.¹¹ This approach is based on the understanding that the history of workers, women, ethnic groups, and the poor requires broad source materials, including oral histories, because often people, rather than

professors, are the best authorities on their own pasts.¹² In the search for new materials, including oral histories, many professionally trained historians have seen how communities gained from defining their own economic and social histories. Hundreds of projects now pursue this approach across the United States. Some also have an interest in community empowerment, and connect work in public history to other kinds of community organizing.

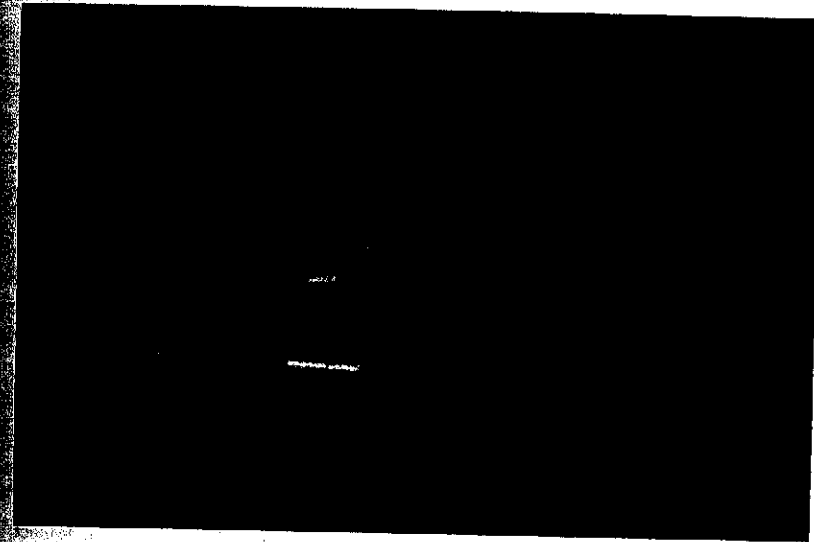
A city-scale, community oral history, the Brass Workers History Project, begun in 1979, involved labor historian Jeremy Brecher in Waterbury, Connecticut. The team also included a video producer, a community organizer, and a union education director. In 1982 they published an illustrated history, *Brass Valley: The Story of Working People’s Lives and Struggles in an American Industrial Region*.¹³ The book, according to Brecher, was “taken as a kind of collective family album in a community where almost everyone has a relative who worked in the brass industry. Many, many people told me that they found in it pictures of relatives. One family told me that they spent Christmas together going through it.”¹⁴ In 1983 the project released a feature-length color videotape for public television, a portrayal of the history of workers in the brass factories of the city, formerly the brass manufacturing capital of the United States.¹⁵

Brass Valley led to a larger community process, including an ethnic music festival that is now a regular event sponsored by the museum, bringing together dozens of choirs, singing groups, and bands whose music reveals the city’s diverse ethnic heritage. Among the participants have been the oldest fife and drum band in the United States, dressed in Revolutionary War style, Irish American women who sing traditional Irish lullabies, and a robed Baptist choir famous for gospel hymns.¹⁶ Local teachers were able to use the rich resources for efforts to incorporate Waterbury’s ethnic history and musical culture into the school curriculum. All of this occurred at a time when the brass industry had collapsed and plants were closing, so workers’ groups in the Naugatuck Valley also found the history project provided a long-term

perspective on their efforts to organize to meet the problems of dying industries in their area.¹⁷

Another example, at the scale of an urban neighborhood, is the New York Chinatown History Project (now Museum), begun in 1980 by John Kuo Wei Tchen and Charles Lai. As one of their newsletters explained: "We seek to learn about the back-breaking toil of Chinese seamen who shoveled coal into the giant furnaces of ocean steamers; the songs composed by lonely wives living in Toishan and bemoaning their sojourning husbands; the ghost stories about the tormented spirits of dead laundrymen; the thriving street life on lower Mott, Pell, and Doyers Streets; and the high-pressured piece-work of garment factory employees."¹⁸ Tchen's analysis of New York's Chinatown before World War II takes a different tone from that of the project about working-class life in Waterbury because of the bitterness of the history of anti-Chinese racism and the territorial form it took: "New York Chinatown, now the largest in the Western Hemisphere, was not the result of some nationalistic clannishness as the prevailing common sense in the United States presumes. Located in New York's Lower East Side, Chinatown was built in a spatial 'crack' between the Irish Five Points, Little Italy, and 'Jew Town.'" Togetherness for Chinese Americans was balanced by a sense of spatial exclusion: "Residents of New York Chinatown could not cross Canal Street into Little Italy without the risk of being beaten up; laundry men in the scattered boroughs and suburbs illegally lived in the back of their shops because they could not rent apartments. Even PhD's couldn't get jobs besides washing and waiting."¹⁹

The Chinatown History Project made "The Eight Pound Livelihood" the subject of their first major project—an oral history of the laundrymen and women, an exhibit, and a PBS video program (figures 3.1, 3.2). "We blindly went out to interview active and retired laundry workers.... We experienced much resistance. One laundryman screamed back at us bitterly that 'Laundries have no history! Laundries have no history!'" Eventually, Tchen found "Perhaps the single most satisfying response was from a regular of the senior center who came up



3.1 The New York Chinatown History Project picked the Chinese laundry and its "eight-pound livelihood" as the subject for their first history project. This is Chin Che Yung from Hong Kong, working at a shirtpress, in Queens, New York. (Photograph by Paul Calhoun.)

3.2 Lunch break at the shirtpress. (Photograph by Paul Calhoun.)



to us and proudly declared, while pointing to the exhibit title, that *she* lived the eight pound livelihood. We felt she had claimed it as her own."²⁰ After more than ten years, the project has remained a national leader in discussion of questions of ethnicity, representation of ethnic groups, and community dialogue around issues of conservation and interpretation of urban cultural heritage. Its recent programs have included comparisons of Chinese and Italian immigrant students' memories of P.S. 23, as well as Chinese and Eastern European immigrants' memories and cognitive maps of Mott Street. "Creating a Dialogic Museum," a recent article by Tchen, stresses the complexity of working with diverse audiences and keeping the conversation open to recording both individual identity and common memories.²¹

The Brass Workers' History Project and the New York Chinatown History Project are just two examples of how communities can reclaim history and recover memory. Each project transcended the response from some of its potential interviewees and audience members that they would prefer to remember the good and forget the bad, to deny their own and their parents' and grandparents' struggles against poverty and discrimination. Both used oral history as well as more traditional research methods. Both looked for the best medium to reach popular audiences: small publishing projects, feature-length films, exhibits in senior centers as well as major exhibition spaces, scholarly books, community newsletters. Both reached their intended urban audiences.

If there were ways to extend the social portraits of the communities they created into urban public space, it might be possible to make these successful projects even more public and more permanent.²² Beyond running walking tours, how could they have mapped their new views of these places? Could architectural preservation, or landscape preservation, or possibly public art help to focus the attention of citizens on the social identity of these communities? In seeking ways to establish their presence in public space, it would be essential to retain their central commitment to making projects accountable to the residents. Preserving workers' places such

as a union hall, a brass factory, or a laundry could help to underline the importance of spatial history. And shared processes would be a significant methodological advance public historians could offer to many practitioners in related fields, including architectural preservation and environmental protection.

Architectural Preservation

Architectural preservation is usually less concerned with accountability and more expensive than community-based public history, but it does assert its visual presence in the spaces of the city. Since the mid-nineteenth century in the United States, most preservation groups have directed their efforts toward saving historic buildings as a unifying focus for national pride and patriotism in a nation of immigrants, or as examples of stylistic excellence in architecture. Preservation at the national level (the National Park Service) and state level thus tends to the creation of museums, and as historian John Bodnar has argued, these often come complete with patriotic exhortations about the glories of the national past.²³ Preservation at the local level, in most cities and towns, tends to the adaptive reuse of historic structures by local real estate developers, with little public access or interpretation, and often involves gentrification and displacement for low-income residents. There are some notable efforts to integrate the preservation of vernacular buildings with local economic development, as in the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Main Street Program, or to preserve working people's neighborhoods without gentrification, as in the Mt. Auburn neighborhood of Cincinnati, but it is difficult work.

The state of preservation today is uneven, and, like public history, many groups struggle without adequate funds. Almost two decades after the Gans-Huxtable debate, New York does recognize more of its social history, with a National Park Service Museum of Immigration at Ellis Island and a Lower East Side Tenement Museum at 97 Orchard Street. But the old focus on great buildings dies hard. As Antoinette J.

