THE FACE OF WHAT CAME AFTER: MEMORIALIZATION OF SEPTEMBER 11
IN NEWS IMAGES AND THE SHANKSVILLE SITE

A Dissertation
presented to
the Faculty of the Graduate School
at the University of Missouri-Columbia

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

by
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AUGUST 2008
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THE FACE OF WHAT CAME AFTER: MEMORIALIZATION OF SEPTEMBER 11
IN NEWS IMAGES AND THE SHANKSVILLE SITE

presented by G. Robert Britten

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am grateful to very many people for their contributions both to this work and to my life as a whole. Thank you, naturally, to the members of my committee for their service and for their willingness to let me take up the occasional hour of their time with my thinking out loud. Thanks in particular to my advisor, Zoe Smith, for her feedback, her edits, her tolerance of more than a few blown deadlines, and for a number of lunches. Thanks to the people of Shanksville and the Somerset area for welcoming me into their lives and homes and for sharing such meaningful images. Thanks to my family for their support and especially to my mom, Vickey, for her invaluable help with transcribing. And finally, thank you to my fantastic wife, Jessica, not only for her encouragement and willingness to hear my ideas out, but for graciously managing so much of our lives-in-transition while I was buried in work – I love you, and will be returning the favor soon.
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THE FACE OF WHAT CAME AFTER: MEMORIALIZATION OF SEPTEMBER 11 IN NEWS IMAGES AND THE SHANKSVILLE SITE

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines the memorialization of the September 11 attacks in newspaper photography and in Shanksville, Pennsylvania, the site of the Flight 93 crash. It is based on the premise that the face of memorialization seen in the news media is very different than the practices seen at the Shanksville site itself. Unlike the other impact sites, the Shanksville area was not widely known prior to the attacks, and even since then, it has seemed to be a rare presence on the news page. Yet memorialization has taken place throughout the area, and while the official memorial has repeatedly stalled, residents have moved ahead with individual visions of the event.

To understand the role of this unseen site in the memorialization process, this study is guided by the cultural concepts of place, collective memory, and framing. The first two of these are used to explain how individuals make meaning of where they live and what they do; the third concept deals with how they share those meanings with others. Analysis takes place at two levels: Media and regional. At the media level, content analysis is conducted on images in the major newspapers serving each of the impact sites. At the regional level, the case study method is used to examine the memorial work on the ground in the Shanksville area. The results suggest a journalism of “we” at play, with media tending to focus only on the memorialization activities of their own areas. The implication is that place limits, both individual and institutional, may keep audiences from understanding the parallel memorial work of others.
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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

As mementoes of the fearful struggle through which the country has just passed, it is confidently hoped that the following pages will possess an enduring interest. Localities that would scarcely have been known, and probably never remembered, save in their immediate vicinity, have become celebrated, and will ever be held sacred as memorable fields. … Verbal representations of such places, or scenes, may or may not have the merit of accuracy; but photographic presentments of them will be accepted by posterity with an undoubting faith. (Gardner, 1959/1866, p. 1)

The preceding quotation is taken from the preface of Alexander Gardner’s *Photographic Sketch Book of the Civil War*, yet it might have come from any book of photography of any number of recent catastrophes. In America, events such as the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing or Hurricane Katrina in 2005 thrust certain cities into the national limelight, often accompanied by the claim, by media and individuals, that these sites would likewise “be ever held sacred.” Such promises are surely often meant in good faith, yet as the memorable fields of one era become the dusty tombstones of another, we may come to wonder what the big deal was. Do the monuments and photographs we place our memories into truly keep the past alive, or do they entomb it?

This dissertation examines the use of images in anniversary coverage of the September 11 attacks. The September 11 narrative is a story constructed through media and interpersonal channels, as well as at an individual level. Although the textual record followed soon after, the event was visually recorded from the very moment of the first plane’s impact with the World Trade Center, with at least three cameras trained on the buildings or their immediate vicinity (Friend, 2006). Many individuals, both journalists
and private citizens, were compelled to grab cameras and point them toward the towers; some of these photographers ran toward the carnage that others were fleeing. The resultant images from New York City on that day recorded scenes of the trauma itself, but also documented individuals reacting to the trauma and, more reflexively, individuals photographing what was happening (Zelizer, 2002). Since then, later photographs have joined those original images in constructing a visual narrative of September 11.

Of the September 11 images that come most readily to mind, scenes from New York City likely make up the lion’s share. These include most of those images we might call “iconic,” whether of firemen raising a flag at Ground Zero or of a lone body plummeting from one of the towers. Considering the extent of the damage, mass of population, and media-heavy nature of the city, this is not surprising, yet it presents questions about the September 11 visual record as a whole. Although New York was easily the site of the greatest damage and casualties, that city was only one of three impact sites. Hijacked planes also crashed in Washington, D.C. and Shanksville, Pa., hitting the Pentagon in the former and an empty field in the latter. Were individuals and media similarly compelled to visually document those other sites? In the days, months, and years following the attacks, how were images used in the record of other sites’ roles in September 11? The high profile of New York City, as both a city and an event site, may lead us to focus on the images of that city, but by examining the visual narratives constructed of other September 11 sites we can build a more complete picture of that day and of how we continue to make sense of its events.
Cultural Emphasis of the Dissertation

A cultural perspective informs the multilevel approach taken in answering the research question: How have images been used in the construction of memory of September 11? For the purposes of this research, the relationship between discourse, culture, and cultural agents must first be explained. Discourse is here understood as the framework of rituals and materials available to individuals and societies at a given point. Culture, in turn, is the going system of beliefs and practices that is assembled and performed from those materials. A cultural agent, finally, is a conceptual instance of culture acting itself out. In the September 11 context of this study, for example, memorial work may be understood to shape and be shaped by both place and collective memory. These agents, in turn, are components of American, global, and local cultures that themselves exist within the framework of discourse of the 21st century world. This definition is necessarily circular, because each sphere both influences and is influenced by the others. Further, they are not singular: There are both global and local discursive frameworks to the individuals who live out culture on those levels. What is important is not to find some monolithic discourse, culture or cultural agent, but to understand the relations of scale between these concepts.

This project applies concepts and methods to an investigation that retains cultural context. The guiding concepts of place and collective memory are thus described as agents of culture, and linkages will be made between their premises and meaning-based natures. Although cultural and constructivist in its emphasis on meaning, the study is not purely a qualitative one, and the methods of content analysis and case study will both be applied for their descriptive strengths. Subsequent sections will describe culture as
existing not in the individual or the group but in the “vibration” between these, and through the application of multiple descriptive methods this study will explore the work of images in the vibration that is the ongoing memory of September 11.

The interplay of place and collective memory is powerfully suited to study of the events of September 11 and the continuing construction of their meaning. The attacks took place at three distinct sites, but also “at” America, the world, and the living rooms of individuals physically removed from the impact sites; they also took place within four airplanes and several buildings. As we remember and attempt to make sense of these events, we construct and reconstruct those multiple places in ways that may alternately emphasize their separation and their unity. Memory in this case and many others is tied to place, both the places where “it” happened and those places in which memory-making is being carried out.

Significance to Journalism and Visual Communication

The above concepts are rooted in a cultural framework that is well described by James Carey’s (1989) ritual perspective on communication. Although American scholars privilege a transmission view of communication, one that focuses on the movement of messages in space, Carey says there is a powerful but overlooked ritual nature to much of communication. Ritual communication is based in “the maintenance of society in time” (p. 18) rather than the dissemination of messages in space. The ritual view holds that producing and consuming the news, and media in general, is much like the regular attending of a religious service where ideas are not learned so much as repeated and confirmed. This view examines the news and media as agents of culture rather than
autonomous operatives, and at the conceptual level the guiding concepts of place and collective memory likewise serve as facets of culture.

Carey’s (1989) argument that “news is not information but drama” (p. 21) presents an uncomfortable challenge for the practicing journalist. Surely, the implication that journalists are not saying anything new must be a false one? The idea of news being manufactured is often offensive to the dedicated journalist and a common sticking point between professionals and academics (Schudson, 1989), yet news-making is necessarily rooted in structures, routines, and broader cultural systems (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996). A cultural perspective identifies issues for consideration in journalism’s “subjectivity of expression, the constructed nature of its meanings for events, the politics of its identity building, and the grounding of each of these premises in practice” (Zelizer, 2004, p. 176).

These issues extend into the realm of the visual, where researchers regularly discover such constructions and patterns in the content and form of news photographs (Hagaman, 1993; Mendelson, 1999; Rosenblum, 1978) as well as in departmental dynamics and norms (Lowery, 2003; Seelig, 2005, 2006). A cultural perspective advocates that representation, whether in text or by the camera, is not a mere depiction but as the way in which meaning is given to the things depicted; the world exists, argues cultural studies scholar Stuart Hall, in how these meanings are shared (Jhally, 1997). Conventions, shared agreements for how things are done, are the foundation of the “recurrent patterned activity” that makes up much of news practice (Rosenblum, p. 423), yet researchers have tended not to examine the social processes that shape these conventions (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996).
Journalists’ dislike of the ritual view may come from a misunderstanding, the belief that it suggests no new information is being presented in the news. In advocating a ritual view of communication, however, Carey (1989) does not say that the transmission view is incorrect or that the two views are mutually exclusive. Rather, he suggests that what is literally transmitted is often secondary to the recognizable ritual form that the story takes. In addition, cultural scholars have withdrawn from study of journalism. Where once media and journalism were favorite topics of the cultural studies movement (e.g., Hall, 1993), the field has “closed its eyes” in recent years, possibly due to the dissonance between journalism’s privileging of facts, truth and reality and cultural studies’ emphasis on relativity, subjectivity, and concerns of audience over those of production (Zelizer, 2004, p. 188). Bringing journalism back to the forefront of cultural studies, Zelizer argues, could reinvigorate and help to mature the field, but this depends on cultural studies’ “capacity to expand and include a phenomenon like journalism rather than shrink and keep it outside” (p. 192). The call for a cultural approach to studying communication recognizes media’s role as a significant source of culture yet also argues for culture’s role as a source of media practices.

Organization of the Dissertation

The following two chapters identify and integrate this study’s cultural concepts. Chapter two establishes the two guiding concepts of place and collective memory, explaining how these cultural agents relate to each other. This chapter also presents the concept of framing as a means for understanding how memory and the meanings of events and place are presented to others. Chapter three takes the cultural concepts of the
framework and applies them to the existing literature on news media and visual communication.

Chapter four explains methods and research design. Two methods are used in this study, content analysis and case study, in order to get at the media and regional levels of analysis, respectively. Chapter five presents the results of the content analysis, and these serve to inform the subject of chapter six, the case study narrative. In chapter seven, the guiding concepts are used to interpret and discuss the previous chapters’ findings, and a set of models is presented for explanation of the memorialization and coverage processes. Chapter eight, the conclusion, presents the limitations and future directions suggested by this research.
CHAPTER II: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is guided by three cultural concepts: Place, collective memory, and framing. These concepts often intersect, especially when significant events are involved: “A truly major event always results in an alteration of the relationship of the group to place. … From then on, neither the group nor the collective memory remains the same, but neither have the physical surroundings” (Halbwachs, 1980, p. 131). As a place changes, so does memory of it, and vice versa. Further, those trying to make sense of the event continually frame memory and place in different ways. Both residents of a place and outsiders attempt to communicate what has happened, what it means, and how others should understand it.

This process is not unlike what is described by Carey’s (1989) characterization of transmission and ritual communication, which suggests that messages move not only in space (the transmission perspective of communication) but also in time via repetition and ritual. Rather than two separate processes, the transmission and ritualization of messages constantly intersect, making the understanding of a given message a construction of the moment. Likewise, place, collective memory, and frames act upon each other in the construction of what an event means to whom. This chapter reviews these three concepts, which will guide the study’s analysis of how memorialization has been performed and presented.
Guiding Concepts

Collective Memory

Collective memory may be understood a cultural and constructivist reading of memory. Once considered purely a tool of recall, scholars such as Maurice Halbwachs (1980) reconceptualized memory as a social activity; for Halbwachs, the concept was “a matter of how minds work together in society” (Olick & Robbins, 1998, p. 109). Collective memory serves not only to recall but also to reconstruct, “remaking the residue of past decades into material with contemporary resonance” (Zelizer, 1995, p. 216). Recalling the past, for collective memory, matters less as a way to describe what happened than as a way to explain what’s happening now, or to predict what will happen next. The past is used as a reservoir of resources from which collective memory may be constructed, and “history’s epistemological claim is devalued in favor of memory’s meaningfulness” (Olick & Robbins, 1998). Thus one group’s collective memory may differ from another’s, and a given group’s collective memory at the moment may differ from their collective memory later. In semantic terms, collective-memory-1 is not collective-memory-2, and neither of these is the “true” past.

Collective memory is used for the purposes of the present in a variety of ways. Media such as movie and video games selectively retell the history of events such as World War II in a way that informs, but only partially, while it entertains (Hess, 2007). The power to make such selections is a factor in collective memory, and the memorializations of certain events may prioritize certain memories over others. Historical accuracy, topographical legibility, and freedom of access can all be areas of contention at memorial sites (Gough, 2004). At the opposite end of the spectrum are
individual memorial acts such as photographs of traumatic public events (e.g., Zelizer, 2002) or individually crafted tributes, shrines, and leavings (e.g., Doss, 2002), memory materials that are informal, transient, and typically diverse. Because it serves the present, collective memory changes as the times change. The Holocaust, for decades a rarely discussed subject, is now the subject of a memory industry that comprises museums, texts, and remembrances (Zelizer, 1998). The churn of memory may be getting faster, with the relatively recent September 11 attacks already the subject of extensive anniversary coverage and memorialization discussion (Kitch, 2002b; Low, 2004).

Collective memory is a duality, at once the memory of the individual and that of the group. Unlike personal memory, collective memory “comprises recollections by and for the collective … determined and shaped by the group” (Zelizer, 1995, p. 214). At the same time, “while the collective memory endures and draws strength from its base in a coherent body of people, it is individuals as group members who remember” (Halbwachs, 1980, p. 48). The individual is the generating cell of and access point to memory, while the group modifies, repeats, forgets, amplifies, or squelches those memories. The subheading of one article on September 11 memorials sums this up well: “While government dithers, Americans build their own memorials” (Last, 2007). Although the parties have different roles, one is not subordinated to the other, for there cannot be memory without the individual, but nothing can be collective without the group. “I would readily acknowledge,” writes Halbwachs (p. 48), “that each memory is a viewpoint on the collective memory, that this viewpoint changes as my position changes, that this position itself changes as my relationships to other milieus change.” Thus we cannot examine “true” collective memory, only the available windows onto it.
Although collective memory is not concrete, we can understand it better by examining its qualities. Zelizer (1995) identifies six premises for collective remembering, “each of which articulates different levels of political, cultural, and social organization around the act of recollecting” (p. 218). Collective memory is *processual*, constantly in a state of change. It is *partial*, and the total truth is not attainable from it no matter how many memories are interrogated. It is *usable*, “always a means to something else” (p. 226), and serves in its construction to help us make some connection. Collective memory is *both particular and universal*, meaning that it can simultaneously be a product of individual and collective; in fact, the concept may be said to exist in the “vibration” between the two. It is *material*, existing in the world rather than solely in our heads, and is embodied in artifacts, stories and routines. Finally, collective memory is *unpredictable*, and thus not consistently linear, logical or rational. This last premise, according to Zelizer, creates a significant restriction on inquiry into the concept. Any study of collective memory must therefore avoid an overly positivist idea of what can be proved about collective memory. A constructivist approach and descriptive methods, however, can provide a clearer look at the windows on collective memory without presuming to see the whole of it.