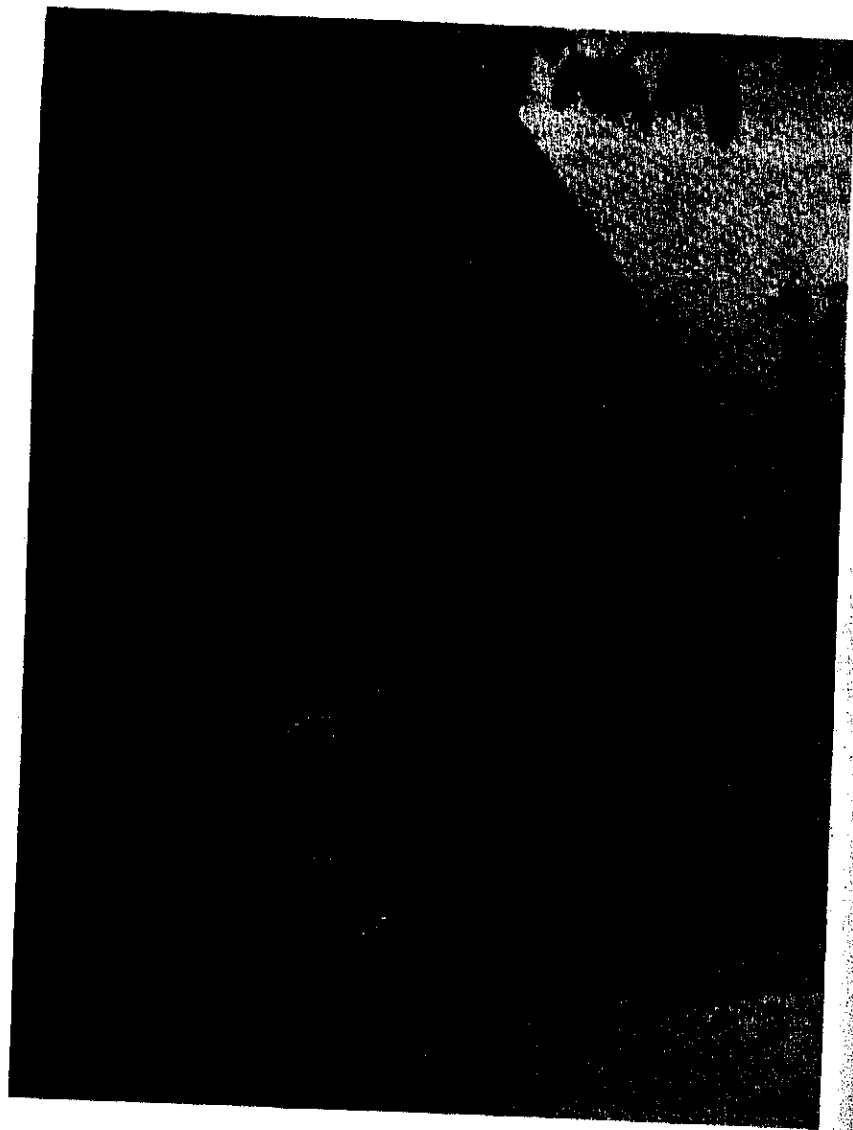
Lee, historian with the National Park Service, has observed, "disagreement between preservation agencies that prize historical and structural integrity on the one hand and historians interested in vernacular and ethnic history on the other, will likely continue for years to come."²⁴ Only about five percent of national, state, and local landmark designations reflect women's history, and an even tinier proportion deal with so-called "minority" history.²⁵ How to preserve is as much debated as what to preserve. Women and people of color need to be making policy. And most social history landmarks cannot be turned into commercial real estate to pay for their physical preservation, nor can they all function as income-producing museums. Yet two projects at the national level suggest how important the sense of place can be in supporting African American or women's history with tangible public forms. These projects show how museums of national importance can extend the resources of an urban neighborhood, although they do not seem to have as much local process behind them as the previous examples.

The National Park Service runs a Black Heritage Trail at the Boston African American National Historic Site on Beacon Hill (figures 3.3, 3.4). There, a ranger in a brown, broad-brimmed hat walks the cobblestoned streets of Beacon Hill, followed by members of a tour group. At the Boston Common he or she will discuss the enlistment of free blacks in the Civil War and trace the contours of their faces on the Robert Gould Shaw and 54th Regiment Memorial by sculptor August Saint-Gaudens, erected in 1897. The ranger then leads the tour group behind the Massachusetts State House and down the alleys to the back of Beacon Hill, a red-brick row house neighborhood that was the site of a thriving community of free blacks in the nineteenth century. Thirteen structures, including two schools, two meeting houses, and several residences, are part of the Black Heritage Trail, a concept originated by historian Sue Bailey Thurman and developed by Byron Rushing and the staff of the Museum of Afro-American History.²⁶

Visitors see these structures in the context of the elegant, expensive neighborhoods nearby, such as Louisbourg Square. They learn that in the first federal census of 1790, Massachusetts was the only state that had no slaves. And they can hear about the free black community on Beacon Hill campaigning for housing, education, and an end to slavery. They can also see a house that served as a station on the Underground Railroad, where runaway slaves were sheltered. Visitors come away with a sense of the active presence of African Americans in the city for over two centuries, although more material showing that the free black community included women who made important contributions would be welcome. Visitors also get a sense of urban history, although it could be more resonant if it addressed how black residents interacted with Irish and other European immigrants who were crowded into

3.3 Map of the Black Heritage Trail, Beacon Hill, Boston African American National Historic Site. (National Park Service.) 1, African Meeting House; 2-6, Smith Court Residences; 7, Abiel Smith School; 8, George Middleton House; 9, Robert Gould Shaw and 54th Regiment Memorial; 10, Phillips School; 11, John J. Smith House; 12, Charles Street Meeting House; 13, Lewis Hayden House; 14, Coburn's Gaming House.





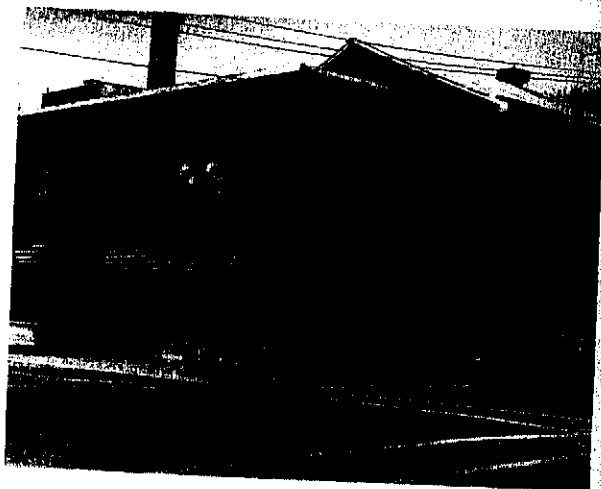
3.4 The African Meeting House, Boston, late nineteenth century. (Courtesy of The Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities.)

tenements at the edges of this area at the end of the nineteenth century. A nationally important struggle for civil rights took place here, yet local participation in the planning and running of the project might widen its potential audience.²⁷

The National Park Service is also developing a Women's Rights National Historical Park at Seneca Falls, New York, the site of the first women's rights convention, held July 19–20, 1848, in the Wesleyan Chapel on Fall Street. Here Elizabeth Cady Stanton drafted a "Declaration of Sentiments," modeled on the Declaration of Independence, to demand the vote for women. Both Stanton and Amelia Bloomer, who was editor of *The Lily*, the first American paper devoted to women's rights and owned, edited, and published by a woman, were residents of Seneca Falls and organized women's activities there. Susan B. Anthony was Stanton's frequent visitor and coorganizer.

By 1987, the Wesleyan Chapel had been pretty well battered out of existence, remodeled into a two-story brick and stucco building that had housed various uses including a laundromat. All that remained from the original building of the 1848 era were four wood roof trusses, some roof rafters and purlins, and about forty linear feet of the east and west brick walls.²⁸ The Park Service held an architectural competition, won by two young women architects, Ann Wills Marshall and Ray Kinoshita, and their design for the preservation of the remains of the chapel is elegant and spare (figures 3.5, 3.6). Unlike many other National Park Service projects, where an expensive restoration freezes a building in time and makes it lifeless, this project will leave the remaining elements visible to visitors, with plenty of room for their own imaginations. Because it is physically integrated with the urban fabric of Seneca Falls, it can engage the life of the town in a way that many larger, more expensive projects do not.

Like the Boston Black Heritage Trail, the Seneca Falls project will emphasize the national history of civil rights leadership over the local history of ordinary people's everyday lives in the nineteenth century, but this doesn't preclude a commit-



3.5 The Women's Rights National Historic Park, Seneca Falls, New York: the remains of the Wesleyan Chapel, showing the front of the structure remodeled as a laundromat. (National Park Service.)



3.6 Ann Wills Marshall and Ray Kinoshita, architects, model of the winning entry in the competition for the Women's Rights National Historic Park. The remains of the original Wesleyan Chapel are preserved in the design of the pavilion at lower right, adjacent to new open space. (National Park Service.)