*Place*

Place is space endowed with meaning (Tuan, 1977), and the study of place is based on “the idea that places have meaning to people” (Williams & Stewart, 1998, p. 21). Like collective memory, the concept of place is both individual- and group-based; a place is defined by both “my” meanings and “our” meanings. Place is rooted not only in meanings but also in the physical environment to which those meanings are linked (Sack,
Further, both outsiders and residents can have a sense of place, and these need not be identical (Williams & Stewart, 1998). Cresswell (2004) distinguished place from both space, which is “meaningless” in the eye of the beholder, and landscape, which is looked at rather than lived in, and argued that place is a way of understanding based in how we know our world. Place can thus be difficult to study because it is both a thing and a way of looking.

There are different definitions of place, but all describe it as an intersection of concepts. Tuan’s (1977) definition, noted earlier, presents place perhaps most simply: The confluence of “space” and “meaning.” For Tuan, space and place exist in a dichotomy. Where space is action, movement, and freedom, place is safety, pause, and security. According to Tuan, although space is necessary for place, place and objects are what define space simply by filling it and existing in relation to each other; we cannot hope to understand the space of existence without the places of life. Place therefore is both a constructed thing and a “pre-scientific” fact of life, “the raw material for the creative production of identity rather than an a priori label of identity” (Cresswell, 2004, p. 39). As with Carey’s (1974) conception of communication, place is not merely part of culture, it is culture.

Space and place (like culture) were once seen far more deterministically, with geographers and others focused on defining and counting regions rooted in physical or anthropological features as the sole means of investigation. In one of the earliest challenges to this view, Henri Lefebvre (1974), argued that the determinists ignored the “abyss” between mental and social space. Lefebvre drew a distinction between “absolute,” natural space and complex, socially determined space, the latter of which is
essentially what others today call place. He presented three propositions about this social space: It represents the political use of knowledge, integrated into forces and social relations of production; it implies an ideology that conceals that use, indistinguishable from knowledge to its adherents; and it embodies a technological utopia of the possible within the framework of the existing mode of production (“the real”).

At the heart of Lefebvre’s view is production and the act of producing – “every society … produces a space, its own space” (p. 31), which assigns places for production (labor) and reproduction (both biological and social) and produces a “conceptual triad” of spatial practice, representations of space, and representational spaces. The paradox is that Lefebvre also held that space is a process, “not the work of a moment” (p. 34) but always changing. As with collective memory, space is processual, perpetually in the act of becoming. Broadly, this means that social space as we encounter it is anything but natural. Instead, it is parceled and determined by society and ideology with the implication that both its form and its “rules” are natural (and thus above the need for investigation or challenge).

Lefebvre’s position is essentially Marxist (although he was a critic of his contemporaries’ economic structuralism) and it was developed further by postmodern theorists such David Harvey (1990), who sought a balance between ideas of change and form in place. Rejecting the idea that built form determines practices, which “have the awkward habit of escaping their moorings in any fixed schema of representation” (p. 204), Harvey argued that spatial and temporal practices in fact “can themselves appear as ‘realized myth’ and so become an essential ideological ingredient to social reproduction” (p. 216). The cultural roles and regulations of place were also examined by Mitchell
(2000), who held that the key is not in identifying constant rules, but in identifying the conditions under which “fierce little concentrations of meaning” are fixed as good or important, and for whom (p. 71); for Mitchell, culture is organized, not organic, and serves “to solidify ways of life in place” (p. 83) through images of identity, taste, and style.

Where some scholars have focused on the arbitrariness of place rules, however, others have pursued empirical investigation of how those rules function. More recently, some have tried to moderate the emphasis on social construction that now characterizes much of place study. Stedman (2003), for example, argued that the Lefebvrian emphasis on social construction has overly neglected physical environment, which is required for social behaviors and processes to take root and develop. Sack (2003) has attempted to strike a balance by addressing a more complex interplay of domains with a three-part model for understanding place, setting the concept at the intersection of mental, social, and natural dimensions that can each be examined. This “geographically aware position” proposes a balance between modernity’s arrogance and postmodernity’s relativizing to address where places come from and what they do. Like Cresswell (2004), Sack identified places as pre-scientific phenomena that enable and constrain actions – different actions are possible at home than at work, and each place has different rules of conduct – which in turn construct and maintain places. The mental, social and natural loops of his model feed into each other, with place existing at their nexus. This perspective is empirically based in examining the rules of place, yet its presentation of the concept as a moment arising from constantly changing circumstances strongly supports the view of place as a constructed thing.
Frames and Framing

Framing is currently a popular theory in the areas of journalism and mass communication (Bryant & Miron, 2004), but the study of frames is not limited to those disciplines. Frames have been described as “a central part of a culture” (Goffman, 1981, p. 63) and have been institutionalized by a variety of disciplines, including sociology, economics, and political communication (Van Gorp, 2007). In fact, framing has been described as a “fractured paradigm” whose popularity has caused the concept to expand in diverse, sometimes incompatible directions (Entman, 1993). The “fracturing” of the framing concept may in part be due to its popularity, but this interdisciplinary appeal also shows the potential for communication to become a “master discipline” (Entman, 1993).

With regard to the news media, frames emphasize or diminish elements of a news story to alter their salience and alignment with mentally stored principles in readers (Entman, 1991). They are both “an active process and a result” (Reese, 2001, p. 7), a means of interacting with audience memory and the product of that interaction. Frames are not fixed, and have been shown to change over time as stories develop and attitudes shift (Muschert & Carr, 2006). Comparing the portrayals in the news of similar events and situations has been a hallmark of research on framing: Media depictions of race (e.g., Dickerson, 2001), gender (e.g., Messner, M. A., Duncan, M. C., & Jensen, K., 1993), politics (e.g., Cappella & Jamieson, 1996), and disaster (e.g., Entman, 1993) have all been compared through the lens of framing. In addition, frames are recognizable by audiences, and the overuse of certain frames has been linked to cynicism about both politics and the media (Cappella & Jamieson, 1996).
Some have argued that framing is just an aspect of the theory of agenda-setting (e.g., McCombs & Shaw, 1993), which holds that though media cannot tell audiences what to think, they can tell them what to think about. Van Gorp (2007), in proposing a cultural and constructionist approach to framing, countered that the framing-as-agenda-setting argument “is in contradiction with the sociological origins of framing” (p. 70). His view is based on two distinctions. First, agenda setting is causal, but framing is an interactive construction of social reality. Second, agenda setting is concerned with issues and their “shells,” but framing distinguishes between issues and frames: One issue can be covered from multiple angles or frames, and the same frame is applicable to cover diverse issues” (p. 70). As with the concepts of place and collective memory, frames may function more as situated, cultural intersections of meaning than as solely effects-producing tools.

Although much research at present is focused on frames in the news, framing and the use of frames is a practice of all humans, not just those employed by the news media. Although he does not use the specific word “framing” in his famed piece “The world outside and the pictures in our heads,” Walter Lippmann (1922) suggested “that what each man does is based not on direct and certain knowledge, but on pictures made by himself or given to him.” A frame, in Lippmann’s terms, is the picture we hold in our head that serves to make sense of the world outside. Goffman (1974) likewise saw frames more broadly than tools of the media alone, describing them as “schemata of interpretation” used to organize the world and make meaning of experience. That organization has been seen as both cognitive and cultural sense-making, applied by both individual and group (Reese, 2001). Beyond the level of individual sense-making, frames
also may be presented to others as a means of impression-management, suggesting that one’s self and actions be read in a certain way (Goffman, 1959). Frames are things, and framing is a process, but both involve processing and presenting certain understandings of the world.

Framing is well-suited to this study’s emphasis on visual communication. The essence of framing is “magnifying or shrinking elements of the depicted reality to make them more or less salient” (Entman, 1991, p. 9), typically promoting a particular definition or interpretation of an event (Entman, 1993). Examining frames directs us to how a text exerts its power, and the power of images is to exemplify, demonstrate or otherwise present as significant some aspect of a story or argument (Morgan, 2005). Photographs can thus be potent framing devices, drawing interest and presenting a visual, memorable, and often emotional face of the story before any text is read (Garcia, 1987; Perlmutter, 1998; Wanta, 1988). Beyond the news page, images and artifacts can promote certain interpretations of past events and even attempt to fix meaning. The appropriate way to memorialize the event (itself a kind of framing) may be the subject of bitter clashes (Low, 2004; O’Hara, 2006). At the same time, spontaneous informal memorials have a tendency to spring up at such site, a form of memorial framing carried out by individuals (Doss, 2002; Jorgensen-Earp & Lanzilotti, 1998); these leavings may bear no indication of their source, leaving other visitors to draw conclusions about meaning through application of frames of their own.

For any frame to function, it must be both recognizable and salient (Entman, 1993). A reader must not only know the frame at some level, he or she must accept that it is the best way of understanding the story, event, or experience. At the broadest
perspective, communication consists of nothing but words and pictures, so we can detect frames by seeking those words and pictures “that consistently appear in a narrative and convey thematically consonant meanings across media and time” (Entman, 1991, p. 7). By examining the creation and use of images over time and at different levels, this study seeks to identify, describe and explain the different ways in which the September 11 attacks have been framed.

Linking the Concepts

Place, collective memory, and frames may be understood as cultural agents with a number of parallels. In particular, place and collective memory may operate in similar ways. Place’s integration of social and individual conceptions, for example, aligns with Zelizer’s (1995) particular-universal premise of collective memory. Both Lefebvre and his intellectual descendents describe place as a practice and process, which matches the collective memory premise of the same name; likewise, place meaning’s existence in acts and routines aligns with the material premise. Lefebvre’s (1974) and Sack’s (2003) notions of place as defined by rules and Tuan’s (1977) claim that a place can hold multiple meanings for multiple parties show a link to both the partial and the unpredictable premises: Another meaning is always possible. Finally, Sack notes that place must be usable. Although his model is a nexus of individual, social, and physical realms, these are only visible when examined; once consideration is exhausted, these aspects recede once more so that place may be used.

With the identification of these parallels, the premises of collective memory may also be extended to investigation of place, and the concepts’ examination in tandem allows more meaningful examination of the culture in which they are situated. Further,
the application of framing theory goes to explain how those conceptions of place and memory may be held, recognized, and shared with others. Thus this framework provides a means for understanding both how meaning is culturally constructed and how those meanings interact. The next chapter, a review of the literature on media and images, examines linkages between those forms of communication and these guiding concepts.
CHAPTER III: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The overarching research question for this study asks how images have been used to memorialize the September 11 attacks. Using the guiding concepts of place and collective memory and the theoretical guidance of framing, the research will study memorial images in the news media and in visual communication. Literature linking the guiding concepts to these forms of communication is reviewed in this chapter. Following the review, research questions and hypotheses are presented.

Guiding Concepts and the News Media

The Role of Collective Memory

As a primary information source for many individuals and groups, the media play a significant role in the construction of collective memory. The mass media, with all its iterations, is perhaps the largest window on the collective memory and serves a site where the concept's vibrations play out. A newspaper, for example, embodies many of collective memory’s premises. Its rolled-up paper form, so often clipped and saved, is clearly material, and in its design, delivery, story structure and choice of content we see an emphasis on usability to readers. Via their routines, we see that journalists are mindful of the partial, processual, and unpredictable nature of their work. Good reporters try to get multiple “sides” to their stories, they reference the past and predict the future, and surprising or “breaking” news gets top billing. News texts are also both particular and universal, written by individuals for individuals, yet reporting on society and produced by
a team effort. Further, the newspaper (and the broadcast, and the webcast) serves a collective, be it a small town or a national audience, so in theory a traveler can pick up the local paper in any town to find out something about what may matter to the people there.

Communication, journalistic or otherwise, does not merely reflect what we know or who we are, it literally is those things. In one of his earliest essays on the subject, Carey (1974) argued that a communicative artifact such as the traditional black press did not merely reflect a culture, it was that culture. By his perspective, the media are a primary site of our ritual understanding of who we are. Journalism in particular, he argues, provides us with “text(s) which said something about something to someone;” further, the way in which a text says something provides us with a picture of what was considered “an adequate report of the world” (p. 27). Any journalistic text, then, can serve as a window onto the world in which it existed, but, as with collective memory, we must remember that the view is only a partial one.

The purpose of collective memory is to create, maintain, repair and transform “reality,” which Carey (1989) argued is constructed rather than a given. As an agent of culture, collective memory serves both positive and negative framing roles, including and excluding pieces as necessary. At both the particular and universal level, collective memory is based on decisions about what belongs and what must be discarded. Framing theory a similar process in journalism. A newspaper, for example, presents pictures of what belongs in the news and what belongs in the community as part of its social role. Hallin (1986) argued the journalistic act of defining community is political in how it
necessarily includes, excludes, and privileges certain interests over others. As with collective memory, community-1 is not community-2 yet is portrayed as though it is.

If journalists attempt to report what is important, then the corollary is that what is reported must be what is important. The temptation is to regard the news media as a top-down culture-maker, yet it is also affected by and inextricable from culture. Schudson (1989), in describing the “culturological” perspective on the sociology of news, notes that the news media both perform and construct culture through their activities: News is a nexus of corporate direction, journalistic activities and reader responses taking place within cultural context. On the one hand, it has been argued that news texts are the raw materials of cultural myths such as that of the Kennedy family (Kitch, 2002a) or even of America itself (Sharp, 1993). The news media have made themselves instrumental in collective celebration of key events and the construction of history (e.g., Kitch, 2002b, 2006), and they purport to help individuals to make personal connections with the past (e.g., Zelizer, 2002). The media may influence how a tragedy is mourned (e.g., Hume, 2003) and can set the frame for the depiction of atrocities (Zelizer, 2005; Moore, 2006).

At the same time, those myths may also be the source of news practices. Tradition is “known, predictable, and therefore orderly” (Gans, 1979, p. 50), and this orderly nature has influenced how the practice of news has developed. Kitch (2003), for example, described how journalists reporting on the aftermath of the September 11 attacks fell into the well-worn cultural ritual of funereal practice. Over the month following the event, coverage progressed through stages of separation, transformation and aggregation that mirrored common grieving processes. Hume (2003) argued that death stories in the news resonate “because of their strong connection with cultural and religious rituals” (p. 167).
In such examples, the particular-universal premise of collective memory is evident in the news, with the instance contributing to the myth while the myth informs understanding of the instance. The “cultural clock” also plays a role in what stories are considered timely or new; “many news stories would not be stories at all if some degree of shared historic depth could not be assumed” (Schudson, 1986, p. 84). On the whole, these examples show that the usability premise can work both ways: The media mold collective memory to secure their influential role, but are also used in its service.

The Role of Place

The news is also linked to place in multiple ways. Traditionally, a news publication or broadcast must come from some physical location, though this is changing with the decentralized information systems of the Internet. Local publications by their nature purport to define a place and an audience, but a national newspaper also serves a place: America. When USA Today began publication as America’s first national newspaper, for example, its coverage typically emphasized what made Americans alike rather than focusing on divisions within the country; this in-group focus was similar to those of much smaller regional newspapers (Hallin, 1986). Both local and national publications have offices somewhere and base their reportage on ideas about their readerships. Often, however, such ideas about audience are based more on feedback from newsroom peers than on the people of the coverage area (Gans, 1979; Sumpter, 2000).

Places may be served by multiple media that say different things about that place (e.g., Steiner & Bird, 2008). The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette’s picture of the city differs from that of the Pittsburgh Tribune-Review; at a national level, the New York Times’ America has both similarities and differences to that of the Washington Post. Beyond a news text’s
point of origin, place has multiple roles in what the news does. News sources may sense (and thus cover) the same place in different ways (Larsen & Brook, 2005; Falk, Hunt, & Hunt, 2006) or may cover similar events differently based on differing senses of places in which they occur (Myers, Klak, & Koehl, 1996).