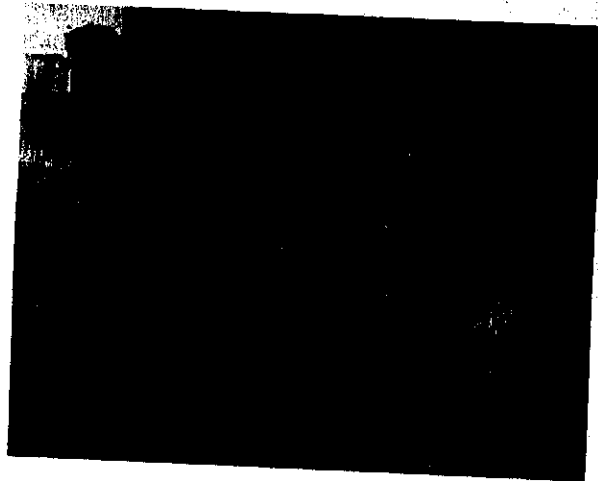
ment to local process. Like the Boston site, Seneca Falls can also encompass broad social issues, such as how limited economic possibilities for women sparked demands for change. In Seneca Falls as well as Beacon Hill, there is an opportunity to show conflict over power as an essential part of history, far more engaging to the public than cheery optimism about progress. Feminism is still controversial. When the site was made a New York State Urban Cultural Park, as well as a National Park Service site, local cynicism was exemplified by the male businessman in Seneca Falls who commented to a reporter that the local merchants "don't give a hoot" about feminism but "they see the money opportunity. I mean, if you've got Old Faithful in your town, you are in favor of geysers."²⁹

As the Seneca Falls example shows, a public past tied to mundane, battered, and constantly reused buildings can call on visitors' historical imaginations and be invested with new architectural integrity. But it takes a great deal of research, community involvement, and inventive signing and mapping—as well as restoration—to bring these social meanings forward. When less funding is available, it is still possible to offer significant reinterpretation of existing architectural landmarks' social history or environmental context. A city or town with an extensive array of existing landmarks, selected for their architectural quality, is thus in a fortunate position to reconsider what stories will be told about those buildings.³⁰ For example, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, owner of many wonderful mansions, could expand its social interpretations. Jay Gould's mansion, Lyndhurst, employed eleven full-time gardeners who maintained the 375-foot-long Victorian greenhouse (figure 3.7), and preservationist Frank Sanchis has suggested designing a tour around their diverse backgrounds and skills, as well as paying closer attention to construction workers and household staff as subjects of other tours.³¹ Even when some aspects of social history are already interpreted, as is the history of the work force involved in industrial development at Lowell, Massachusetts, it may be possible to frame the interpretation more broadly. Women workers need to be more visible there (figure 3.8), as they formed the great majority of the work force. At the moment,



3.7 Reinterpreting the social history of a mansion can mean looking at the lives and work of carpenters, maids, or the grounds workers. Gardeners at Lyndhurst, Tarrytown, New York, photographed ca. 1875-1885. (Lyndhurst Archives, National Trust for Historic Preservation.)

3.8 Reinterpreting a preserved industrial site can mean sharpening the focus on different groups of workers. Women weaving room employees at Appleton Mills, Lowell, Massachusetts, and their supervisors, 1913. (Lowell Historical Society.)



although there is a women's history tour of Lowell given occasionally, and an excellent exhibit in a boardinghouse, a much heavier emphasis is placed on technology. In the same vein, Heather Huyck of the National Park Service has urged her colleagues concerned with the history of the West to go beyond what she calls the "John Wayne view" of the sites they interpret.³² At Fort Bowie, she pointed to laundresses, soldiers' wives, and soldiers' children who can be represented as part of the life of the community. At Lyndon B. Johnson's boyhood home, she argued that it is important to interpret the room where his mother taught elocution.

Beyond the national level, states are engaged with social history. The efforts of New York State to provide Urban Cultural Parks and similar efforts in Massachusetts, especially at Lowell, provide some suggestions about how to focus on the efforts of working people. California has provided a path-breaking survey of hundreds of ethnic history sites relevant to its diverse population.³³ These include the Chinese American agricultural workers' town of Locke, Los Angeles's Little Tokyo, and the African American town built by settlers at Allensworth. Although this survey started in 1980, other than Little Tokyo very few of the urban landmarks proposed had been found suitable for architectural preservation by 1993.

This underscores the importance of finding new, community-based ways of working with the physical traces of the past beyond its preservation as museums or adaptive use as real estate. As more states begin to publish resource lists of ethnic architecture or undertake ethnic history context statements,³⁴ as the United States begins to survey women's history and ethnic history on a national scale, and as the National Trust launches a major campaign to promote "cultural and ethnic diversity in preservation," the need to find processes for simultaneously engaging social and architectural history is pressing. Some public history programs offer models of how to share authority with local residents in deciding what places are most significant, and why. Both social history and architectural preservation have the potential of contributing to neighborhood economic development in the city. It is partic-

ularly important as inner cities fall on hard times financially. Surviving urban neighborhoods—such as the Sweet Auburn district of Atlanta, Georgia—can become a greater focus of urban working people's self-respect, if citizens and planners come together to heighten the awareness of past accomplishments of their residents in the face of past hard times. Vernacular buildings—such as a church that launched a civil rights campaign, or the offices of a newspaper that called for fair housing, or the first integrated school in an area—may lie together in a potential historic district to support social memory and embrace the stories that citizens think need to be told. This is one route to forming strategies of urban preservation that ally social historians, and their strategies of dialogic history, with architectural historians concerned with public meaning.

Environmental Protection and Landscape Preservation

Most American cities and towns host a variety of environmental organizations whose mission is to defend natural landscapes against destruction through carelessness, neglect, toxic substances, or development. There are dozens of different types of environmental groups, some with participatory processes that permit local groups to assess their own sense of what the most important places are to defend, and others that set national agendas (to campaign for the preservation of wetlands as habitations for wildlife, for example). In addition, most cities and states, as well as the federal government, have agencies concerned with regulating treatment of the environment.

While there is much political and scientific activity concerned with protection of the natural environment, there is also a broad cultural and historical debate taking place about the extent to which "nature" and "culture" are intertwined. Urban landscape history shows that simply trying to protect untouched parts of nature has a very limited possibility of success against the constant production of urbanized space. Understanding this interplay suggests that making common

cause with other groups concerned with the presence of the past may be a very useful strategy for environmentalists.

Working together with architectural preservationists, landscape architecture historians and landscape architects are increasingly concerned about methods for defining and protecting historic cultural landscapes, although these concerns often seem to focus more on designed landscapes and rural areas than urban landscapes.³⁵ More promising is the work of some large environmental organizations in protecting rural landscapes with their human activities of gaining a livelihood intact.³⁶ Most promising of all is work being undertaken in urban regions to protect a variety of natural landscapes interwoven with urban development. At the same time some landscape architects are active in the heart of the city, developing community gardens and educational projects to reach the poorest residents in the most devastated urban areas.³⁷ Cultural landscape history could become a part of all such ventures to connect efforts to nurture green spaces with a broader understanding of the urban past.

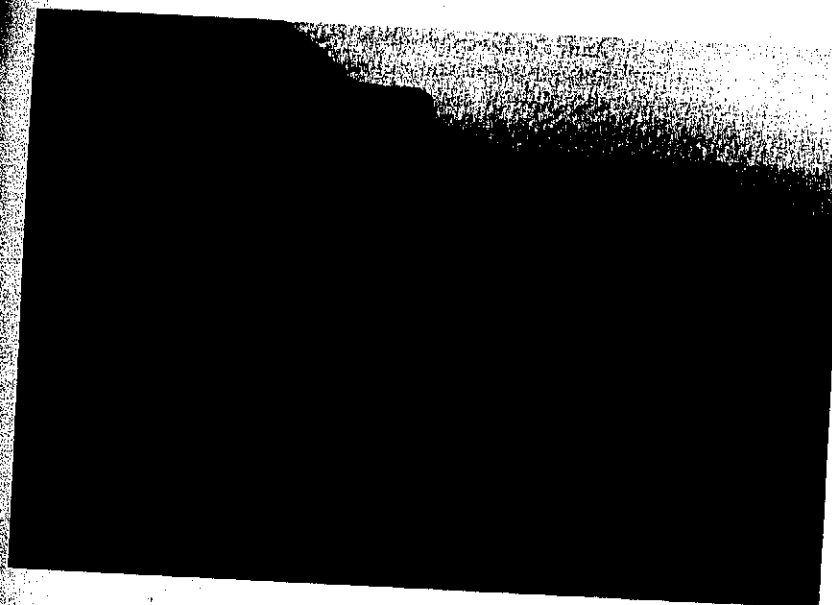
This has been tried with success in England by Common Ground, one of the most popular British environmental organizations, whose founders feel landscape history should form a more prominent part of environmental efforts. They state, "We should be talking more about the conservation of our common cultural heritage and less about science, for example the current emphasis on the preservation of specific rare plants and animals and special 'protected' places."³⁸ Founded in London in 1983 by environmentalist Angela King and geographer/planner Sue Clifford, Common Ground has entwined the discovery and defense of the natural environment with discussions of places. Its objectives are to "excite people into remembering the richness of the commonplace and the value of the everyday, to savor the symbolisms with which we have endowed nature, to revalue our emotional engagement with places and all they mean to us, and to go on to become actively involved with their care." They elaborate the reasons for a broad organization: "We have chosen to focus attention not singularly upon natural history or architecture or art or