Most print news stories literally begin with place, in the form of the dateline. “Where” is part of the journalistic litany of questions, after all, and Hallin (1986) says it may be used as authority, as actionable information, as social construction, as place, or as subject. Used as *authority*, place denotes the location of reporters or sources. Place may be given in the dateline to prove something happened somewhere even when the events are not physically concrete; Hallin give the examples of government stories with the Washington, D.C. dateline that in fact happened in multiple locations. As *actionable information*, place tells where to do things. A seemingly value-free category, Hallin argues this use still reveals ideology in what is presented, and such information typically deals only with areas of consensus. As a *social construction*, place can establish a sense of community or vicarious participation. The partiality premise of collective memory is at work here in how this constructed place includes, excludes and privileges certain viewpoints. Place as *setting* is a basic narrative tenet and can be used to make a story more concrete. Hallin notes that political reporters often avoid this use when covering controversial topics because it appears to take a stand: “To give an event a setting is to make it concrete,” and this “can stereotype as well as humanize” (p. 125). Finally, place may be used as *subject* in stories dealing with a location as a commodity for consumption or the object of political controversy, in which case places are covered not on their own terms but from some other perspective, often that of city hall.
Although journalists regularly use place, they often skirt its implications (Hallin, 1986). According to Hallin, this portrays a lack of responsibility, but it may also show a lack of knowledge or deeper thought about place by journalists. In Sack’s (2003) terms, Hallin’s complaint is with a media that rarely chooses to activate the loops of place. Place is taken as a given rather than as an interaction of forces, and is typically used as a dead, unchanging signifier of location. Cresswell (2004) might describe such use as more akin to landscape (looked at rather than lived in) than place. In examination of the September 11 anniversary narrative, we can look at how the event’s multiple places are portrayed. Is New York, the best-known site and the one with the greatest loss of life and property, portrayed differently than the others? Is Shanksville, a little-known rural location that today still lacks an official monument, portrayed more as location than place? Are these depictions different for different publications? These questions will inform this study’s hypotheses and research questions. First, however, place and collective memory will be examined with regard to visual communication.

Guiding Concepts and Visual Communication

Images are a form of communication, but their messages are unstable. Mitchell (1986) asserted that the image depends on consciousness: “If there were no more minds, there would be no more images” (p. 17). Peirce (1991), writing on images as signs, also emphasized the role of individual consciousness and perception in visual communication, defining a sign as “an object which stands for another to some mind” (p. 141). Yet one is not free to interpret an image in absolutely any way. There are conventions that lead (though do not force) consciousness to existing categories; Hall (1993) defined such “preferred” readings not as unavoidable, but as presented in such a way that it “makes
sense” to align with them, often because they embody familiar rituals of interpretation. Using images to communicate thus requires awareness of those conventions and rituals behind their use. For Mitchell (1986), the image is not merely a sign, it is a significant element of the “order of things,” one of the “figures of knowledge” that hold the world together (p. 11). An image is thus more than a relationship between a thing (the signified) and a picture of it (the signifier), it is a reflection of how we understand both signifier and signified as well as their relationship to each other and to the world.

Peirce (1991) also suggested the signifier-signified relationship may be too simplistic, and he described three types of sign – icons, indexes, and symbols - each of which has a different relationship to the signified idea or form (“sign” here is understood as synonymous with “image”). The icon represents something that does not exist (such as a line or point) and thus becomes (“possesses”) that form; religious icons may be seen to serve a similar function. The index marks the existence or passage of a form; indices only exist because the signified has been present at some point (examples might be a bullet hole or footprint), yet they persist and serve as a sign even if the originator passes out of existence. Finally, the symbol is able to represent the signified only in the appropriate embedding context; an example would be words or speech, which are gibberish if not understood as a sign.

This study draws on the understanding of images as complex forms of communication, not mere linkages of signifier and signified. All of Peirce’s signs require recognition, which Mitchell would link to consciousness, but of particular interest here is his concept of the symbol. Unlike icons, which exist to represent the unrepresentable, or indices, which have a physical link to their signified, symbols are an invitation to see
communication in a certain way. Agreement is necessary for symbolic communication. In reviewing the guiding concepts’ connection to visual communication, this section examines the conventions, rituals and forms that such agreement has taken.

Collective Memory and Images

The process of making an image is one of selection: Out of the existing world, one chooses what to represent. Images thus provide excellent artifacts with which to examine how collective memory develops, shifts, and changes, and this is especially true of photographs. All photographs depict the past. According to Stephen Shore (2007), this depictive level is what makes photography “inherently an analytic discipline. Where a painter starts with a blank canvas and builds a picture, a photographer starts with the messiness of the world and selects a picture” (p. 37). No matter how instantaneous the act, according to Shore, any photograph has a frame, a vantage point, a moment of exposure, and a plane of focus. These may be selected consciously or unconsciously, but the physical nature of a photograph demands that selection. The resulting material images feed both individual and collective memory.

The description of photographs as “windows on the world” once referred to an idea of captured reality, but the collective memory premises show those windows to be only partial glimpses of an unpredictable world. As they are seen and remembered by more people, however, they can open onto the collective memory. The pinnacle of this development may be the “iconic” image, those images that somehow become almost universally recognized symbols. Joe Rosenthal’s World War II photograph of the Iwo Jima flag raising is perhaps the best known of all iconic photographs. After its creation, the photograph was almost immediately seized by the American government as a tool to
build support for the war effort. Was this because of its specific referent? Likely not – the Japanese recaptured Mt. Suribachi the next day. The image endures today, a common symbol in editorial cartoons and the subject of a popular 2006 film, *Flags of Our Fathers*. Something about that image was immediately recognizable as larger than the event it depicted, an event the image has outlived, and yet the image could not exist without the event. Once again, the particular-universal and processual premises come into play, “recognizing” a new image that would go on to become part of the collective memory.

The photograph partly diverges from journalism in the nature of its creation. Where journalism is an abstract that is produced in different ways, a photograph is a material thing produced by an individual aiming and pressing a button; where other journalists have visually limitless potential for selection, for the photographer the process still comes down to individual choices of frame, vantage point, moment and plane of focus. Yet the cultural perspective also requires consideration of the people who make these photographs. Jay (1978) describes two types of photographer: the naturalist and the humanist. The naturalist seeks to record reality, at times attempting the “indiscriminate recording” of images as data; this perspective is loosely parallel to the memory-as-recall idea. The humanist, on the other hand, is less concerned with objects than with depicting his or her value system, an approach that matches the ends of collective memory.

In this study’s focus on September 11 images, both types can be seen at work. On the humanist side, consider James Nachtwey’s photographs in *War* (2003). One, an image of the World Trade Center wreckage with a large golden cross in the foreground, is an unsettling juxtaposition that says as much about Nachtwey as about the scene. Contrast this with the largely naturalist photographs taken by those bystanders who
happened to have cameras at the scene, seeking only to record in the frenzy of an unfathomable moment. The perspectives, goals and approaches are very different, and yet the collective memory premises again inform our reading. The individual photographic materials produced by these different cameras become part of the larger story. Both are available to the collective memory.

Although the physical object of a photograph is unchanging, the interpretations of what it represents are flexible. Whether taken with naturalist or humanist intentions, the final reading of an image takes place in the viewer. The viewer is another aspect in the cultural perspective. Michael Baxandall’s (1972) concept of “the period eye,” the constructed and changing ways in which members of a culture see, suggests how viewer and photographer perspectives intersect. The reading of a given image is the product of both the photographer and his or her culture, and the different background of the viewer in his or her own place and time. An image’s role in collective memory is likewise attributable to the culture of the moment, which can in turn be influenced by that image. An example is Ansel Adams and Dorothea Lange’s separate documentations of the Japanese internment camp at Manzanar (Ohrn, 1977). Both fit the humanist mold, but their images advocate different things: Where Adams presents an apologist image of the camp, Lange paints an antagonist picture. In different decades, each photographer’s images were regarded as evidence of the “true” face of Manzanar.

These different perspectives on a given photograph are central to understanding the medium’s place in the collective memory because they speak to how photographs are understood. The distinction between photography as objective mirror and as vehicle for self-expression was made early and persists today (Schwartz, 1990, p. 1). Susan Sontag
(2003) similarly identified photography as having a dual nature – “to generate documents and to create works of visual art” (p. 76) – but challenges the notion that these functions exist as opposites. According to Sontag, there is no collective memory, but there is collective instruction. “Photographs that everyone recognizes are now a constituent part of what a society chooses to think about, or declares that it has chosen to think about” (pp. 85-86). By this reasoning, collective memory is really a stipulating of what is important and how it should be told. People do not remember through photographs, Sontag argued, they remember the photographs themselves, which can provide shock but not understanding. The collective memory concept, however, suggests that individual shock may translate into belief of understanding, which may be collectively acted upon in the same way as “actual” understanding. Photographs may not influence through individual shock or collective action so much as the vibration between the two.

Several examples show such collective-individual vibrations at play. In coverage of the September 11 attacks, many newspapers chose to run a particular image of a man plummeting from the World Trade Center. The photograph was later dubbed “Falling Man.” Research suggests response to the image was mixed (Kratzer & Kratzer, 2003), and later reports noted that the image and others of its type effectively vanished from the record in subsequent years. Despite the frequent re-running of a variety of images from that day, images of jumpers have been largely erased from the visual recollection of September 11. Images often most dynamically show the processual, always-in-motion nature of collective memory. Zelizer (1998) described how liberators of the concentration camps of World War II took numerous photographs yet kept these to themselves for decades out of a sense of memorial propriety. These images were so shocking that their
individual holders chose not to share them with the collective. With the 1980s resurgence of Holocaust interest, however, many came forward with such images to add to the record; thus, as the collective changed, the materials available to inform its memory also changed. In the previously mentioned Manzanar images of Adams and Lange, Ohrn (1977) noted that the photographers’ depictions of the internment camp have been alternately received as “truth” at different times. Adams’ apologist images, widely seen as true in the 1950s, were a decade later supplanted by Dorothea Lange’s more critical take on the camp. In all these examples, both individual and collective action have played a role in vibrating materials in and out of collective memory over time. Some shocking images entered the collective consciousness early only to be rejected. Others were withheld until the time was right. Still others were alternately accepted and rejected as windows on what “really” happened. The multiple ways in which photographs have been perpetually selected and excluded by groups and individuals informs this study of collective memory and its premises.

*Place and Images*

Interpretations of photographs are as useful for getting at sense of place as they are for examining collective memory. Especially in the case of physical events, images are often necessarily rooted in the places where those events took place. Following hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005, collected editions showed the devastated sites from the perspectives of news photographers (*The Dallas Morning News*, 2006) and of individual photographers (e.g., Polidori, 2006). Professional photographers have set out to document place at the national level (Robert Frank’s *The Americans*; the “A Day in the Life” series that sends professionals to document countries such as Japan, Italy, and
America in a single day) and at the local level (Pittsburgh in W. Eugene Smith’s *Dream Street*; eastern Kentucky in Shelby Adams’ *Appalachian Lives*). Others have revealed place by putting cameras into the hands of the people who live there. James Hubbard’s Shooting Back project has set homeless urban children up with cameras and training to document their world, and similar programs have surfaced elsewhere (such as Nairobi in Wong’s (1999) *Shootback*).

Place imagery may also incorporate time in showing how that place has or has not changed over the years. Antonin Kratochvil (1997), for example, drew on 20 years of photography in war-torn regions of his native Eastern Europe to “record how all those poor people adapted to lies and suffering, how they got used to it, how in fact they were bound to miss it when it was over” (p. 1). Although his images focus on those people, place is an ever-present character; his are not images of people in a vacuum, but rather of people who “adapted” and “got used to” specific places in eastern Europe. Lauren Greenfield (1997) made a similar examination of people place in a very different setting in *Fast Forward: Growing Up in the Shadow of Hollywood*, which contrasts the lives of children of the powerful and poor in the large but shared space of Los Angeles.

The above examples place cameras in the hands of visitors and residents, insiders and outsiders of different places and lifestyles, yet no single approach can reveal what a place really is. Howard Becker (1986) argued that seeking photographic truth is fruitless. A more valuable question is to ask what it is that a photograph asserts to tell a truth about. One can then see “what answers we can extract from them to questions either we or they have suggested” (p. 279). Becker’s point is an important caution. In using images of a place to understand that place, we run the risk of oversimplification. Sontag (2003)
claims that photographs objectify, that “they turn an event or a person into something that can be possessed” (p. 81). Chalfen (1980), drawing in part on Sontag’s labeling of photography as “supertourism,” argued that photography is linked with tourism in their dependence on encounters and interactions. Each is a nexus of people observing, being observed, and considering those observations. Although Chalfen was specifically concerned with tourist photography, his argument that “the assumption that all people want to either see or have pictures of themselves should be questioned” (p. 28) is also relevant to journalistic photographers (and the researchers who study their work). Hallin’s (1986) call for more place responsibility in journalism is crystallized in the touristic potential that Chalfen describes, and it is something journalists and photographers must be on guard against. Likewise, in investigating place the researcher must be careful never to assume that the images, no matter how many or how varied their sources, tell the whole story about the place or situation they depict.

Hypotheses and Research Questions

The above theoretical framework and literature review provide the basis for several hypotheses and research questions. In order to provide a more nuanced answer to the main research question of September 11 memorialization in images, this study is conceptualized in two levels: Media and regional. The guiding concepts encourage a multiple-level approach to the study of culture and communication. Collective memory’s partial and particular-universal premises suggest more levels of examination will provide more windows onto the concept. Regarding place, Sack’s (2003) three-part model of individual, social, and physical meaning suggests that examining different levels will provide different pictures of place. A multiple method approach will be pursued for this
investigation as a way to “confront diversity” embodied in the guiding concepts (Brewer, 1989); the specific methods will be discussed in the next chapter.

The Media Level

This level of analysis will examine media texts. Its focus is the coverage provided by the major newspaper closest to each site: The New York Times for the World Trade Center, the Washington Post for the Pentagon, and the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette for Shanksville. The overarching research questions for this level ask how images of September 11 are used in different places and at different times. Analysis of the media level will be quantitative, and several hypotheses are proposed.

Hypotheses. The proposal of hypotheses is compatible with a constructivist approach so long as they are directed at conceptual and theoretical development. By testing these hypotheses, this study of September 11 images may contribute to the greater understanding of place and collective memory and their construction in the media. First, the media that serve an impact site may be expected to devote a greater proportion of coverage to that site than non-site media. Sense of place is not limited to residents of a place (Williams & Stewart, 1998). Insiders and outsiders may each have an understanding of a given place, and those understandings may be greatly at odds. Using Sack’s (2003) concept of place as the intersection of physical, personal, and social realms, it follows that those in different physical locations will have a different understanding of a place. Insiders physically present in a place tend to hold different meanings for it than do outsiders (Stedman, 2003), and this distinction extends to the pictures of place presented by outsider and insider media (Falk, Hunt & Hunt, 2006; Larsen & Brook, 2005).
Framing theory further suggests that coverage of “our” people is likely to be different than coverage of others (e.g., Entman, 1991); at the same time, the news media examined in this study will all be American, so that outsider effect may not be so pronounced. Overall, however, local coverage is likely to emphasize local imagery and to show a more nuanced picture of local practices beyond the site or event itself (e.g., Gans, 1980; Larsen & Brook, 2005); in this study, depictions of an area’s memorials outside the physical impact site will be referred to as off-site imagery. Coverage by non-local sources may be expected to focus on the site itself, which in this study will be referred to as on-site imagery. The expectation is that a site's major newspaper will show more images of what happens in the region beyond the site itself. On-site images show memorials, ceremonies, etc., at the impact site itself, while off-site images show the larger region/community in which the impact site is situated.