3.9 Common Ground, Parish Maps project, detail of Simon Lewty's map of Old Milverton, England, 1987. (Common Ground.)

social history or legend or literature but upon their complex combining which is the reality of people's relationship with their places, and which begins in our hearts but gets mediated by our reason."³⁹

The approach of the organization is both to encourage broad, place-based community participation and at the same time to work with recognized artists and writers seeking a fresh look at historic landscapes. One of the first publications was a handbook by the founders, *Holding Your Ground: An Action Guide to Local Conservation*. Accompanying this was the parish (i.e., town) maps project, which involved hundreds of local communities in mapping their towns and defining important features (figure 3.9). Women's groups, school groups, city councils, or conservation groups might sponsor the activity, which could take many forms, from jigsaw puzzles, posters, and quilted wall hangings to a procession "beating



3.10 Common Ground, The New Milestones project, John Maine, sculptor, Chiswell Earthworks, Chiswell, England, 1986-1993. (Common Ground.)

the bounds" (walking the town boundaries) of Buckland Newton for the first time in the residents' living memory. As one participant from North Yorkshire commented, "The making of the map has been valuable as a shared activity, stimulating conversations, reminiscences and skills. Although the outline design was given, it is not static but constantly changes as people add their contributions, their ideas, and their experience."⁴⁰ At the same time, artists made town maps that were exhibited in galleries and museums. Television productions combined the popular public work with the artists' efforts. Both local community groups and artists were participants in these activities, and appreciative audiences for each other's efforts.

Common Ground carried their aesthetic of places into commissioning outdoor sculpture projects such as "Trees, Woods, and the Green Man" and "The New Milestones." Artists like

Andy Goldsworthy, whose *Hand to Earth* conveys a remarkable gift for building a human message in ice, leaves, stems, branches, or stones, rose to individual fame for his work with found materials in natural settings, but other projects involved intense public collaborations.⁴¹ In the town of Chiswell, Common Ground brought sculptor John Maine to work with local residents to create *Chiswell Earthworks*. Sue Clifford describes it as "five terraces to stop the land sliding, held back by dry stone walls, each one built with stone from a different level of the Portland beds, each worked in discrete masonry techniques appropriate to the stone." The objectives were multiple: "At one stroke this would make visible the geology, the long masonry and stone walling traditions and allude to the farming and quarrying history and the dominance of the sea." The project also reintroduced the indigenous grasses of the area. It included about a dozen collaborating organizations, from corporations to youth training schemes to environmentalists (figure 3.10).⁴²

Common Ground's 1990 alphabet of "Local Distinctiveness" encouraged poetic possibilities: "Tottergrass, twitchel, tor, tarn, tithebarn, tower, Tamworths, thatched walls, towpath, terrace, tump, Tan Hill Fair, red telephone box."⁴³ Could local distinctiveness also extend to tower block, temple, terraced house, elevated train tracks? The inner city challenges them to try their environmental tactics in tougher, more difficult settings like declining industrial cities (like Waterbury), or inner city enclaves (like Chinatown) and several New Milestones projects are under way in Glasgow. The landscape, as storehouse of culture and history rather than as a scientific problem, seems to be able to rally both individual and social memory in ways that move British citizens to claim places and increase their care for them. But the underlying ideas seem to apply to the United States as well, especially the potential for involving artists. American campaigns for local, community-based history share these British environmentalists' views of the importance of dialogue. Architectural preservationists share their interest in aesthetics and the arts. As Common Ground's "Mayday! Mayday!" poster concludes, "Never forget YOU are an expert in your place."⁴⁴

Public historians may conduct interviews, construct territorial histories, chart workers' landscapes, research political histories of housing types or neighborhoods, and document vernacular arts traditions. Many artists, especially those interested in working with urban communities in public places, are attempting similar kinds of tasks, reaching out to history and geography to study the meanings of historic urban landscapes as a way of making more resonant public work.

This couldn't be more different from the conjunction of public history and public art achieved in the nineteenth-century statues that adorn American parks. "It buttered no parsnips that it was raining/ on some statues of older men" runs the opening of John Ashberry's poem "A Call for Papers," summoning our distaste for things stuffy and irrelevant.⁴⁵ "Statuomania" preoccupied the capitals of imperial power—London and Washington—at the end of the nineteenth century, as parks and other public places filled up with statues of political leaders and military figures on horseback. It also spread to many small towns, and in every case a political consensus was assumed to support the presence of these statues in public places, although they rarely represented a full range of citizens and often had clichés about white men's conquests as their implicit or explicit narratives, the legacy that artist Judith Baca terms "the cannon in the park."⁴⁶ It usually excluded heroic representations of women or members of diverse groups. (As one disgruntled female official remarked in New York after a survey of the civic statuary in Central Park, the only representative of her sex to be found was Mother Goose!)

Today there are many new ways to be an artist: sculptors and painters, muralists and printmakers are joined by environmental artists, performance artists, book artists, and new media artists. For all of them, the key to acquiring an audience is making meaning for people in resonant and original ways. Along with new media come new definitions of public. The older definition of public art is art that is accessible to the

public because it is permanently sited in public places. (It is not in galleries or museums or private offices or private homes, but in the streets, the parks, the public realm.) But many artists would agree that a better definition is art that has public content. James Clark says, "Public art is artwork that depends on its context; it is an amalgamation of events—the physical appearance of a site, its history, the socio-economic dimensions of the community, and the artist's intervention."⁴⁷ Or as Lucy Lippard, critic and author of the notable book on multicultural art, *Mixed Blessings*, puts it, "Public art is accessible art of any kind that cares about/challenges/involves and consults the audience for or with whom it is made, respecting community and environment; the other stuff is still private art, no matter how big or exposed or intrusive or hyped it may be."⁴⁸

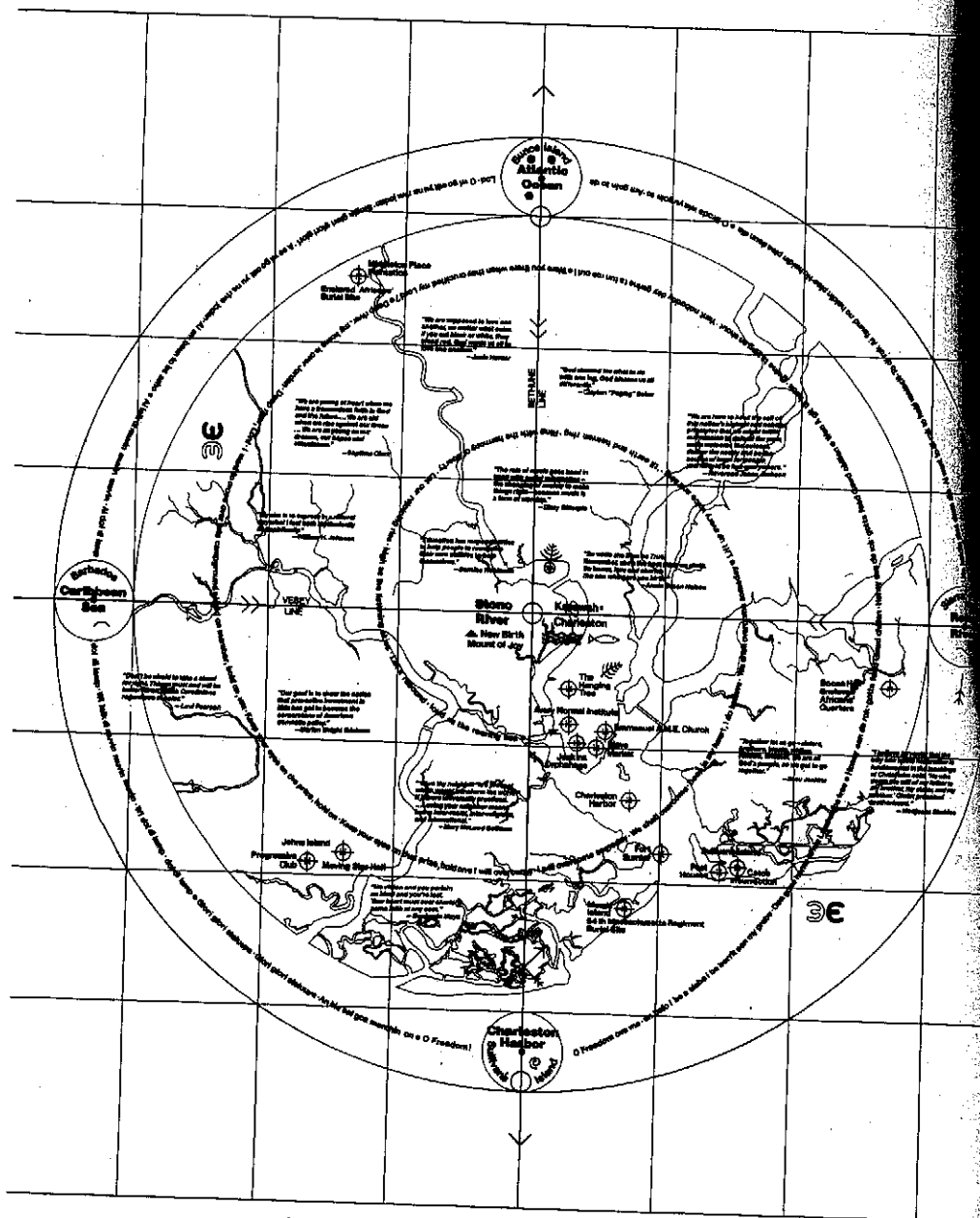
While these debates continue, two decades of provocative work on urban sites has been done across the country, and artist Suzanne Lacy suggests there is now a convergence of many different artists on a common direction, dealing with identity through connecting art to the history of places, and moving away from a feeling of marginalization toward a sense of centrality in the city.⁴⁹ Encouraged by public art planners and curators like Richard Andrews in Seattle, Ronald Fleming and Renata Von Tschanner in Cambridge, Pamela Worden of Urban Arts in Boston, or Mary Jane Jacob in Charleston, artists are undertaking projects that involve complex processes of community engagement, as well as works that claim public places in new ways.⁵⁰ Worden has organized the public art on the Orange Line, nine stations leading through the Roxbury and Jamaica Plain areas into downtown Boston. In addition to permanent artworks in the stations, she commissioned works of prose and poetry to be sited in public and organized local history, and photography workshops. Jacob, an independent curator in Chicago, has grouped artists with an interest in history in a series of temporary installations for Charleston, *Places with a Past*.⁵¹

To take just three examples from the hundreds of artists' projects now emerging that remap urban landscape history. His-

torians and preservationists will see the polemical impact of the installations of Edgar Heap of Birds, an artist of Cheyenne/Arapaho descent who undertook a project in New York City's parks in 1988. He mounted aluminum signs reading "NEW YORK," in backward letters, followed by "TODAY YOUR HOST IS SHINNECOCK," to force viewers, struggling to read the reversed letters, to remember the original Native American settlements. Different tribes whose land was occupied were the subject of signs in different places: Shinnecock, Seneca, Tuscarora, Mohawk, Werpoe, and Manhattan. He repeated a similar set of signs in Vancouver, British Columbia, using a site outside an old government building with LAND REGISTRY carved on the portal that enhanced the piece. A third project, *Day and Night*, located in Pioneer Square in Seattle, picked up the theme of dispossessed Native Americans in the context of homelessness: "Far Away Brothers and Sisters We Still Remember You." Next to a statue of the chief who gave the city its name, the artist wrote, "Chief Seattle Now The Streets Are Our Home" (in both English and the local Native American language).⁵²

The New Charleston is a far more exhaustive look at one city and the spatial history of African Americans within it over three centuries (figures 3.11, 3.12). Unlike some of the oral history projects that have slowly drawn out material from a community, here artist Houston Conwill, working in collaboration with Estella Conwill Majozo, a poet, and Joseph De Pace, an architect, jump-started the process with a detailed map of historic places of importance to African Americans—slave markets, the hanging tree, community centers. They painted it on the brown wooden floor of a public room with indigo blue, once grown in Charleston, and white made from local oyster shells. The map serves as the stage for new performances by African American musicians, and opens up the terrain of the city to any interested visitor.

The work of this team is complex because the layering of physical and social history is so intense. There are fourteen places, called "Spiritual Signposts," each marked with a crossroads sign of Congolese origin.⁵³ Peopling this land-



3.11 Houston Conwill, Estella Conwill Majozo, and Joseph De Pace, *The New Charleston*, in the installation for Avery Research Center of African American History and Culture, 125 Bu Street, Charleston, South Carolina. Part of *Places with a Past*, curated by Mary Jane Jacob,

3.12 *The New Charleston*, photograph.

scape, the "Dance Partners: South Carolina Heroic Models" include Mary McLeod Bethune, Benjamin Mays, Septima Clark, William H. Johnson, Janie Hunter, Clayton "Pegleg" Bates, Modjeska Simpkins, Esau Jenkins, Annie Green Nelson, Jesse Jackson, Marian Wright Edelman, Levi Pearson, Bernice Robinson, and Dizzy Gillespie, each of whom is represented by a quotation on the map. What is magical is that, despite the intensive research, the artwork functions not only as a dance floor but also as a cosmogram, a "description of the universe of the African American story," and as an image of a water journey, delineating the waterways that slaves traveled, from the Rokel River in Sierra Leone, across the Atlantic Ocean, through the Caribbean Sea, and into Charleston Harbor.

Drawing visitors onto the dance floor are the spiraling song lines of spirituals (said to originate in Charleston) and freedom songs ("We Shall Overcome" and "Keep Your Eyes on the Prize" originated in Charleston). In the space, spirituals could be heard—sometimes in Gullah—sung by a local group, the Morning Star Hall Singers.⁵⁴ The sparseness of the space—bare brick walls, uncurtained windows, three wooden columns supporting a wooden roof—makes the floor the dominant element in the room, carrying audiences into the map with its intense indigo outer circle leading to the intriguing, irregular lines of the rivers and creeks. Visitors of all ages and dispositions will find reason to visit and revisit.

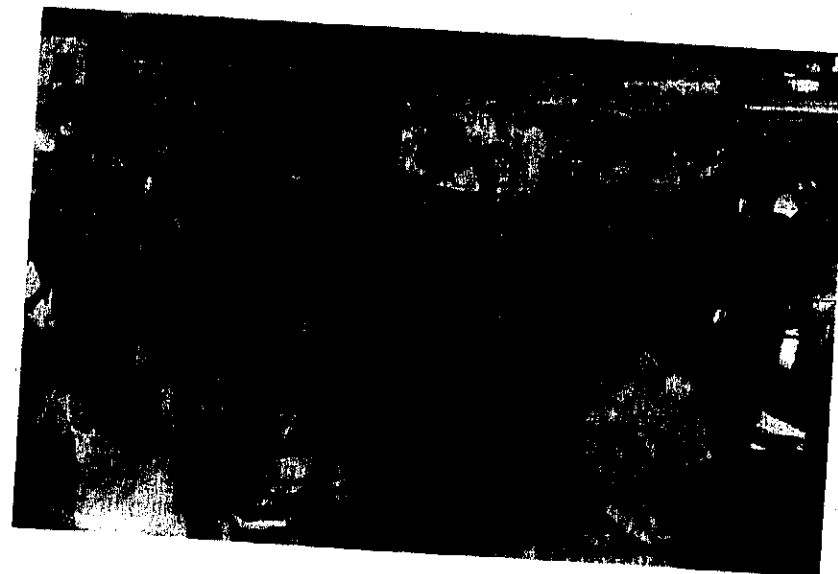
The power of public art to engage citizens with urban history also appears in the case of Cincinnati's pigs. In the nineteenth century, Cincinnati was "Porkopolis." Between 1830 and 1870, the first American assembly line was developed there for turning pigs into ham. The landscape suffered while the local economy prospered. The canal ran red with blood from the slaughterhouses; German American immigrant workers came home spattered with blood and smelling of offal.⁵⁵ For the celebration of the city's bicentennial in 1989, artist Andrew Leicester proposed a new gateway for Sawyer Point Park that climaxed with a tribute to Porkopolis in the form of four winged pigs atop a suspension bridge. (A collation of images chosen by the artist from local landscape history were

also part of the piece, including the Native American Adena culture's serpent mound, smokestacks from old paddle wheel steamers, a canal barge, working locks, and an ark atop a pole showing the flood levels of the Ohio River.)

The citizens erupted in debate about the pigs. Were they a symbol of a smelly industry the city had outgrown? Were they insufficiently genteel? Or did they capture the city's spirit in a witty and wonderful way? The city council heard testimony from both camps. One indignant opponent argued, "We are now poised on entering the twenty-first century as a technologically sophisticated city and pigs are a rural image." He suggested that the pigs represented greed and sloth. Another complained, "I don't think we need the burden of being called the pig city of the world." Proponents claimed, "We've got enough old statues with old bearded men on horses in this town and it's time to have something else." One advocate noted, politely, "I would be pleased to see their porcine presence."⁵⁶

Amid wild applause and loud laughter from partisans, the debate flourished. At least three city council members donned pig snouts before the vote to show their support for the artist, while schoolchildren had their say as well (figures 3.13, 3.14, 3.15). Leicester's winged pigs won, and the piece was constructed. They stand atop the gateway today because Cincinnati's residents chose to remember Porkopolis as an essential part of the city's historic landscape and make it part of a compelling new public history.⁵⁷ In this case it was the required review of the art, and the media attention it received, that engaged the public's participation so effectively, but one can find many ways for artists (perhaps in teams with historians) to engage the public at the start.