H1a: A site’s closest newspaper will show that site in a greater percentage of images than do other newspapers.

H1b: A site’s closest newspaper will show off-site images of that site in a greater percentage of images than do other newspapers.

The above hypotheses are complicated, however, by the unequal loss of life and material damage on September 11. New York City drew the vast majority of each, so can be expected to draw the highest proportion of coverage. An estimated 2,603 lives were lost in the World Trade Center and its environs on September 11, along with countless dollars in material losses. What’s more, New York City is arguably the flagship of the United States, a city most Americans likely have some concept of; that so many images are available from immediately before, during and after the impact on the World Trade
Center (Friend, 2006) says much about the extensive representation of that city. Compare this to the Shanksville crash, which in fact did not even take place in that small town but rather in a field some miles north; no one in the city lost loved ones in the event, and though the comparison is not meant to trivialize the losses there, only 40 lives (the passengers and crew of United Flight 93 – this number excludes the hijackers themselves, who are rarely counted) were lost. According to Gans (1979), magnitude of tragedy and the presence of “knowns” are both key news values. It is reasonable, then, to expect certain similarities in coverage of these sites.

H2a: The World Trade Center site will be depicted in the greatest percentage of images.

H2b: The Shanksville site will be depicted in the lowest percentage of images.

The processes of memory and memorialization should also be considered. As time passes, memorial practices begin to solidify as individuals seek closure and reproduce certain practices while discarding others. The media play a role in this process, drawing on established storylines, narratives and rituals that support their authority and encourage eventual closure (Carey, 1989; Kitch, 2002a; Zelizer, 1990). Kitch (2003), for example, showed how media in the weeks following September 11 carried out a transition ritual that mirrored three funeral stages – separation, transformation, and aggregation – that went beyond merely supplying information to explain, reassure, and unify readers. Reassurance and unification encourage simplification, and as media repeatedly tell the story, stray threads can be expected to disappear. Partly this is due to “official” memorials taking over and to the fading of pain with time, but it also shows an urge to simplify and move forward.
H3: In all newspapers, there will be differences in the use of off-site images in different years.

Research questions. This study’s focus on news photography encourages the development of research questions aimed at exploring the kinds of photographs used. In addition to being longtime tools of newsgathering, photographs are distinctive in being material objects in their own right and in how they depict partial images on a given scene. Recalling the collective memory premises, this partial and material nature makes photographs intriguing artifacts for this study’s guiding concepts. News photography is characterized by a regularity of style, which is defined as “predictable combinations of features” (Rosenblum, 1978, p. 424). News photographs are often repetitive in both content and composition (Rosenblum, 1978), and though photographs with novel content tend to win more awards (Mendelson, 1999), most day-to-day images are products of convention, based on what can be gotten quickly and meet editorial criteria for quick reader understanding (Hagaman, 1993). “Working under such constraints, newspaper photographers do not use the camera to investigate events, but instead make photographs from a repertoire of already known images that illustrate already known stories” (Hagaman, 1993, p. 61).

This is not to say that all news photography lacks originality. News photographers who recognize this emphasis on convention may seek to maintain photographic integrity by balancing norms from inside (i.e., journalistic) and outside (i.e., artistic) of the field (Lowery, 2003; Seelig, 2006). Non-visual journalists may at times defer to photography directors as a visual elite based on their ability to balance these norms (Seelig, 2005). By and large, however, the practice of news photography is one that encourages repetition.
and convention. In Carey’s ritual communication terms, news photographers are encouraged to make familiar images that their editors and readers can recognize, and we can see in such conventions “the solemn reproduction of the achieved” (1974, p. 4). This suggests an emphasis on reaffirming the known, at least stylistically, rather than transmitting new information. By examining the photographs used, we may better understand the rituals at play.

Based on the literature, September 11 anniversary images may be expected to conform to a set of types. This study will use the grounded theory approach of constant comparison to draw several news image types from a set of newspaper data; this approach is fully described in chapter four. With this study’s focus on place and memory, and given the assumption of a resultant image type category, two research questions may be proposed:

RQ1: How will image type use differ by site depicted?

RQ2: How will image type use differ by anniversary year?

The Regional Level

Unlike the media level, regions and communities are not defined by a textual product; they do not produce “content” in the sense of something that can be meaningfully measured. Yet a variety of images, objects and texts are produced at the regional levels, and these may be analyzed and compared with qualitative methods. Study of the regional level will focus on the Shanksville area. This area includes not only the impact site in Stonycreek Township, but also the surrounding boroughs and towns of Somerset County, Pennsylvania. The Shanksville area will be home to an official memorial to Flight 93 at some point, but it has been a source of informal memorials since

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almost immediately after the crash. Studying the creation and interaction of objects and images in this area, the least-known of the three impact sites, will provide an understanding of informal memorialization practices, and investigation will be guided by Peirce’s (1991) idea of symbols as shared images. Investigation will be guided by a research question: How have images been used to memorialize September 11 in the Shanksville area?

Conclusion

This study examines how images have been used in constructing the memory of September 11, a question directed at America as a whole and at an individual impact site. These macro and micro levels of examination align with the particular-universal premise of collective memory by using two different-level windows onto the guiding concepts. The goal is not to increase the study’s validity so much as to conduct analysis that can improve our understanding of those concepts, as well as culture as a whole. The next section will use this study’s constructivist reading of the guiding concepts to identify two methods, case study and content analysis, for investigating the two levels of analysis.
The above reviews of collective memory and place show key commonalities. Each exists at the intersection of other concepts. Collective memory exists in the “vibration” between individual and group (Zelizer, 1995), and place can be understood either as an interplay of physical, mental and social realms (Sack, 2003) or more simply as space endowed with meaning (Tuan, 1977). In their shared emphasis on changing meanings, both place and collective memory lend themselves to a constructivist approach. In constructivist research, meaning is understood as situated and relative to the interaction at hand (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The concepts’ shared premises (procession, partialness, unpredictability, and so on) show that collective memory and place are constructions that are perpetually in a state of change, and they may be traced through a variety of materials. Investigations focused on absolute truth are irrelevant to collective memory studies beyond the truth of the immediate interaction. The constructivist researcher, serving as facilitator rather than dispassionate observer, enters a dialogue with subjects to better understand how meanings are constructed, maintaining the position that such meanings are situated and relative. Focus is on the process of construction as much as on what is constructed, and the larger motivation is to improve the quality of future constructions through understanding that process.

This study’s interest in meaning construction suggests descriptive and explanatory methods to be appropriate; a predictive approach would be at odds with the premises of
collective memory and place. Qualitative methods are valuable for research with a
descriptive goal because they seek to identify the existing conversation about something
and join it (Pauly, 1991). Cresswell (1998) presents five basic inductive (generalizable to
theory) approaches to qualitative investigation: Biography, ethnography, grounded
theory, phenomenology, and case study, each of which is appropriate to different
emphases of investigation. The regional level of this study is concerned with how a
complex instance, the Shanksville area’s memorialization of September 11, speaks to the
larger concepts of place, collective memory, and framing. Because the subject can be best
understood as “a phenomenon not readily distinguishable from its context” (Yin, 2003a,
p. 4), case study is an appropriate method with which to investigate the individual level
of Shanksville.

For the larger media level, which examines images used in multiple American
newspapers during September 11 anniversaries, case study is not feasible. Rather than
return to Cresswell’s (1998) qualitative suggestions, this research instead applied the
quantitative method of content analysis to get at this level. Although qualitative methods
are useful for descriptive research, they need not be the only approach considered. A
combination of methodologies can provide more satisfying depth and conclusion to
research and provides a more solid base for potential theory building (Mathison, 1988;
Shoemaker, Tankard & Lasorsa, 2003). Some quantitative approaches, however, are not
compatible with a constructivist reading of the place and collective memory concepts.
Content analysis is an appropriate measure because it is designed to describe content,
“and makes no claims beyond that” (Riffe, Lacy & Fico, 2005). The method is well-
suited to analysis of texts alone, which is the focus of the media level, and is often the
first study in an area. Used in conjunction with the study’s guiding concepts, content analysis of September 11 anniversary images described how the windows of different media use images to depict the sites of the attacks.

Taken in conjunction, the two levels can tell us much about how images have been used in memory construction. Depictions can be compared both within and across levels, incorporating the work of individuals and groups, local and far distant media. The result is not a complete picture of memory but a richer array of windows onto the concept, windows that we can look through in tandem. In addition, both of the methods used can, in describing the subjects of their levels, provide the building blocks for inductive theory building.

Content Analysis of Newspaper Photography

The news media are perhaps the primary source of collective memory (Zelizer, 1995; Kitch, 2002b) and of information about unfamiliar places (Hallin, 1986). Certainly at the time of the September 11 attacks, the media told most people what was happening, and the image of the burning and crumbling World Trade Center towers was repeated long after the event itself. When Flight 93 crashed in Stonycreek Township, Pennsylvania, just north of the borough of Shanksville, it was through the media that many learned just where that place was located, and this information came packaged with a place-as-subject message of what the town meant. Content analysis can describe how the media have presented the September 11 sites in the years after the attacks, but simply examining such presentations in all media is far too broad. Media messages come in many forms. To make investigation more specific and illuminating, this study examined newspaper photographs.
Content analysis was used to get at the ritual conventions and repetitions that characterize news photography. This method is appropriate for a first approach to study of how September 11 is remembered and how that remembrance is carried out in media practice. Content analysis is “the systematic assignment of communication content to categories according to rules, and the analysis of relationships involving those categories using statistical methods” (Riffe, Lacy & Fico, 2005, p. 3). A nonreactive method for the study of the symbols of communication, it often represents the earliest study in an area. Content analysis is based on the assumption that “a text means something to someone, it is produced by someone to have meanings for someone else” (Krippendorff, 2004, p. 19); this is remarkably similar to Carey’s call to interrogate journalism “as a text which said something about something to someone” (1974, p. 27). Analyzing content can reveal details of how that something was said, and this study’s guiding concepts further aid consideration of what that something might mean.

Sample

This study specifically examined news image use in anniversary coverage of September 11. At the time of this research, six such anniversaries had taken place. This study examined images specifically from the immediate anniversary period: September 10 to 12 of each of the first five anniversary years. Different years held different amounts of coverage throughout the year, so focusing on editions closest to the actual date allowed for clearer comparison of coverage from the anniversary itself. The focus on anniversary dates was expected to provide a great number and variety of images because of media efforts to play a strong role in covering and commemorating the event (e.g., Zelizer, 1990; Kitch, 2002b). Only the first five years were examined because this constitutes a
major cycle. Historian Marc Bloch (1971) has described the phenomenon of “hectohistory,” the tendency to parcel history into manageable chunks and “arbitrarily homogeneous segments” (p. 27); these often privilege multiples of five and 10 (e.g., “the Sixties,” “the Eighties”). Hectohistorical thinking is suggested by a simple count of the number of September 11 photographs present in the anniversary coverage of each of the four newspapers to be used in this study: The first anniversary saw the greatest number of September 11 photographs (see Table 4.1), with much lower numbers for each of the following anniversaries until the fifth, when the overall number of September 11 photographs increased once more.

Table 4.1. Images Used by Newspapers in 9/11 Anniversary Coverage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2002</th>
<th>2003</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New York Times</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington Post</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pittsburgh Post-Gazette</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Louis Post-Dispatch</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>764</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>283</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The photographs to be analyzed were drawn from the major newspapers of each of the three impact sites – the New York Times, the Washington Post, and the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette – as well as from a site-neutral newspaper, the St. Louis Post-Dispatch. Although September 11 was a national event, it was also a local one in the sense that the four airplanes crashed in three distinct locations. Examining the major newspapers that serve each of the impact sites allows comparison of the event as both national and regional phenomenon, and the inclusion of a site-neutral newspaper provides data that is
not connected to any of those localities. There are many large metro newspapers that could serve this role; the Post-Dispatch was chosen because it is well outside the region of the three impact site newspapers, because it was easily accessible to the researcher, and because, as a Midwestern publication, it serves a region often perceived as the heartland. This does not argue that Midwestern readers are a representative sample of all Americans, only that this publication is a valid selection for a perspective on September 11 that comes from outside the sites themselves but still is inside the place that is America.

Due to the high number of images on the news pages \(N=1,423\), coders coded only the top-left September 11 image on each news page; the top-left position is consistently marked as the first place readers look (e.g., Adams, Edmonds & Quinn, 2007), thus making it prime real estate and a useful position from which to draw images. Coding selections were made based on the photograph placed highest on the page; when two or more photographs were of equal height on the page, the leftmost image was coded. If there were no photographs on a page, the news image (graphic or illustration) that occupied the top-left position was coded. With 554 pages of September 11 images, this still resulted in a substantial number of units to code.

*Categories*

Content analysis requires categories into which data are sorted, and these categories may be manifest or latent (Krippendorff, 2004; Riffe, Lacy & Fico, 2005). Manifest content is content on its face, that is, it is apparent to and can be sorted fairly consistently by a reasonable person. Manifest categories in a study of newspaper images might include publication name, date, location, and other such clearly identifiable
information. Latent content is more subjective, dealing to some extent with coders’ sense of the content. It might include theme, mood, or other categories for which a judgment call is required. Coding for latent content can provide richness beyond simple demographic description, yet its subjectivity makes it potentially less reliable, so clear and comprehensive coding rules must be created.

This analysis mainly coded for manifest content. Coders first identified news images, each of which were coded for the following categories:

- **Newspaper:** Did the image appear in the *New York Times, Washington Post, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* or *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*?

- **Publication details:** On what day, year and page did the image run?

- **News image:** Is the image a photograph, an information graphic, or an illustration?

Because the emphasis of this study is on photography, only photographs were coded beyond this point (other types of images were coded at the above basic level in order to provide a more descriptive picture of image use). To test the place-themed hypotheses of this study, each photograph was coded for the following categories:

- **Site depicted:** Does the image show one of the impact sites (New York City, Washington, or Shanksville), or does it show a non-impact site (e.g., St. Louis, New Delhi)? For the purposes of this study, “site” refers to both the physical impact site and the larger region and community in which it is located. For example, a September 11 image from New York City that does not depict Ground Zero would still be coded as a site image. This approach to coding would be too broad on its own, but it is clarified by the next category.
Situation: Is an image situated at an impact site (the World Trade Center, the Pentagon, or the field north of Shanksville), is it situated in the surrounding region or community, or is it non-locatable (as with a mugshot or image taken from a media text such as a book cover or television frame)? Coders coded for one of two situation subcategories depending on an image’s site. Impact site images were coded as on-site or off-site respectively. Images not from an impact site are all equivalent to off-site images; like off-site images, they show a community’s activities beyond the site itself. Images not from an impact site were coded for Pittsburgh, St. Louis (these cities are specifically coded for to see how frequently they are depicted in memorial images from their respective newspapers), other American locations, international locations, and non-locatable images (see Appendix A for full codebook).

The above categories were used to test the study’s hypotheses through analysis of site and situation in image use over time and place. The hypotheses all draw on permutations of the manifest categories to explain how place is depicted, yet more detail can be gained by turning to a more specific examination of the kinds of images used. For this, an additional image type category was developed using the constant comparative approach.

Image Type Category Development

Because this study of September 11 anniversary images is a new direction for research, there is not a satisfactory existing category for describing the images to be examined. This study therefore developed a category for image type by using constant comparison, a grounded theory method. Grounded theorists collect data from interviews, observation, and texts, from which they form categories that are related into a model built
around the central phenomenon or process (Corbin & Strauss, 1990; Cresswell, 1998). The grounded theorist collects data from the phenomenon of interest without predictions, hypotheses, or expectations beyond one’s guiding research questions. Grounded theory serves as a more analytic alternative to previous qualitative approaches to theory building, which Glaser and Strauss (1967) argued were limited to either coding qualitative data “into crudely quantifiable form” (p. 101) or inspecting it to further develop existing theory. There are different methods that may be employed in grounded theory, but they all serve the end of drawing theory from the data at hand.