Metaphorical wit connects private and public, personal and political, the individual and the community, in the most effective public art projects about places that link past and present. Scale and cost are not the defining elements of a public, urban language. Rather, it is metaphorical ingenuity that enables the creators of some projects to summon the res-



3.13, 3.14, 3.15 Public processes can gather support for controversial history: Cincinnati city council member Arn Bortz, and local children, all wearing pig snouts to show support for artist Andrew Leicester's winged pigs, in *Cincinnati Gateway*, 1988. (Cincinnati Post, Maureen France, Andrew Leicester.)

onance of urban public life, while others fail and their projects fall flat. Working in the interstices of public history, planning, and preservation to build meaning at the urban scale is complex, but artists' use of the stone walls of Chiswell, the rivers of Charleston, or the pigs of Cincinnati focuses an audience's attention. (Of course, an obnoxious art project draws public criticism fast, as did the city of Dallas's recent attempt to provide itself with a "Wild West" image by commissioning a vast herd of bronze steers driven by three bronze mounted cowboys.) It all comes back to community process. No public art can succeed in enhancing the social meaning of place without a solid base of historical research and community support.

Public history, architectural preservation, environmental protection, and public art can take on a special evocative role in helping to define a city's history if, and only if, they are complemented by a strong community process that establishes the context of social memory. That is not to say that there are simple guidelines for a good public process. This is an emerging area of interdisciplinary work, and in all of these related fields some practitioners are looking for ways to merge their knowledge and concerns with those of residents. There are bound to be conflicts between the outsiders and the insiders, as well as between various individuals, whether members of a project team or residents. Artists, historians, citizens, and planners who come to this kind of work need both historical and spatial imagination to learn to work together to identify and interpret people's history in the urban landscape.

All of the participants in such a process transcend their traditional roles. For the historian, this means leaving the security of the library to listen to the community's evaluation of its own history and the ambiguities this implies. It means working in media—from pamphlets to stone walls—that offer less control and a less predictable audience than academic journals or university presses do. It also means exchanging the well-established roles of academic life for the uncertainties of collaboration with others who may take history for granted as the raw material for their own creativity, rather than a creative work in itself.

For the artist or designer seeking a broader audience in the urban landscape than a single patron or a gallery or museum can provide, it means being willing to engage historical and political material. The kind of public art that truly contributes to a sense of place needs to start with a new kind of relationship to the people whose history is being represented. This means that the artist is involved in an art-making process very different from conventional conceptions of art as the progression of an idiosyncratic, personal style. This kind of process

exchanges the established system of shows in galleries or museums for the uncertainties of collaboration with others and community review.

For the public art curator, environmental planner, or urban designer, it means being willing to work for the community, in incremental ways, rather than trying to control grand plans and strategies from the top down. It means understanding that citizens and their grass roots organizations are a source of meaning as legitimate as elected officials and the real estate lobby that often provides the bulk of campaign funding in city politics. It means working alongside—rather than within—the established system of getting things done by phone calls from powerful people in City Hall or the local museum. Funding is always difficult, and the planner on such projects often becomes a nonprofit developer.

For the community member or local resident, it means being willing to engage in a lengthy process of developing priorities for a place, and working through their meanings with a group. This demands patience as insiders educate outsiders and people of different ages, genders, and political views try to agree on what is meaningful and what is creative. Like any other local issue, from parking to street widenings, protection of the public landscape can be exasperating, but it is never unimportant.

While interdisciplinary, community-based projects are not always easy to accomplish, they are not necessarily enormously expensive. They require a labor of love from everyone involved, transcending old roles and expectations, but these are not million-dollar projects. They compare favorably with the funding required to mount a major museum exhibit on city history, or to produce a documentary film for television. And unlike either of these media, public installations in the city refresh the memories of citizens who are passing. A large and diverse audience for urban history exists today in American cities—people who will never go to history museums, attend public humanities programs, or read scholarly journals. Entrepreneurial public historians may be able to reach

them occasionally in community centers, churches, or union halls. Successful installations in public places, in all parts of the city, may reach even more people, and, if these are permanent installations, may reach them on a continual basis.

While a single, preserved historic place may trigger potent memories, networks of such places begin to reconnect social memory on an urban scale. Networks of related places, organized in a thematic way, exploit the potential of reaching urban audiences more fully and with more complex histories. There is "a politics to place construction," David Harvey has observed, including "material, representational and symbolic activities which find their hallmark in the way in which individuals invest in places and thereby empower themselves collectively."⁵⁸ People invest places with social and cultural meaning, and urban landscape history can provide a framework for connecting those meanings into contemporary urban life.

59. Toni Morrison, *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the American Literary Imagination* (New York: Vintage, 1990), 6.
60. American Social History Project, *Who Built America?*, 2 vols. (New York: Pantheon, 1992).
61. Gloria T. Null, Patricia Bell Scott, and Barbara Smith, *All the Women Are White, All the Blacks Are Men, but Some of Us Are Brave: Black Women's Studies* (Old Westbury, N.Y.: Feminist Press, 1981).
62. For example, Elizabeth Higginbotham, "Laid Bare by the System: Work and Survival for Black and Hispanic Women," in Amy Swerdlow and Hanna Lessinger, eds., *Class, Race and Sex: The Dynamics of Control* (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1983); also see Higginbotham's excellent *Selected Bibliography of Social Science Readings on Women of Color in the United States* (Memphis, Tenn.: The Center for Research on Women, Memphis State University, 1989).
63. William Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1991).
64. Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 286.
65. David Brodaly, *LA Freeway: An Appreciative Essay* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981); Mark Rose, *Interstate: Express Highway Politics 1939-1989*, rev. ed. (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1990). Also see Martin Wachs and Margaret Crawford, eds., *The Car and the City: The Automobile, the Built Environment, and Daily Urban Life* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992), and Virginia Scharff, *Taking the Wheel: Women and the Coming of the Motor Age* (New York: Free Press, 1991).
66. Castells, *The City and the Grassroots*, 314; David Harvey, "From Space to Place and Back Again: Reflections on the Condition of Postmodernity," UCLA Graduate School of Architecture and Urban Planning Colloquium, May 13, 1991, 39.
67. There is not space for a complete review. Sharon Zukin, *Landscapes of Power: From Detroit to Disney World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), is one good study from the sociology of culture; John M. Findlay, *Magic Lands: Western Cityscapes and American Culture after 1940* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), treats a variety of western places, including Disneyland and Sun City, Arizona. Michael Sorkin, ed., *Variations on a Theme Park: The New American City and the End of Public Space* (New York: Noonday Press, 1992), is uneven, but contains a wonderful essay on shopping malls by historian Margaret Crawford. Joel Garreau, *Edge City: Life on the New Frontier* (New York: Doubleday, 1991), and James Howard Kunstler, *The Geography of Nowhere: The Rise and Decline of America's Man-Made Landscape* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1993), are journalists who agree with Sorkin that Americans face the end of meaningful places and public space.
68. Harvey, "From Space to Place," 39.

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3 Place Memory and Urban Preservation

1. John Kuo Wei Tchen, "Historical Amnesia and Collective Reclamation: Building Identity with Chinese Laundry Workers in the United States," in *Vers des Sociétés Pluriculturelles: Études Comparatives et Situation en France* (Paris: Éditions de l'Orstom, 1987), 242-250; Michael Wallace, "Visiting the Past: History Museums in the United States," in Benson, Brier, and Rosenzweig, eds., *Presenting the Past*, 160; M. Christine Boyer, *The City of Collective Memory: Its Historical Imagery and Architectural Entertainments* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1994), 367-476; David Lowenthal, *The Past Is a Foreign Country* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), xvi. For other examples of recent work on this topic, see Michael Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture* (New York: Knopf, 1991); John Bodnar, *Remaking America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992); Michael Frisch, "The Memory of History," in Susan Porter Benson, Stephen Brier, and Roy Rosenzweig, eds., *Presenting the Past: Essays on History and the Public* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986); Lois Silverman, ed., *A Bibliography on History-Making* (Washington, D.C.: American Association of Museums, 1989); Peter Fowler, *The Past in Contemporary Society* (London: Routledge, 1992); Martha Norkunas, *The Politics of Public Memory: Tourism, History, and Ethnicity in Monterey, California* (Albany: State University of New York, 1993); David Thelen, *Memory and American History* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1990); Melissa Keane, "Asking Questions about the Past," *Mosaic: The Newsletter of the Center on History Making in America*, 1 (Spring/Summer 1992), 9.
2. Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 36. He cites Maurice Halbwachs, *Les cadres sociaux de mémoire* (Paris, 1925), and *La mémoire collective* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1950). See Maurice Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*, tr. Francis J. Ditter, Jr., and Vida Yazdi Ditter (New York: Harper and Row, 1980). On the importance of social memory, also see Lowenthal, *The Past Is a Foreign Country*, xix; Boyer, *The City of Collective Memory* (especially chapters 1 and 4); Edmund Blair Bolles, *Remembering and Forgetting* (New York: Walker and Company, 1988); George Lipsitz, *Time Passages: Collective Memory and American Popular Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989); Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: *Les Lieux de Mémoire*," *Representations* 26 (Spring 1989), 7-24.
3. Edward S. Casey, *Remembering: A Phenomenological Study* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1987), 186-187. See also his chapters on "Body Memory," "Place Memory," and "Commemoration."
4. Frances A. Yates, *The Art of Memory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), traces the classical art of memory building. Jonathan D. Spence, *The Memory Palace of Matteo Ricci* (New York: Viking, 1984), is a fascinating account of a Jesuit missionary transmitting these ideas to the Chinese in 1596.
5. Connerton, *How Societies Remember*, 27.
6. For an account of some of these differences, see Michael J. Ettema, "History Museums and the Culture of Materialism," in Jo Blatti, ed., *Past Meets Present*:

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Essays about Historic Interpretation and Public Audiences (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1987), 62-86.

7. Linda Shopes, "Oral History and Community Involvement: The Baltimore Neighborhood Heritage Project," in Benson, Brier, and Rosenzweig, eds., *Presenting the Past*, 253. Also see Elizabeth Fee, Linda Shopes, and Linda Zeldman, eds., *The Baltimore Book: New Views of Local History* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1991).
8. Paul Buhle, "Popular Memory, the Landscape, and Photo History," *Radical History Newsletter* 66 (May 1992), 1.
9. Some projects seem to have cultivated these bodily social memories. Long ago, Jane Addams's Hull House Labor Museum introduced craft demonstrations of Irish and Italian spinning techniques as a part of preserving ethnic identities, and many museums do craft demonstrations today—blacksmithing and weaving, for instance. At Lowell National Historic Park in Massachusetts, The Boot Cotton Mills Museum of industrial history runs turbines and power looms to show visitors old technologies and explain how fast the operatives had to work. The curators ordered ten thousand pairs of earplugs to spare them the shattering noise.
10. Casey, *Remembering*, 214-215.
11. Michael Frisch, *A Shared Authority: Essays on the Craft and Meaning of Oral and Public History* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1990); John Kuo Wei Tchen, "Creating a Dialogic Museum: The Chinatown History Museum Experiment," in Ivan Karp et al., eds., *Museums and Communities: The Politics of Public Culture* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1992), 285-326.
12. This approach gained ground in England in the early 1970s with historian Raphael Samuel and the journal *History Workshop* and then spread to the United States; it has been supported by *Radical History Review* and many other journals and organizations. The People's Autobiography of Hackney, founded in England in 1972, is one early example of a very creative, entrepreneurial group that presented itself to urban audiences in unusual ways. Ken Warpole started this project at Centerprise, a community bookstore in a working-class neighborhood in the East End of London. A dressmaker, a cab driver, and two fifteen-year-olds who hated school were the first local authors to write vivid accounts of their everyday lives in Hackney. As many as 5,000 to 10,000 copies of these autobiographies were sold to neighborhood residents, advertised by word of mouth. To meet the demand for more, the group began taping accounts of the lives of other residents, using oral history as a route to generating more autobiographies, and involving both professional historians and local residents in their production.

Combining a series of local history publications with a cafe and bookstore enabled each to enhance the others. The storefront, located on a busy pedestrian street, attracted people. Visitors interested in one aspect of the work would often meet others with similar interests in the cafe or store. Hackney was enriched by the bookstore, the cafe, the exhibits, and the opportunity they provided to organize with others, as well as the special line of books by local

authors. Ken Warpole, *Local Publishing and Local Culture* (London: Centerprise Trust Ltd., 1977).

13. Jeremy Brecher, Jerry Lombardi, and Jan Stackhouse, comps. and eds., *Brass Valley: The Story of Working People's Lives and Struggles in an American Industrial Region* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1982).
14. Jeremy Brecher, "A Report on Doing History from Below: The Brass Workers History Project," in Benson, Brier, and Rosenzweig, eds., *Presenting the Past*, 275-276. Also see the longer version of this text, Jeremy Brecher, "How I Learned to Quit Worrying and Love Community History: A 'Pet Outsider's' Report on the Brass Workers' History Project," *Radical History Review* 28-30 (1984), 187-201.
15. *Brass Valley* (videotape distributed by Cinema Guild, 1897 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10019).
16. *Brass City Music* (videotape coproduced by Lisa Bothwell and Jeremy Brecher and produced by The Waterbury Traditional Music Project of Stone Soup and Connecticut Public Television).
17. Brecher, "A Report on Doing History from Below"; Jeremy Brecher, "'If All the People Are Banded Together': The Naugatuck Valley Project," in Jeremy Brecher and Tim Costello, eds., *Building Bridges: The Emerging Grassroots Coalition of Labor and Community* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1990), 93-105.
18. "Why History? An Introduction to the New York Chinatown History Project," in *New York Chinatown History Project* (New York: New York Chinatown History Project, n.d.), unpag. For accounts of the work also see J. Tevere MacFadyen, "Exploring a Past Long Locked in Myth and Mystery," *Smithsonian* (January 1983), 70-78, and Candace Floyd, "Chinatown," *History News* 38 (June 1984), 6-11. Also see John Kuo Wei Tchen, "Towards Building a Democratic Community Culture: Reflections on the New York Chinatown History Project" (paper delivered at the Fifth International Oral History Conference, March 29-31, 1985).
19. Tchen, "Towards Building a Democratic Community Culture," 2-4.
20. John Kuo Wei Tchen, "The Chinatown-Harlem Initiative: Building Multicultural Understanding in New York City," in Brecher and Costello, eds., *Building Bridges*, 186-192. A permanent center for the project was created in New York in 1984 in four rooms of a former city school at 70 Mulberry Street, and included a gallery, a book shop, archives, and an office. The project continued in 1989 with the lively exhibit "On Both Sides of the Cloth," on the history of garment workers in past and present sweatshops of Chinatown. In 1991 they opened a permanent exhibit, "Remembering New York Chinatown." The project also offers walking tours of Chinatown. A Chinatown-Harlem initiative to promote multicultural understanding includes discussions with East Harlem and the Latino community there. In 1991 the project renamed itself the Chinatown History Museum.

21. Tchen, "Creating a Dialogic Museum," 285-320.
22. At the Mattatuck Museum in Waterbury, an exhibit was mounted that included one section comparing workers' and managers' dwellings as a follow-up to *Brass Valley*.
23. See "The National Park Service and History," in John Bodnar, *Remaking America*, for a full critique.
24. Antoinette J. Lee, "Discovering Old Cultures in the New World: The Role of Ethnicity," in Antoinette J. Lee and Robert E. Stipe, eds., *The American Mosaic: Preserving a Nation's Heritage* (Washington, D.C.: US/ICOMOS, 1988), 203; Antoinette J. Lee, ed., *Past Meets Future* (Washington, D.C.: The Preservation Press, 1992).
25. Page Putnam Miller, ed., *Reclaiming the Past: Landmarks of Women's History* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), raises these issues. See especially Gail Lee Dubrow, "Women and Community," in that volume, and Gail Lee Dubrow, "Claiming Public Space for Women's History in Boston: A Proposal for Preservation, Public Art, and Public Historical Interpretation," *Frontiers: A Journal of Women's Studies* 13 (Winter 1992), 111-148; as well as Dubrow's forthcoming *Planning for the Preservation of American Women's History* (New York: Oxford University Press).
26. *Black Heritage Trail* (brochure, Boston African American National Historic Site, n.d.). There is a newer African American heritage trail planned for Cambridge, Massachusetts.
27. Dubrow, "Claiming Public Space," discusses how to do this in the context of a review of women's history landmarks in Boston.
28. *A Vision Realized: The Design Competition for the Women's Rights National Historical Park* (Seneca Falls, N.Y.: National Park Service, 1990).
29. Michael Wallace, "Reflections on the History of Historic Preservation," in Benson, Brier, and Rosenzweig, eds., *Presenting the Past*, 189. Also see his "Industrial Museums and the History of Deindustrialization," *The Public Historian* 9 (1987), 9-19; "Mickey Mouse History: Portraying the Past at Disneyworld," in Warren Leon and Roy Rosenzweig, eds., *History Museums in the United States: A Critical Assessment* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989), 158-160.
30. But of course there are limits to what any one site can convey. As Jo Blatti has warned, "we tend to look at a 'George Washington' site, likely to have been developed in the late nineteenth century or the first third of the twentieth century, wanting to know about the rest of the cast—women, blacks, soldiers, children—who may have been present as well. The next question is whether that particular site can shoulder the weight of our contemporary concerns." Blatti, *Past Meets Present*, 4-5. She suggests referring visitors to related sites of the same era, and describes curators in Minnesota who manage a nineteenth-century Anglo American settler's rural farmstead and refer visitors to an urban market garden in St. Paul and immigrant farmsteads at Old World Wisconsin.