The Constant Comparative Method

The constant comparative method of grounded theory is a specific way of drawing categories from the data itself (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). In this approach, all units (in this study, individual photographs) are first compared and sorted into groups. The researcher should initially code units into as many groups as possible, comparing each to all others when making determinations. As the number of groups increases, coding will eventually begin to conflict, at which point the researcher should stop, record ideas about the process, and discuss the work with others. As discussion and coding continues and categories become interrelated, comparison moves from incident-incident to incident-group. Then the groups are integrated and developed into a set of categories that reflect a “unified whole” (p. 109). It is important for the researcher to note when theory begins to solidify, because the development is potentially endless but changes eventually become marginal. Once a category becomes theoretically saturated (additions to the variety of data distinction become marginal only), it no longer needs to be coded. Theory can then be drawn from the saturated categories.
An additional note on the relation of this study to grounded theory is necessary. Because constant comparison was used here primarily for category development, this study makes no claim to being a full-fledged grounded theory. However, grounded theory is based on the principle of continuous change, and the researcher must constantly test the theory and the relations of its categories (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). With this in mind, the content analysis also served as a means for testing that emerging theory and contributing to its future development.

Adding an image type category to the study deepened the description that the content analysis provided, and using a constant comparative approach kept this latent category close to the texts it analyzed. The constant comparative approach satisfies a key requirement of content analysis categories, that they be relevant, exhaustive, and mutually exclusive (W. Benoit, personal communication, July 12, 2006). Categories drawn from a set of data are by their nature relevant to that data; pursuing category development to the point where additional changes cease or become marginal makes them exhaustive; and the act of sorting all data into distinct categories requires that those categories be mutually exclusive. Because it was inductively developed, the resultant image type category is closer to latent content than are the other categories, which are based on manifest content such as publication, date and place. Because it was uncertain what kinds of images would be common in September 11 anniversary coverage, the data itself was used to develop such a category.

Image Type Category

The data was in the form of full newspaper pages printed in black and white from microfilm on 8.5 by 11 inch pages. This form was used for this study because it was
comparable, sortable, and maintained the news page context in which a given image appeared. It was slightly problematic for category development, however, because many pages had more than one September 11 image. For the purposes of sorting, each page was sorted according to a single photograph, the image most toward the top and (secondarily) the left of the page; because photography is the main focus of this study, graphics or illustrations appearing in this position were disregarded, and pages with only graphics or illustrations were set aside during category development.

The single-image sorting decision certainly excluded a number of images, but the resulting categories should still be considered exhaustive if properly developed to theoretical saturation (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The decision draws from the principles of constant comparison and grounded theory. Although the choice was made in part to make sorting more manageable, the number of images considered was still quite high, as was the number of piles resulting from the process. The pages sorted in category development came from all four newspapers for 2002 and 2006 ($N=310,127$), the first and fifth anniversaries respectively, with the intervening anniversaries to be examined only if changes had not yet become marginal (note that, while only 2002 and 2006 were examined here, all years were still coded for content analysis). The term “marginal” is used in its grounded theory sense, referring to the point at which new piles become both rare and less distinct from existing piles (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). The grounded theory approach dictates that at this point theoretical saturation has been reached, at least for the data at hand, and sorted piles may be solidified into categories whose interrelations may be considered. If changes do not become marginal, the next step would be to consider the intervening years, then the additional images on each page. Once changes to the existing
set of categories is judged marginal, the researcher may turn to the content analysis as a means of testing the categories’ utility and identifying their relationships through the hypotheses and research questions. This testing may reveal flaws in the fledgling theory, but that is a necessary part of the process (Corbin & Strauss, 1990).

Case Study

Case study is a kind of umbrella approach, incorporating methods within itself to answer some larger question about the case. This method arises from a desire to understand complex social phenomena while retaining “holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events” (Yin, 2003, p. 3). A primary research question guides the selection of the methods used under the case study mantle, and single or multiple cases may be used. Data typically includes qualitative staples such as archives, interviews, questionnaires and observations, but quantitative evidence may also be incorporated, which can help researchers avoid “being carried away by vivid, but false, impressions in qualitative data” (Eisenhardt, 1989, p. 538).

A case study formulates a research question, and its investigators abide by a well-formulated protocol (see Appendix B). The protocol consists of a project overview (issues, objectives, background, literature, scope, methods), field procedures (access to research sites, scheduling, case selection rationale), a design matrix for questions and data collection, case study question details (including questionnaires, observation guides, and lists of documents and photographs to take), and a guide for the outline, format, and audience of the final report (Yin, 2003). Decisions about the goal of the case study determine whether it is descriptive, seeking to show only how a given case exists or took place (e.g., Nelkin, 2004), or explanatory, making some sort of argument as to why the
case happened as it did (e.g., Kelling & Coles, 2004). The narrative format of case study can also serve prescriptive ends, presenting a picture of a complex system as a way to understand how to make improvements (e.g., Smith & Dowell, 2000). Because there are so many forms and goals for case study, it is useful to more deeply consider what defines the method.

*Case Study Criteria*

The case study method itself is qualitative, but it can be difficult to understand because of its umbrella nature. If not properly defined, case study can be hard to distinguish from ethnographic or historical methods, but Yin (2003) sets the method apart as empirical inquiry that “investigates a *contemporary phenomenon* (italics added) within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (p. 13). The “contemporary” aspect distances case study from history, while the focus on the phenomena rather than the group distinguishes it from ethnography. As part of the qualitative family of methods that Cresswell (1998) describes, however, case study shares many elements with similar approaches, and drawing clear lines between them is not so important as making sure case study is performed properly.

There are three conditions that help determine if case study is an appropriate strategy for an investigation (Yin, 2003). First, case studies are best suited to “how” or “why” research questions because such questions deal with “operational links needing to be traced over time, rather than mere frequencies or incidence” (p. 7). Different questions produce different case studies, which may be exploratory, descriptive, or explanatory. This distinction is drawn from the guiding research question. An exploratory study, as the
name suggests, is concerned with “what happened” in a relatively unexplored area; a
descriptive study might ask a “how” question about the case as it functions normally or in
some specific instance; and an explanatory study attempts to answer “why” questions,
focused on the reasons and processes that influenced a case to progress in a certain way.

Next, the control a researcher has over behavioral events determines whether case
study is the right choice. Unlike some history, which deals with a “dead” past, that is, one
with few or no subjects alive to report on events, or experimentation, which relies on
researcher-controlled conditions to make comparisons, case study deals with
contemporary events; the goal is neither historical distance nor the manipulation of
variables. Further, the method involves direct observation of events when possible, draws
on artifacts, documents, and archives, and incorporates interviews with participants to
understand both those events and their ongoing influence as perceived by those involved.
It should be noted, however, that a number of historical studies do take place under the
case study rubric (e.g., Smith, 2005). Such examples show that case study methods can
be broadly interpreted, but also that there is still some confusion about what the method
is.

Finally, and as mentioned above, case study must focus on contemporary events.
This criterion distinguishes case study from historical methods, although these methods
can be incorporated under the case study mantle. Once again, the intention here is to
distinguish case study as a method with its own strengths and emphases, not to strictly
separate its methods from those of other overarching methods such as history. A case
study researcher is certainly not barred from use of historical materials such as archival
documents in building his or her argument, but the contemporary focus makes the
difference. In sum, case study is a good choice for research when “a ‘how’ or ‘why’ question is being asked about a contemporary set of events, over which the investigator has little or no control” (Yin, 2003, p. 9). This study’s interest in how images have been used at a specific site to construct memory of an event makes it a good candidate for case study.

**Qualitative Criteria**

One can further assess a case study by seeing if it meets the requirements of a qualitative study; Christians and Carey (1989) provide four such criteria. Qualitative study requires *naturalistic observation*, with observers entering the actual situation and becoming familiar with its vocabulary, imagery, and symbolic activity. In the study at hand, interviews and observation were conducted at the Shanksville site as a way of meeting this criterion. *Contextualization* is necessary for the researcher and his or her audience to understand the meaning of observed acts. By letting residents talk about the images they have seen and made, this study retains their vocabulary; context is further retained by incorporating study of local media coverage as well as through the parallel content analysis of national media images. Qualitative study also seeks *maximized comparisons* by embracing diverse comparative units; Christians and Carey warn that this criterion should not be understood as code for comprehensiveness or strict random sampling, but rather as a call to understand how individuals fit diverse concepts (status, race, death, etc.) into a meaningful frame of social existence. By incorporating interviews, observation, media text analysis and site visits, this study provides a rich array of units for comparison. Lastly, qualitative study relies on *sensitized concepts* that are “meaningful to the people themselves, yet sufficiently powerful to explain large
domains of social experience” (p. 369). The grounded theory approach discussed in the previous section is a strong example of how sensitized concepts may be developed. Further, in this study the guiding concepts of place and collective memory must be regularly assessed against the observations at hand to be sure they remain sensitized to their subjects.

Case study is valuable in allowing a multiplicity of methods to be integrated under that guiding question rather than be placed side-by-side. In this, it maintains the case’s “webs of significance,” those linkages in human meaning-making that Geertz (1973) argues must be maintained in effective research. Case study inquiry, according to Yin (2003), “copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points, and as one result relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion” (p. 13). The method thus allows for multiple and unexpected variables rather than attempt to predict what will be important beforehand. Because its result is integrated narrative, not a juxtaposition of parallel studies, case study better maintains the case’s original context and, further, provides a stronger inductive link from case to theory.

The Shanksville case

This project applied case study to the memorialization of September 11 through objects and images at the Shanksville site. This study examined the Shanksville area because, of the three impact sites, it is the least known on a national level. Studying this case allows for exploration both of the memorialization process and of a September 11 site that may be less widely understood than the others. Unlike New York City or Washington, D.C., there was no national narrative about Shanksville prior to September
11, 2001; after that date, media mainly invoked Shanksville as mere setting rather than as a site with a story that preceded the attacks. Thus the national understanding of Shanksville is likely much more limited than that for either of the other sites to begin with. In addition, it is valuable to understand how memorialization plays out when disaster takes place in residents’ backyards. The case study’s guiding research question asked how the residents of Shanksville and its vicinity have used images to construct the memory of that place’s role in September 11. To answer this, the case study incorporated ethnographic observation of the site and the different memorials there, interviews with residents about the images and objects they have made, examination of archived “tributes” left at the area’s memorials and of documents such as local newspapers, and analysis of regional newspaper photography.

Individuals’ ideas about images were central to this level of the study. Because case study serves as a mantle for other methods, the study also drew on other methods that have been used to gauge individuals’ responses to photographs. One such approach is that of photo-elicitation, where participants are interviewed about photographs of subjects with which they have experience. Photo-elicitation has been used to explore the responses of recovering drug addicts (Smith & Woodward, 1999) and survivors of domestic violence (Smith & Whitney, 2002) to images experiences similar to their own. Another approach, Q-methodology, develops categories based on respondents’ ideas of what an image communicates. This method has been used to compare different groups’ interpretations of particular photographers’ work, as with the images of Robert Frank (Nesterenko & Smith, 1989) and Diane Arbus (Smith, 1985).
Where the above methods get at perceptions of images, other methods use images as a means to understanding other things. Both visitor- and resident-employed photography draw on individuals’ interpretations of images they themselves have made (Stedman, et al., 2004). Residents of or visitors to a place are given disposable cameras and asked to photograph the area over some period of time, after which the researcher develops the photographs and interviews participants about the images they made. The user-employed photography approach is another way to get at the qualitative emphasis on context and retaining subjects’ vocabularies. Rather than limit the study only to vocabularies of word, the incorporation of image-making allows examination of a different form of communication. This study drew on tenets of the image-based methods described here, interviewing subjects about the images that they and others have made, and interpreted those interviews using the previous studies’ guidance.

The case study was investigated in the Shanksville area through interviews with residents and journalists, observation of practices and memorial artifacts, and analysis of documents and archives linked to the site and the event’s memorialization. The process began with easily accessed sources such as library archives, local journalists, and park service officials. As connections were made, further leads were pursued until the case study narrative was sufficiently developed, and this process was documented in field notes (see Appendix C for field notes detailing this process). The results are presented in narrative form, as is typical of case study research (Yin, 2003a). Additional information and primary source citations are provided in footnotes so as not to interfere with the narrative, and false names are used except where participants were public or prominent figures.
This approach does not claim that examining Shanksville will reveal the “true” meaning of that place, but rather that such examination provides a different perspective on a place that many people only became aware of after a tragic event. By examining the images made by Shanksville’s residents and media and seeing and hearing how they describe their place, readers may better understand a perspective that may be absent from the September 11 memory.
CHAPTER V: IMAGES OF SEPTEMBER 11 AT THE MEDIA LEVEL

This chapter reports the results of the constant comparative process of category development and of the content analysis of newspapers’ September 11 anniversary image use. Although the primary purpose of the content analysis was to test the study’s several place-oriented hypotheses, the method was also used to test the image type category developed through constant comparison. The results of intercoder reliability testing are presented prior to the content analysis results, and these include the agreements for the image type category.

Results of the Constant Comparative Process

Although avoiding most outside theoretical guidance allows for the “discovery” of the grounded theory process (Corbin & Strauss, 1990; Glaser & Strauss, 1967), some guidance was needed for the consideration of image content. On the one hand, it has been argued that because images are “complex and unstable articulations” (Hariman & Lucaites, 2003, p. 37), they often require the context of words to direct their interpretation. However, some have argued that too much reliance on contextual information can distract from consideration of the image itself (e.g., DeLuca, 2006). In all cases, the image was assessed by focusing on the question “What does this show?” This question was also presented to content analysis coders as a guide for their work.

The individual pile of papers was the working unit of this analysis, and the movement and orientation of piles was constantly noted and updated. The grounded
theory process is based not merely on categorization but on how those categories are related; this is what provides its explanatory power (Corbin & Strauss, 1990). Although extensive notes on thoughts and emergent groups were taken throughout, variety of data was prized over consolidation for as long as possible. Literally, this means that piles were rarely merged, but instead were regularly repositioned to indicate the perceived relationships between them. Because no studies that applied grounded theory to images were found, the constant comparative process relied most heavily on the memoranda taken throughout category development. The collected piles of units continuously shifted and separated as new comparisons challenged older ideas about what belonged with what.

On completing analysis of the first anniversary’s images, a list was made of what was in each pile. This step back allowed assessment before continuing the process with the fifth anniversary images, and provided memoranda for later reference. Changes had become fairly marginal well before all first anniversary images had been sorted, but developing a set of categories from this data alone would be invalid in light of Bloch’s (1971) hectohistory premise – the expected fifth-year resurgence in coverage may well have presented significantly different image types. On investigation, however, new developments in the fifth anniversary images were limited. Only three new piles arose, and these were closely situated next to existing groups of piles. At this point of seeming theoretical saturation, more specific categorical development could be pursued.

Five image categories coalesced from the body of data: History, Materials, Rituals & Practices, Perspective, and Outcomes. In addition, each of these categories comprises
several subcategories. In all cases, the September 11 nature of the image should be clear and not inferred.

History includes the images of the event, its participants, and of the linkages that have been made to it. This category is made up of three subcategories. Event images show what happened during the event itself. These include not only the moment of destruction or impact, but also the immediate response from that day or days. Dead and departed includes images of what can no longer be seen, both victims killed and things destroyed. Such images come from prior to the event and show how things were or what they looked like. Connections and explanations attempt to explain how the event happened, what led to it, and may also attempt to make linkages to other elements of the past.

Materials are focused on objects; there may be people in the image, but the object is the main focus. There are four subcategories of materials. Memorials and tributes show things like shrines, official and unofficial memorials, and may also feature objects (“tributes”) left in remembrance. These may also show such objects under construction. Sites and artifacts are images of an impact site itself or objects at or taken from a site or otherwise produced by the events of September 11; these images emphasize a site rather than things humans have done or left there. Communicative texts are media and textual objects. These may be September 11 themed or the September 11 linkage may be made by the story; context is necessary to identify these images because they may resemble other types of image (examples of media and text images might be book covers or stills from television programs). Drawings, photographs, and other artwork may also be considered communicative texts so long as they are not depicted as memorials and
tributes. The coder should determine whether such an image is of a site or object (such as the World Trade Center) or is of a text (e.g., an image from a book or movie) that happens to depict that object.

Rituals & practices show actions, both individual and collective, in response to the event. The category is made up of three subcategories. Individual actors are photographs of people or groups who have responded in personal ways; one example is an image of a man who has written a poem every day since September 11. This type of image focuses on the individual person or group rather than what he, she or they has made (if the focus of the image is on the object, it would be coded as memorials and tributes). Grief and interaction are images of mourning and consolation that are personal and individual; for example, survivors comforting each other at Ground Zero. Grief and interaction images may also show interaction with objects or texts (e.g., a photograph showing viewers reacting to televised footage), but only if coders determine that such interaction is the image’s focus. Ceremonies and events depict larger, organized commemorations such as vigils, parades, and moments of silence.

Perspectives involve individual responses about meaning, not only with regard to the events of September 11 but also the resultant actions, events, and texts that stem from it. The category is made up of four subcategories. Survivors and responders are those who were at the scene and immediately involved with the events of September 11. This category also includes surviving entities, such as displaced or directly affected businesses. Family and friends are those who lost loved ones in the event. Experts and officials involve perspectives from official positions of authority. Other individuals are
those who did not experience the event firsthand or through the loss of a loved and are presented as individuals rather than from any position of event-related expertise.

For all subcategories of perspectives, coders should be made aware that they are coding for images that are linked to a perspective story. Merely depicting a survivor or family member does not place an image into the perspectives category. In all cases, coders should use context units to determine whether the image is linked to a story about the depicted individual’s perspective (for example, survivors discussing their views of September 11 or its aftermath), or whether the individual is depicted within another image type (for example, an image of a mourning mother at Ground Zero would likely be coded as rituals: grief and interaction, not as perspectives: family and friends).

Outcomes show the world today and since the event. Ongoing response images show what is happening specifically in response to the event; examples are official acts or military response (so long as the September 11 connection is explicit). World today images attempt to show what things are like now (such as images of economic activity). The final subcategory, juxtaposed symbols, requires special attention. This type involves images of September 11 outcomes placed in combination with existing symbols; examples are images of barred gates in front of national monuments and security guards patrolling sites like the Golden Gate Bridge. The seeming frequency of this type of images led to its being considered as a category of its own, and the presence of clearly identifiable symbols is what differentiates it from other outcome images.

Intercoder Agreement for Content Analysis

Two coders were used in this study. Intercoder reliability was assessed by having each of the individuals code an overlapping 12 percent of all data (n=68). This coded data
was assessed for intercoder reliability of each category using Krippendorff’s \textit{alpha}. This coefficient can accommodate more than two coders and can address multiple levels of measurement, thus allowing comparison with a greater variety of future studies (Krippendorff, 2003).

Reliability for publication information (newspaper, day, date, year, and page) and news image type (photograph, graphic, or illustration) was perfect (1.0), which was expected because this data was either clearly manifest, as with the publication information listed at the top of each page, or easily distinguished, as with news image types.

Reliability for the place-based categories was near-perfect, .98 for site and .99 for situation. Reliability for image type and its subcategories was lower but still acceptable: .73 for the five main image types, and .77 for the 15 subcategories. These levels of agreement were especially encouraging considering the categories were newly developed. It should be noted, however, that coders underwent considerable training and testing to ensure accurate distinction of the multiple categories; such preparation would be necessary in future uses of the image type category. Further observed agreement issues will be addressed in discussion.

Results of Content Analysis

The purpose of this study was to examine how September 11 images were used over place and time. Out of the data set of news images ($N=619$), 554 units (89.5\%) were photographs, and these were coded for place and image type. Frequencies were calculated for all interactions, and \textit{chi-square} was calculated on the results when that statistic’s assumptions could be met.
Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1a predicted newspapers would have the greatest percentage of images of the site closest to them. The combined frequency of images of each impact site in its closest newspaper (World Trade Center for New York, Pentagon for Washington, and Shanksville for Pittsburgh) was compared with images of all other sites in those newspapers (see Table 5.1.1). The resulting comparison supported this, $x^2(1, N = 288) = 116.28, p < .0001$.

Table 5.1.1. Use of all site images in impact site newspapers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Images of a site in its closest newspaper</th>
<th>Images of a site in other newspapers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>236 (82%)</td>
<td>52 (18%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$x^2(1, N = 288) = 116.28, p < .0001$

Table 5.1.2. Newspaper use of on-site, off-site, and non-impact-site images

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>WTC</th>
<th>PEN</th>
<th>SV</th>
<th>NI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NYT (Site: WTC)</td>
<td>117 (60%)</td>
<td>7 (4%)</td>
<td>4 (2%)</td>
<td>68 (35%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WP (Site: PEN)</td>
<td>19 (11%)</td>
<td>103 (57%)</td>
<td>1 (1%)</td>
<td>57 (32%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPG (Site: SV)</td>
<td>21 (28%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>16 (22%)</td>
<td>37 (50%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPD (Site: NI)</td>
<td>22 (21%)</td>
<td>7 (7%)</td>
<td>3 (3%)</td>
<td>72 (69%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>179 (32%)</td>
<td>117 (21%)</td>
<td>24 (4%)</td>
<td>234 (42%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Bold font indicates closest site to the newspaper.

A more detailed table, while not representative of the above chi-square statistic, shows how the sites were depicted in the different newspapers (see Table 5.1.2). In this table, images of the World Trade Center, Pentagon, and Shanksville seem to account for greater percentages of images (60%, 57%, and 22%, respectively) in the nearest major newspapers than in other newspapers. The table also includes images from the St. Louis Post-Dispatch (SPD; a site-neutral newspaper) and non-impact-site images; non-impact-
site images were more frequent in that site-neutral St. Louis newspaper (69% of its images) than were images of any of the impact sites.

Hypothesis 1b predicted an impact site’s closest newspaper would show off-site images of that site in a greater percentage of images than did other newspapers (see Table 5.2.1), and this was supported, \( \chi^2(1, N = 194) = 120.66, p < .0001 \). The high percentage of off-site images in an impact site’s closest newspaper (90%) was even higher than the percentage of all images of a site in the closest newspaper (82%).

Table 5.2.1. Use of off-site images in impact site newspapers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Off-site images of a site in its closest newspaper</th>
<th>Off-site images of a site in other newspapers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>174 (90%)</td>
<td>20 (10%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\( \chi^2(1, N = 194) = 120.66, p < .0001 \)

A more detailed breakdown of impact site newspapers’ image use frequencies suggests that, as with the previous hypothesis regarding all images, most off-site images of a given site were run in the closest newspaper to that site (see Table 5.2.2). In addition, the newspapers of both St. Louis and Pittsburgh (itself neighboring but not part of the Shanksville site) listed far greater percentages (89% and 77%) of non-impact-site-images in comparison with those of the New York and Washington newspapers (45% and 37%).

Table 5.2.2. Newspaper use of off-site images

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>WTC</th>
<th>PEN</th>
<th>SV</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NYT (Site: WTC)</td>
<td>79 (94%)</td>
<td>5 (6%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WP (Site: PEN)</td>
<td>8 (8%)</td>
<td>91 (92%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPG (Site: SV)</td>
<td>7 (64%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>4 (36%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>101 (48%)</td>
<td>98 (49%)</td>
<td>4 (2%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Bold font indicates the off-site images of the closest site.
Hypotheses 2a and 2b predicted that the World Trade Center and Shanksville sites would be depicted in the highest and lowest percentage of images, respectively, for all newspapers. A goodness of fit test for depictions of the three impact sites, \( x^2(2, N = 320) = 115.121, p < .001 \), confirmed that there were differences in their overall frequencies of depiction (see Table 5.3.1).

**Table 5.3.1. Goodness of fit for site depictions in all newspapers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>WTC</th>
<th>PEN</th>
<th>SV</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WTC</td>
<td>179 (56%)</td>
<td>117 (37%)</td>
<td>24 (8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PEN</td>
<td>( x^2(2, N = 320) = 115.121, p &lt; .001 )</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although the above frequencies suggest confirmation of the hypotheses, *chi-square* cannot tell which of the three values is greatest or least. To test these hypotheses, goodness of fit tests were conducted on each possible pairing of the sites (see Table 5.3.2). Both hypotheses were confirmed. The World Trade Center was depicted in more images than the Pentagon, \( x^2(1, N = 296) = 12.58, p < .001 \), or the Shanksville site, \( x^2(1, N = 203) = 116.82, p < .001 \). The Shanksville site was also depicted in fewer images than the Pentagon site, \( x^2(1, N = 141) = 60.02, p < .0001 \).

**Table 5.3.2. Goodness of fit for World Trade Center and Shanksville depictions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>WTC</th>
<th>PEN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WTC</td>
<td>179 (60%)</td>
<td>117 (40%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PEN</td>
<td>( x^2(1, N = 296) = 12.58, p &lt; .001 )</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WTC</td>
<td>179 (88%)</td>
<td>24 (12%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SV</td>
<td>( x^2(1, N = 203) = 116.82, p &lt; .001 )</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SV</td>
<td>24 (17%)</td>
<td>117 (83%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PEN</td>
<td>( x^2(1, N = 141) = 60.02, p &lt; .0001 )</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Hypothesis 3 predicted that there would be differences in the use of off-site images in different years. This hypothesis was also confirmed, $x^2(4, N = 320) = 42.58$, $p<.001$. Although *chi-square* cannot identify where differences are located, the data suggest a change in the use of off-site imagery in 2006, the fifth anniversary of the attacks (see Table 5.4). The percentage of off-site images used this year (42%) is 23% lower than the mean of the previous four years, and 31% lower than the percentage used in the first anniversary.

**Table 5.4. Depictions of situations in anniversary years**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>On-site</th>
<th>Off-site</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>38 (27%)</td>
<td>105 (73%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>14 (33%)</td>
<td>29 (67%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>16 (44%)</td>
<td>20 (56%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>13 (36%)</td>
<td>23 (64%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>36 (58%)</td>
<td>26 (42%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>117 (37%)</td>
<td>203 (63%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$x^2(4, N = 320) = 42.58, p<.001$

**Research Questions**

The two research questions were aimed at the use of the image type category developed for this study. Research question 1 asked how use of image types would differ by site. Cell frequencies did not meet the assumptions of chi-square, which requires that no more than 20% of cell frequencies may be less than 5, so the reported frequency results are not statistically generalizable.
Table 5.5.1. *Use of image types to depict impact sites*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>History</th>
<th>Materials</th>
<th>Rituals &amp; Practices</th>
<th>Perspectives</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WTC</td>
<td>13 (7%)</td>
<td>57 (31%)</td>
<td>74 (40%)</td>
<td>30 (16%)</td>
<td>10 (5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PEN</td>
<td>3 (3%)</td>
<td>14 (12%)</td>
<td>51 (44%)</td>
<td>21 (18%)</td>
<td>28 (24%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SV</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>9 (38%)</td>
<td>13 (54%)</td>
<td>2 (8%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>16 (5%)</td>
<td>80 (25%)</td>
<td>138 (42%)</td>
<td>53 (16%)</td>
<td>38 (12%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These frequency data suggest that rituals and practices accounted for most of the image types used, accounting for the largest percentages of images both overall (42%) and for depictions of each impact site (see Table 5.5.1). Materials images were also quite common, making up a quarter of usage overall, and were the second most common image type used to depict both the World Trade Center and Shanksville sites. The Shanksville site, in fact, appeared to be almost entirely limited to these two image types. History images had the lowest proportions and tended to be used in connection with the World Trade Center site. Outcomes seemed to have the most variation of frequency, with the type never used to represent the Shanksville site yet making up 24% of Pentagon images, the second-most for that site.

The above analysis of off-site imagery, especially hypotheses 1b and 3, led to further interest in how image types were used in off-site images. An additional analysis was conducted of image types across each newspaper’s use of off-site or non-impact-site images of its coverage area. For New York and Washington, off-site images of the World Trade Center and Pentagon (respectively), were used; for Pittsburgh and St. Louis, non-impact-site images of those cities were respectively used. The history image type was removed from consideration because, under the above criteria, these images were rarely situated and each newspaper had approximately zero instances of the type.
Table 5.5.2. *Image type use for closest off-site or home site images*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Materials</th>
<th>Rituals &amp; Practices</th>
<th>Perspectives</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NYT</td>
<td><strong>31 (39%)</strong></td>
<td>14 (18%)</td>
<td><strong>26 (33%)</strong></td>
<td>8 (10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WP</td>
<td>7 (8%)</td>
<td>40 (44%)</td>
<td>20 (22%)</td>
<td><strong>24 (26%)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPG</td>
<td>3 (14%)</td>
<td><strong>11 (50%)</strong></td>
<td>7 (32%)</td>
<td>1 (5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPD</td>
<td>11 (24%)</td>
<td>16 (36%)</td>
<td>12 (27%)</td>
<td>6 (13%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>52 (22%)</td>
<td>81 (34%)</td>
<td>65 (27%)</td>
<td>39 (16%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$x^2(9, N = 237) = 42.00, p<.001$

The resulting comparison was statistically significant, $x^2(9, N = 237) = 42.00,$ $p<.001,$ and showed a range of uses (see Table 5.5.2). Although image proportions are changed because of the removal of the history type, that type had only accounted for 5% of all images. Rituals and practices retained high proportions, but the perspectives image type grew to 20-30% of images used for all newspapers, a considerable increase from the previous consideration of all site images (see Table 5.5.1), which reached 18% at its highest. The *New York Times* used the highest percentage of materials (39%) and perspectives (33%) images, the *Washington Post* used the highest percentage of outcomes images (26%), and the Pittsburgh *Post-Gazette* used the highest percentage of practices images (50%); the St. Louis *Post-Dispatch* seemed to have less variation in its use of these types, so lacked any such high usages. Overall, use of image types in localized off-site images did appear to be different from use as a whole.

Research question 2 asked how newspapers’ use of image types would change over time, and image type use was compared for each anniversary year. There were significant differences in these uses, $x^2(16, N = 554) = 32.078, p<.01.$
Although *chi-square* does not indicate where the differences are located, some general observations may be made (see Table 5.6). Of the image types, materials is the only one that seems to make a fairly consistent increase from the first anniversary (17%) to the fifth (35%). The history type seems most consistent in its use over the years, with its mean of 7% quite similar to usage in both 2002 (7%) and 2006 (8%). The rituals and practices type saw a spike to 44% in 2003 followed by a drop to 26% in 2004 before returning to the 30% range in 2005 and 2006, while the perspectives and outcomes types each seemed to hover around their respective means of 15% and 17%, both of which saw their highest percentages in 2004.