Taking this approach one step further in 1991, the state of Wisconsin's Ethnic Corridor Project proposed to link inner-city neighborhoods with rural farmsteads to show the state's diverse past: German, Finnish, Swedish, Belgian, Luxembourgian groups in the countryside; Italian, Latino, and African American neighborhoods in the city. Alan C. Pape, "Preserving Cultural Landscapes," *Historic Preservation Forum* 5 (January-February 1991), 26-29. This kind of agenda gives curators opportunities to save vernacular buildings in ordinary urban ethnic neighborhoods—the modest homes, workplaces, and public spaces that have formed the urban landscape framing the daily lives of working people in the past.

31. "Once Is Never Enough," *Historic Preservation News* (November 1990), 6.
32. Heather Huyck, "Beyond John Wayne: Using Historic Sites to Interpret Western Women's History," in Lillian Schlissel, Vicki L. Ruiz, and Janice Monk, eds., *Western Women, Their Land, Their Lives* (Albuquerque, N.M.: University Press of New Mexico, 1988), 303-329.
33. See, for example, Paul M. Bray, "The City as a Park," *American Land Forum* 5 (Winter 1985), 23-27; *The Urban Cultural Park (UCP) Program* (Albany: New York State Office of Parks and Recreation, 1980); Allen Freeman, "Lessons From Lowell," *Historic Preservation* 42 (November-December 1990), 38; *Five Views: An Ethnic Sites Survey for California* (Sacramento: State of California Department of Parks and Recreation, 1988).
34. For example, Gail Dubrow, Gail Nomura, Shawn Wong, et al., *The Historic Context for the Preservation of Asian/Pacific American Resources in Washington State* (Olympia: Washington Office of Archaeology and Historic Preservation, 1993).
35. See, for example, "Focus on Landscape Preservation," special issue of *Historic Preservation Forum* 7 (May-June 1993); "Conserving Historic Landscapes," special issue of *APT Bulletin, The Journal of Preservation Technology* 24 (1992); and Arnold R. Alanen and Robert Z. Melnick, eds., *Preserving Cultural Landscapes in America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, forthcoming).
36. The Nature Conservancy has a project of this kind in a rural area around the village of Oster on the Eastern Shore of Virginia, with 6,200 acres of mainland property as well as 35,000 acres of undeveloped barrier islands. Denis Drabelle, "Design for an Ecosystem," in *The Art of Landscape Architecture* (Washington, D.C.: Partners for Livable Places, 1990). The Hanalei Valley Federal Wildlife Refuge on the Hawaiian island of Kauai is another rural example, "sugar cane and coffee plantations, cattle ranches, missions, and the villages of fishermen and farmers of Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, Korean, and Spanish ancestry"; William J. Murtagh, *Keeping Time: The History and Theory of Preservation in America* (Pittstown, N.J.: The Main Street Press, 1988), 128-127.
37. Anne Whiston Spirn, report of the West Philadelphia project, unpublished.
38. Susan Clifford and Angela King, "Preface," in Richard Mabey, ed., with Susan Clifford and Angela King for Common Ground, *Second Nature* (London: Jona-

- than Cape, 1984), vii. Also see Sue Clifford, *Places: The City and the Invisible* (London: Public Art Development Trust, 1993).
39. Angela King and Sue Clifford, "Common Ground," in *An Introduction to the Deeds and Thoughts of Common Ground* (London: Common Ground, 1990).
 40. "The Parish Maps Project," in *An Introduction to the Deeds and Thoughts*, n.p.
 41. Terry Friedman and Andy Goldsworthy, eds., *Hand To Earth: Andy Goldsworthy Sculpture, 1976-1990* (New York: Abrams, 1990).
 42. Clifford, *Places*, 11.
 43. *Local Distinctiveness* (London: Common Ground, 1990), n.p.
 44. *Mayday/Mayday!* (London: Common Ground, 1988).
 45. John Ashberry, "A Call for Papers," *Yale Review* 80 (April 1992), 44.
 46. On statues, see Eric Hobsbawm, "Mass-Producing Traditions: Europe, 1870-1914," in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 272-280; for Baca, see Suzanne Lacy, "Mapping the Terrain: The New Public Art," *Public Art Review* 8 (Spring/Summer 1993), 16.
 47. Hafthor Yngvason, "The New Public Art: As Opposed to What?" *Public Art Review* 8 (Spring/Summer 1993), 8.
 48. *Ibid.* Also see Lucy Lippard, *Mixed Blessings: New Art in a Multicultural America* (New York: Pantheon, 1990).
 49. Lacy, "Mapping the Terrain," 16-17.
 50. Some recent works on public art include: Pam Korza and Jeffrey Cruickshank, *Going Public: A Field Guide to Developments in Art in Public Places* (Amherst, Mass.: University of Massachusetts Arts Extension Service, 1988); Richard Andrews, Jim Hirschfeld, and Larry Rauch, *Artwork/Network: A Planning Study for Seattle, Art in the Civic Context* (Seattle, Wash.: Seattle Arts Commission, 1984); Richard Andrews, "Artists and the Visual Definition of Cities: The Experience of Seattle," in Stacy Paleologos Harris, ed., *Insights/On Sites: Perspectives on Art in Public Places* (Washington, D.C.: Partners for Livable Places, 1984), 16-23; Ronald Fleming and Renata von Tscherner, *Place Makers: Public Art That Tells You Where You Are*, 2d ed. (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1987); Martha Rosler, *If You Lived Here: The City in Art, Theory, and Social Activism* (Seattle: Bay Press, 1991); Myrna Margulies Breitbart and Pamela Worden, *Beyond a "Sense of Place": New Roles for the Arts and Humanities in Urban Revitalization* (Boston: Urban Arts, 1993); Harriet Senie and Sally Webster, eds., *Critical Issues in Public Art* (New York: HarperCollins, 1992); Harriet Senie, *Contemporary Public Sculpture: Tradition, Transformation, and Controversy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); Ariane Raven, ed., *Art in the Public Interest* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1989);

Donna Graves, "Sharing Space," *Public Art Review* 8 (Spring/Summer 1993), 10-13; Rosalyn Deutsche, "Uneven Development: Public Art in New York City," *October* 47 (Winter 1988), 34. Also see the journals *Passage*, *On View*, and *Public Art Review*.

51. Mary Jane Jacob, *Places with a Past: New Site-Specific Art at Charleston's Spoleto Festival* (New York: Spoleto Festival U.S.A. and Rizzoli International Publications, Inc., 1991). See also *Program Guide: Culture in Action* (Chicago: Sculpture Chicago, 1993).
52. Edgar Heap of Birds, lecture, Yale University, April 6, 1992.
53. The 14 are: Sullivan's Island Pest Houses (the initial quarantine holding places for enslaved Africans); Sullivan's Island, site of Cato's Insurrection (one of the first sites of resistance among enslaved Africans); Boone Hall Plantation (site of enslaved Africans' quarters); Middleton Place Plantation (burial site for enslaved Africans); Johns Island Progressive Club (established by activist Esau Jenkins as a literary and citizenship training center); Moving Star Hall (oldest Praise House on Johns Island and home of the Moving Star Singers); Morris Island (burial site of Colonel Robert Gould Shaw and the 54th Massachusetts Regiment, the first African American military unit to fight in the Civil War); Fort Sumter (where the first shot of the Civil War was fired); Charleston Harbor (where Robert Smalls commandeered a transport steamer, carrying his family north to freedom); Jenkins Orphanage (established by the Reverend Daniel Jenkins in 1893 to aid troubled African American youth and famous for its jazz band); Slave Market (where thousands of enslaved Africans endured the auction block); Emanuel A.M.E. Church (built by the congregation of Denmark Vesey, who, inspired by the Haitian Revolution, masterminded an unsuccessful insurrection); The Hanging Tree (site of numerous executions of enslaved Africans and African Americans); and last at all, Avery Normal Institute, now Avery Research Center for African-American History and Culture, established for the education of African American children. Jacob, *Places with a Past*, 147.
54. *Ibid.*, 148-150.
55. Sigfried Giedion, *Mechanization Takes Command: A Contribution to Anonymous History* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1969), 77-99. See especially plates 49 and 50.
56. The testimony was taped by Harriet Baskas, "The Place of Place in Public Art" (Seattle, Wash.: Rael Women Productions, for National Public Radio, 1989). Also see the brief reference to the city council testimony in Ruth Eckdahl Knack, "Painting the Town Red and Green and Blue and Yellow and . . ." *Planning* (May 1988), 13.
57. Baskas, "The Place of Place."
58. David Harvey, "From Space to Place and Back Again: Reflections on the Condition of Postmodernity," text for UCLA CSAUP Colloquium, May 13, 1991, p. 39.