The subtypes within the image type category have not been extensively discussed because comparison of these appears to be inconclusive. These were a useful tool for identifying image types with more specificity and for describing those types in more depth, but frequencies were too low to provide much more than clarification at this time. Their presentation would likely not be useful even for descriptive purposes. Further coding and analysis of other event coverage would be helpful to this end.
Conclusion of Content Analysis

The above description of 9/11 images used by major site media sets the stage for the next level of this study, the case study of image use within the Shanksville community. Starting with the larger picture of 9/11 constructed by major media contributes to a macro-level understanding of the images that have been seen and shared by many. Next, the study turns to those images that have been seen by far fewer. The above results confirm the expectation that images of the Shanksville site are rare. As mentioned, the loss of life and destruction of property were considerably lower in the Shanksville crash, yet considering its role as a September 11 impact site, it remains surprising that so few images have been seen, even in the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette’s coverage. Case study analysis is intended to show the memorialization practices in Shanksville that major media have not.
On September 11, 2001, United Airlines Flight 93 crashed into a field in Stonycreek Township, Somerset County, Pennsylvania, just north of the borough of Shanksville. The guiding research question for this case study asks how residents of the Shanksville area have created and used images and objects to memorialize this event. The Shanksville area is a site of significance because of Flight 93, so the details of that event, of the area, and of residents’ immediate interactions with the event will first be provided. Following this is a case study of image-making and use at the site. This consists of two major components: The signs, symbols and structures that have been made, and the way in which individuals have interacted with these images and objects.

False names are used throughout the study to protect participants’ anonymity except in cases were individuals are speaking as officials (e.g., National Park Service workers) or highly recognizable or public figures (e.g., local journalists); a list of all interviews, with false names indicated, is attached (see Appendix D). Case study results are typically written as a narrative (Yin, 2003b), so citations of primary sources such as interviews and newspaper archives will be placed in footnotes to minimize interruptions; secondary scholarly sources will be cited in-text as usual. Throughout, the guiding cultural concepts of place and collective memory will inform the products and practices observed in the Shanksville area.
Flight 93 and the Shanksville Area

Details of the Event

Flight 93 took off from Liberty International Airport in Newark, New Jersey, at 8:42 a.m. on September 11 for its flight to Los Angeles. Along with the 33 passengers and seven crew members, there were four hijackers aboard, according to The 9/11 Commission Report (2004). These hijackers were part of the 19 men who boarded four planes on September 11; with each plane carrying up to 11,400 gallons of fuel, the group planned “to hijack these planes and turn them into large guided missiles” (p. 4). The flight had been delayed from its scheduled 8:00 a.m. departure due to heavy morning traffic at the airport, but United and the FAA were not aware of the multiple hijackings until around 9:00 a.m., after Flight 93 was in the air. At 9:07 a.m., FAA controllers began advising airborne aircraft to increase cockpit security, but no warning message was sent to Flight 93 until 9:23 a.m. Captain Jason Dahl responded with a request for clarification, and it was soon after this, at 9:28 a.m., that the hijackers attacked.

The Flight 93 hijacking differed from those of the other three planes in several ways, according to The 9/11 Commission Report (2004). The hijacker team for Flight 93 had only four men, compared to five for the others (a fifth man suspected to be set for Flight 93 had been refused entry to the country in August). The Flight 93 hijacking took place 46 minutes after takeoff; the others had all been initiated within 30 minutes. And where the other flights had all taken off within 10 to 15 minutes of the scheduled times, Flight 93 had been delayed by more than 25 minutes. Radio transmissions and flight data recordings provide evidence of some struggle and of the hijackers attempting to announce
to the passengers and crew that there was a bomb on board (the report suggests that, due to incompetence, this message may not have actually gotten to the passengers).

By 9:32 a.m., a number of passengers and crew members were making airphone and cellular phone calls to family and friends, getting outside information about the other attacks and providing accounts of what was happening in the air. According to the report, the passengers voted to revolt in an attempt to take back the plane; this began at 9:57 a.m., and some sounds of the struggle were recorded by the cockpit voice recorder. Just prior to 10:00 a.m., the hijacker pilot began to roll and pitch the airplane in an attempt to thwart the passengers. After repeatedly asking whether to “finish it off” – at one point, another hijacker responded, “No. Not yet. When they all come, we finish it off” (p. 14) – the hijacker pilot was told to end it all. At around 10:02 a.m., the plane crashed into the field north of Shanksville “at 580 miles per hour, about 20 minutes’ flying time from Washington, D.C.” According to the report, “Jarrah’s (the hijacker pilot) objective was to crash his airline into symbols of the American Republic, the Capitol or the White House. He was defeated by the alerted, unarmed passengers of United 93” (p. 14). Not only did the Flight 93 hijackers fail to destroy one symbolic site, but their actions and those of the passengers produced a new one in the Shanksville area.

Response from the Shanksville Area

Shanksville, Pennsylvania, is a mainly residential borough.¹ Its residents work in regional industry, mainly coal mining and agricultural operations; there are a number of

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¹ One finds somewhat different stories of the origin of the name “Shanksville” in the area. If entering the borough from the west on Stutzmantown Road, a sign indicates that Shanksville was founded by early settler Christian Shank, but a local information booklet says Shanksville was “named for the German Family Schenkes who established a grist mill on the Stonycreek River in 1798.” Sister Anne Francis Pulling’s *Somerset County*,
small and home-based craft stores in the area, which serve as supplemental income for some. The 2006 population of Shanksville was estimated at 227, with neighboring Stoystown estimated at 400 and Stonycreek Township at 2,221.\(^2\) About half of its residents are retired, and many were born and raised in the area (Pulling, 2007). Shanksville can be difficult to find, but it is relatively easy to navigate once there: At the main crossroads of Bridge and Main streets, one finds Ida’s General Store (named for former owner Ida Spangler) and the fire hall; the post office is a little to the south of this, and the elementary and high school building is a short way down Main Street to the east. Heading north from Shanksville on Lambertsville Road for a few miles brings one to Skyline Road, which leads to the impact site.

Residents tend to point out that the Flight 93 crash was not the first highly publicized disaster in this area. About 30 miles to the north lies Johnstown, the site of the devastating flood of 1889. When a dam burst flooded the thriving iron and steel city, “an estimated two hundred photographers rushed to Johnstown to record what was clearly the greatest natural disaster of the nineteenth century” (Degen & Degen, 2000, p. 1). A more recent incident was that of nine trapped miners in nearby Quecreek, which took place in July 2002. Although of a smaller scale, the story of the nine men trapped for three days in a 240-foot pit drew national attention and shared cover space in local newspapers with...

\(^2\) United States Census Bureau. (n.d.). Retrieved July 1, 2008, from http://www.census.gov. In addition, the nearby county seat of Somerset was estimated to have a population of 18,187 (6,468 in Somerset borough, 11,719 in Somerset Township). Somerset County as a whole was estimated at 78,508 residents.
September 11th anniversary stories. One newspaper columnist proposed her own theory about the region, arguing that a 1998 string of tornadoes in Salisbury, Pennsylvania, prepared residents to respond: “Disaster hitting a small community made us rely on each other for strength, for help, for hope. … I wonder if [victims’ family members at the other impact sites] were welcomed into homes and community as they have been here.”

Residents of the Shanksville area immediately noticed the physical impact of the Flight 93 crash. Some people said they heard the crash, or felt it, even as far away as Somerset, about 12 miles to the west, and others said they knew people who did. A few claimed they saw the plane overhead, and one man, who lived close to the site, maintains he saw the plane immediately before it crashed. The field itself was a reclaimed coal mining site, much of it the property of PBS Coals. Unlike the World Trade Center, there were no cameras trained on the site at the moment of impact, and certainly not prior to it. The one known photograph, taken from a distance soon after the crash by local woman Valencia McClatchey, shows an ominous plume of black smoke rising up from beyond a

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5 According to this witness, the plane had rolled over just before the point of impact and was flying upside-down. Some of the people I spoke with pointed to this account as absolute fact. One man even made a diorama of the scene, now on display at the Flight 93 Memorial Chapel, that included an upside-down plane based on this account. Others suggested that the story had perhaps become embellished over time, noting that the witness had been a private, quiet man prior to the event and may have become overwhelmed by the onslaught of media attention to his account.
treeline, with a house and barn in the foreground and a bright blue sky making for an otherwise pastoral image.  

Area fire departments, including those of Shanksville and neighboring Stoystown, about four miles northwest of the impact site, were the first official responders to the crash. The state police and FBI reported to the site soon after. In addition, some individuals responded to the impact, drawn by the sound, the cloud of smoke, and word of mouth. Some photographs were taken, but a perimeter was quickly closed off and non-civilians were pushed back. A number of early photographs of the scene include various emergency personnel in the foreground, gesturing to the cameraperson to move further back from the site, and when read in sequence the vantage points of these images get consistently more distant from the impact site. Although all but emergency personnel were soon barred from the site, many residents of the Shanksville area responded in a support capacity. Donations of food and beverage were sought and delivered to responders, as were essentials such as suntan lotion, and residents of the area made their homes and facilities available to responding personnel.

Beyond the logistical level, residents offered moral support in a variety of symbolic ways, many of these in the form of visible artifacts. Although access to the

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7 See Hamill, S. D. (2007, September 11). A Sept. 11 Photo Brings Out the Conspiracy Theorists. September 11, 2007. Retrieved June 29, 2008, from www.nytimes.com. This earliest image is also a contested one. “In online postings, critics have ripped apart every element of the photo and Mrs. McClatchey's life. They accuse her of faking the photo, of profiteering from it and of being part of a conspiracy to cover up that the government shot down Flight 93. … The photo is considered legitimate by the Federal Bureau of Investigation; the Smithsonian Institution, which used the photo in an exhibition on Sept. 11; and the Flight 93 National Memorial, which has used the photo in pamphlets.” In addition, McClatchey “filed suit in 2005 against The Associated Press, saying that it violated her copyright by distributing the photo to its clients as part of an article. The lawsuit is pending.”
impact site was barred for several weeks, “Shanksville devised its own memorials. The first were visible along the rural roads leading to the site and at the end of Main Street. … These mementoes were moved to the Flight 93 temporary memorial when it opened in early spring of 2002” (Pulling, 2007, p. 114). Signs sprang up almost immediately throughout the region, both directing responders and mourners to the site and providing interactive surfaces on which visitors were encouraged to write out their messages of grief and support. A group from Shanksville and the larger area calling themselves “ambassadors” formed to guide visitors and tell the story of the event. There were 41 volunteer ambassadors by summer 2002, and even though the National Park Service has since taken over management of the site, they continue to assist (Pulling, 2007).

In the following months and years, larger and more planned objects and images came into being: A chapel, a memorial garden, a series of post office cancellation stamps, and many other individual works of art and craft. Although a number of individual shrines still exist, many of the larger memorials soon coalesced into a temporary memorial just off the crash site. As visitors left tributes at the temporary site, the region’s historical society began to collect the more fragile and perishable of these for preservation; their endeavor eventually fell under the mantle of the National Park Service. Today, an official memorial is in the works. To better understand the many projects and memorials that have appeared or are underway, it is useful to first understand what has happened at the actual site of the event.

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8 The impact site itself is off-limits to visitors, and will remain so with the official memorial. Deemed “sacred ground” because it is believed to still contain unfound remains of the crash victims, this patch of ground will be set off by a circular marble wall. The temporary memorial marked the site with a single American flag that could be viewed only from a distance; in addition to the sacred ground concern, the land was still owned by PBS Coals, and the organization had trespassing concerns.
The Site Itself

As of 2008, the actual point of Flight 93’s impact remained inaccessible to any but authorized parties (e.g., investigators or family members). It is marked by an American flag, which stands alone out in the field (see Figure 6.1). Some 500 feet away is the temporary memorial, and this is the closest most visitors get. If approaching from the northwest via Skyline Road, the temporary memorial bursts into view as one crests the hill. It is an explosion of flags, signs, and messages, usually flapping deafeningly in the wind that whips unchecked across the fields. The site itself is surrounded by the signs of local industry. To the northwest is a scrapyard. To the southeast are several large pools, the results of the strip-mining that once took place here. Until recently, a massive, out-of-service Marion 7500 walking dragline, a large crane-like machine used in mining, overlooked the site on a hill to the east; an American flag typically flew from the dragline boom, placed there by employees of the coal company that owned it.9

No official structures may be erected at the site or the temporary memorial, aside from a cleared-off parking lot and a small shed, but informal contributions are everywhere. The main focal point is a chain-link wall, to which visitors have attached all manner of memorial objects (see Figure 6.2). There are signs and statues specifically

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9 Rock, V. (2008, April 16). Flight 93 dragline leaving site. Daily American (Somerset, PA), p. 1; and Leverknight, B. (2008, April 29). Dropping the boom [Photograph caption]. Daily American (Somerset, PA), p. 1. Once intended to be included in the official memorial, the dragline had earlier been purchased on behalf of the National Park Service, among the first properties purchased in connection with the site. They were originally believed to have been in the airplane’s flight path and were valued as a reference point as well as for their role in the existing landscape. The National Park Service cited the cost of maintaining the draglines (a smaller one was sold years earlier), as well as the liability risks of wandering visitors, in making the decision to sell them for scrap. The dragline boom was lowered for scrap on April 29, 2008, but “certain parts of the machine [were] set aside for use in the USS Somerset, a Navy attack ship currently under construction.”
dedicated to the victims of the crash, but there are also hats, t-shirts and stickers with the names of groups and organizations, presumably left in support. The parking lot itself is surrounded by a highway guardrail, and this has been covered with handwritten messages and bumper stickers: Some are from military branches, some from motorcycle clubs, and one, bedecked with eagle and flag, reads “This is America, Speak English – Geno’s Steaks” (see Figure 6.3). The victims themselves are represented in numbers, with 40 benches and 40 angels made of slate bearing their names. In the corner of the site are its tallest structures, the American and Pennsylvania flags, which are flanked by a cross.

Some residents describe the site as “messy,” but this is not necessarily meant in a bad way.\textsuperscript{10} Deciding what to do with the site, and how to do it, have been issues at both the national and local levels. Much of the land was originally owned by local industries PBS Coals and Svonavec, Inc., and there has been some controversy regarding attempts to collect money for maintenance costs; one landowner placed a donation box in the parking lot, but this was covered up in 2007 by order of the park service (see Figure 6.4). Money and control are sensitive subjects here. On Sept. 24, 2002, Congress enacted the “Flight 93 National Memorial Act,” which officially designated the Flight 93 impact site a unit of the National Park System and established a Flight 93 Advisory Commission “to assist with consideration and formulation of plans for a permanent memorial to the passengers and crew of Flight 93, including its nature, design, and construction.”\textsuperscript{11}

\textsuperscript{10} For example, resident Diane Thompson described the temporary memorial as “kind of a carnival-like atmosphere. … I think it’s more heartfelt. And when I first went and, reading the little notes that people wrote … It was really, really heartfelt. And not glitzy or disrespectful or anything. I like it the way it is even though it’s messy.”

More recently, the National Park Service has selected a design plan for the official memorial site by California-based Paul Murdoch Architects, the winner of a 2004 open design competition, and site development is currently underway. As of spring 2008, nearly all of the land has been purchased from its current owners, according to park service staff member Barbara Black. The planned memorial will incorporate a circular structure (see Figure 6.5). Visitors are first led through a gateway to an overlook of the site. They then follow a curving walkway, planted with indigenous red maple trees, around the “bowl” down to the crash cite, referred to as “sacred ground.” According to the plan, the existing temporary memorial will be torn down, but, in recognition of the many tributes left at the site, niches will be built into the sacred ground plaza for visitors’ memorial leavings (National Park Service, 2007). Completion of this first phase is planned for 2011, the tenth anniversary of the attacks.

The residents of the Shanksville area seem very conscious of a role in the identity and memorialization of the Flight 93 crash site. The impact site may be reached from several directions, but Shanksville itself is situated between it and the main access point, the Pennsylvania Turnpike exit in Somerset, about 12 miles to the west (see Figures 6.6, 6.7). Because of this, Shanksville has served as a kind of gateway to the site; although the site is actually located in Stonycreek Township, the scene of the Flight 93 crash is often referred to as the Shanksville site (as is the case with this study). No one from the Shanksville area died in the Flight 93 crash; many of the passengers were from New York.

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12 The curved structure is currently a semi-issue in the site design. Originally referred to by architect Paul Murdoch as a crescent, the description was changed to “bowl” after some seized on the shape as a “red crescent,” symbolizing Islam, and further opposed the design based on its perceived orientation toward Mecca. All but one of the 40 victims’ families reject this interpretation. See “Statement by Gordon Felt,” http://www.nps.gov/flni.
Jersey and its vicinity. Yet despite the absence of such losses, the residents of the Shanksville area were nonetheless affected. With September 11 taking place in their backyards, area residents’ experiences are unlike those of the victims’ friends and families yet also differ from those of Americans as a whole. Their homes are the homes at which visitors stop for directions; local fire departments and township buildings are the recipients of tributes mailed by those who cannot make the trip; and the area’s newspapers intersperse memorial coverage with logistical stories about improving road, sewage, and hotel capacity to deal with the influx of visitors. Residents describe themselves not as victims, but as helpers, ambassadors, and emissaries. They are a face of September 11. Not a face of the dead, or even a face of the grieving, but the face of what came after. It is how this face is presented, in the form of memorial images and objects, that is the focus of this case study.

Signs of Flight 93

Signs are the first Flight 93 related images encountered by most visitors to the Shanksville area. Few visitors to the crash site can be expected to be familiar with Somerset County and the Shanksville Area, and although first-time visitors to any place will be unfamiliar with the terrain, finding the Flight 93 site on its own can be a particular challenge. The expanse of land between Interstate 70/76 and U.S. Route 30, where the site is located, is largely populated with farms and mining operations and crisscrossed by winding rural roads. Those visiting the site for a first or even second time are likely to get lost, even with the assistance of residents who have given the same directions countless times.
In light of this, it is no surprise that signs pepper the roads of the area, pointing the way to the site. A visitor is likely to first encounter the site in the form of such signs. What is more surprising, however, is the variety of those signs. That previously mentioned visitor, coming from Somerset, first encounters a blue, official looking sign bearing only the words “Flight 93 Temp. Memorial.” Upon passing through Shanksville, he or she encounters a second, white sign, this one incorporating an American flag logo, pointing out a necessary left turn. Further on, along Lambertsville Road, a handpainted sign stands outside Hauger’s auto body shop; this sign relies more on images than words to direct, using the outline of an airplane to serve also as a directing arrow and with “93” and “1.8 miles” the only text. The final turn to the site, from Lambertsville to Skyline Road, is marked by still another sign.

Nor is the Somerset route unique in its variety of signage; approaching from the north, the visitor encounters various other signs, including a well-crafted wooden one that marks the southward turn from U.S. Route 30 onto Lambertsville Road. What’s more, along the way one may encounter a number of signs conveying information and expressing support; the main roads entering Shanksville all are posted with signs that honor the Flight 93 victims. Signs may thus inform in different ways, with regard to direction or emotion.

Directive Signs

Why does one make a sign? Although signs may incorporate symbolic elements, they serve a clearly functional end: To direct others to where they want or need to go. Because of this, the question of why a sign was made can be puzzling to the sign-maker. The sign at Hauger’s auto body shop on Lambertsville Road, for example, is compelling
for its emphasis on images over written language (see Figure 6.8). Rather than point out the memorial in text, the sign is based on an assumption that viewers will recognize the symbolic connection of the airplane outline and number “93” with the crash site. It also requires viewers to view the airplane as an arrow directing them forward. Without making these connections, the sign is useless.

Yet the sign’s creator, Scott Haas, doesn’t claim to have thought much of these choices. A 1998 graduate of the Oak Bridge Academy of Arts, to the east of Pittsburgh (when I stopped at Hauger’s to ask about the sign, his uncle proudly described him as an artist), Haas holds a specialized technology degree in commercial arts. He works at an auto parts store on Route 30, and his involvement with commercial art is only on a freelance basis for friends, family, and odd jobs. He made the sign “about a year ago,” around 2006 or 2007, at the request of his uncle:

Because they had trouble with people asking. Every … once in the morning, once in the afternoon, if not more than that, directions how to get to that, to the crash site, and … he said, we need a sign or something, and they knew I was into signs a little bit … art … and they just said, can you make something with a plane on it, 2.3 miles I think it is.

The purpose of the sign, according to Haas, is function (and perhaps to cut down on annoyances for his uncle). When asked specifically about the more symbolic elements in making the sign, he responded that it was “just a quickie,” and mainly emphasizes the material process:

Nothing special. I just did a quickie one, I just went over there one day, she had an old sign there, I used what I had, she gave me paint, that’s it. She wanted an arrow pointed forward, so I figured the nose of the plane would be the best thing for an arrow, so I just made it to go forward.

According to Haas, the symbolic elements of the sign are only there because they make sense, and his description is matter-of-fact. Based on his experience, that
assumption seems to be borne out – he noted that I was the first person to ever ask about the sign, and when his aunt called to ask if he’d be open to an interview, he first thought it was a joke. The context of the place may play a role in the function of this sign’s symbols, with visitors primed to recognize the meaning of the “93” and airplane outline as well as the direction it suggests. Unlike a text-based direction, this highly symbolic and visual sign might be incomprehensible in another setting, but where it is located, the viewing audience of residents and site-seekers seem likely to speak the needed language.

The origins of Haas’s sign, a product of visitors repeatedly asking how to get to the site, are not unique in this area. One area resident with a great deal of experience with directional signs is Father Alphonse Mascherino. An unassigned Roman Catholic priest at the time of the September 11 attacks, Father Al is perhaps best known for conceiving and developing the Flight 93 Memorial Chapel, which officially opened in 2002 for the first anniversary of September 11. The chapel itself will be discussed in the following section on structures, but even before it was completed, Father Al encountered the need for direction to the impact site:

I had started working at the chapel in January [2002], and people were finding their, trying to find their way out there, the chapel was here, and the car was here and I was here. People would stop and ask directions, how to find this place. So right off the bat I was telling them, go down here, three miles to the stop sign, make a left, go one block, make a left – I could say it in my sleep – go two and a half miles, make a right, come over the hill and you’ll find it. Well I was trying to work, get things done, and every two minutes I’d be turning around, somebody coming to the door, knocking on the door, and I was always telling them where this place was, how to find it.

Operating on little budget as he worked to get the chapel ready, Father Al sought out what he could get cheaply or for free. The chapel had initially been built in 1901 but had been converted to a seed warehouse for several decades, and piles of large corrugated
cardboard seed signs had been left behind. The signs were folded in half, with seed numbers on the outside and a blank surface on the inside, so he reversed them and stenciled his own signs on the now-blank signs (see Figures 6.9, 6.10). The plan for these original signs took into account the direction in which visitors would be traveling, whether to the site or from it:

I made those signs in February 2002, I started making them. And I stenciled them. And one side had arrows directing to the impact site. The other side said “Flight 93: Never Forget,” so people going to the site could find it, and coming back they would be reminded never forget, never forget. So I put those signs out at every major intersection by March the 11th, and up to March 11, at every major intersection, so people could find it.

As with Scott Haas, Father Al’s signs were designed with the context of place in mind. Not only that, they also relied on an assumption about knowledge over time, with their messages tailored to what the viewer would know both before and after viewing the site. These signs direct, as Father Al explained, but they also serve to admonish the viewer of what he or she must do in support: Never forget. This message makes the sign something more than a purely directive one, adding a declaration of support to that direction. Although this example is a kind of hybrid, other signs in the Shanksville area were concerned exclusively with such declarative messages.

*Declarative and Interactive Signs*

All signs exist to be seen, but not all serve to direct. Some are signs of character or support. Rather than telling the viewer how to get to a place, such signs may tell visitors what a place is. For example, a newcomer to a town may be informed, via sign, that they are entering the “Home of the Screaming Eagles,” the location of the 2002 state wrestling champion, or the birthplace of some celebrity. Front yard signs indicate support
for candidates or ballot propositions; occasionally one encounters a hand-painted sign indicating some more specific opinion on the speed of local traffic or the excellence of the Pittsburgh Steelers. Further, as this section will show, signs of support may be closed statements, or they may be open ones encouraging viewer contribution.

Upon entering the borough of Shanksville on one of the four roads intersecting in the borough, one encounters a sign that tells about where one is rather than where one should go (see Figure 6.11). As with similar signs posted at other cities’ limits, these large, blue, wooden signs announce “Welcome to Shanksville,” along with some key information about the place: Shanksville is the “Home of the Vikings” (this statement includes a profile image of said Viking), it was established in 1803, and it is “A friendly little town.” The signs, the senior project of a Shanksville student, were unveiled close to the first anniversary of September 11 and include a message related to the event. Hanging from the main sign is a smaller wooden sign that reads “Shanksville Honors the Heroes of Flight 93;” the message is accompanied by the logo of the Flight 93 temporary memorial, an image that also adorns a nearby sign, this one directing visitors to the site.13

What makes signs of support compelling is not necessarily their design. Many front yard signs in the area expressing remembrance or solidarity are not visually stunning. They are often text-only, and usually in block letters. Any ornamentation is usually simple, such as an American flag icon. And yet the presence and the message of such signs seem to draw powerful emotional responses from many creators and viewers. Karen Shaw, a Shanksville resident and National Park Service employee working with Flight 93, provides an illustration of this. Shaw is linked to the Flight 93 site in several

ways. In addition to her park service role (she is currently conducting oral histories of survivors, responders, and visitors), her husband, Terry, is chief of the Shanksville Volunteer Fire Department, one of the first responders to the scene on September 11, 2001. Here, she describes an image of Shanksville firefighters with a simple blue banner they had made:

A large banner that Shanksville firefighters had made, displayed at the fire station for many months after September 11, “Our thoughts and prayers go out to the New York City Firefighters and their families.” There was just a tremendous … burden … for the families of the firefighters, the Port Authority, all that were lost in New York City as they rushed into the towers. And that was felt here.

Of all the stories Shaw told about her extensive album of images, this seemed to most visibly give her pause, requiring a moment to collect herself. In her album, she has photographs of the wreckage of Flight 93 itself. Following September 11, the Shanksville firefighters were brought to many events and ceremonies in recognition of their service, and Shaw has pictures of her husband being honored many times over. Yet it is this image, with its message of support, from her own home town, that seems to touch her most deeply during our conversation. This image of a material sign of support, for her, has meaning.

Signs of support in the Shanksville area seem to draw interaction – even the girl who created the welcome signs said she enjoyed “watching people get out of their cars to be photographed with them” 14 – and this subject is not complete without the mention of Josie Benson. When talking with people about memorials in the Shanksville area, it is not long before Benson’s name is mentioned. The main route from Somerset to the impact

site passes through Shanksville’s main crossroads, the T-intersection of Main and Bridge streets. On the east side of this junction is the old volunteer fire hall and Ida’s General Store, two local landmarks. On the west side is Benson’s front lawn, arguably a landmark in its own right. According to Father Al, something about the location and Benson’s own efforts of support made this site something special:

To me, it’s very significant, the location of her house. When people came into the territory, on September 11, 2001, and thereafter, the FBI and the state police had set up a barricade to prevent people from proceeding further than Shanksville toward the crash of the plane. And where they turned them around was in front of Josie’s yard. And she put up that tribute sign, “Salutes the Heroes of Flight 93,” and immediately people began to sign it, and even the tributes that were left there, in Josie’s yard, because they were turned around there and that’s where they left their tributes of flowers, their candles, their signs, their messages.

Benson can regularly be found working at the Shanksville Post Office (although she has served as acting postmaster on occasion, she won’t take the full-time job because she doesn’t want the extra work). She has been interviewed many times about her yard, and her voice carried an almost exasperated tone when talking about various media outlets’ interest in her. One of the main actors in the Shanksville area’s memorialization of Flight 93, she has served as an ambassador at the site, greeting visitors and telling the story of the event, but her involvement goes back to the beginning:

I was an ambassador in my yard from before there were ambassadors. [laughter] I used to call myself Shanksville’s Goodwill Ambassador, because … I mean, there were people there all the time. And even in the middle of the night, people would come and say, Josie, did you know there’s people in your yard at 2 a.m. in the morning? And I said no, and she’d say, yeah, they were out there looking at everything.

Those front yard visitors had come to see her collection of signs and tributes that, after September 11, seemed to grow every day. They had first sprung up as soon as the
Saturday after Tuesday, September 11. Throughout Shanksville, according to Benson, there was a feeling of urgency about putting up a visible display of support:

Roxanne, that lives up there, she comes into the post office, she’s crying, and she says, she wants a memorial in her yard, she says, she don’t know which way the buses are coming. She says, she don’t think they’re gonna bring ’em past all that media blitz down there, she says they’re gonna take ’em in the back way, she says, I think they’re gonna come my way. And she says, and I have these little bows out in the yard, and that’s all I have. She had a bow and like a basket hanging there, and that’s all there was. … And we, my neighbor across the street, Kelly, she got all these mums donated, and these wreaths … in case that’s the way they went. Because we wanted to show support for those families.

Benson’s own home’s location in the heart of Shanksville made it an ideal location for such a show of support, and she continued to add signs (to the occasional exasperation of her husband and the general distress of her lawn). From the first sign she posted, a large piece of plywood, painted white, with the block message, “Shanksville Salutes the Heroes of Flight #93,” visitors were leaving their own messages on the signs. Such messages were so popular, that as Benson began to run short on sign (and yard) space, she began to improvise other ways to create space for messages:

Well see how [in this photograph of a board with no sign], something blew off of something? Well then there was this blank board there. It was … you know, should write something on there. And people could start signing here. And so, I says, well I got some pens at home, let’s go home and get ‘em. So she [her friend Kim] wrote on the board, cause she was, you know, good with the calligraphy. And we left pens there, and that’s, basically, I think how it all started. … We started getting portable signs, like and we’d lean ‘em on a tree, and then we’d flip ‘em over and let ‘em sign on that side.

The visitors who came to Benson’s yard interacted with these signs. Many signed messages on them and left items of their own, and the signs eventually filled up with these words. Benson has since donated many of her signs to the National Park Service, but decided not to donate the two she considers most important because their display
could not be guaranteed: “I didn’t think it should go in a cave [the park service’s off-site storage facility], that’s why I didn’t. Because it might never come out of the cave.” One of these, incorporating a list of the victims of Flight 93, is dear to her both as a meaningful object and a reminder of her now-deceased friend Kim. The sign went up soon after September 11, the product of some frantic networking:

My friend up the hill, Kim, made that sign. She said, well, up there nobody’s gonna see it, and I said, well, I was going to make a sign for my yard, and you can put it in my yard. And so she did. … And then, like, I tried to get the names of these, of the people [the victims], and it was hard to get, you know? So finally I called the … Channel 6 News up in Johnstown, and they said they would fax it, I said, I don’t have a fax machine. And I was in Ida’s [General Store], then, and the Indian Lake policewoman was in there, and she said, Oh Josie, you can have them fax it to me and I’ll bring it to you. So they faxed it to her, she brought it down to me, this is like at 10 o’clock at night, you know, so, my friend Kim was sick … in fact, she passed away since then … but she had a cold or something, she was sick in bed, and I was up at her house and I’m throwing stones at her bedroom window and I’m saying, Kim! Kim! I have the list, it’s on the porch! I put the white board there too! I says, could you please, you know, put the calligraphy or however you say on there, and she did. [laughter]

The other sign is her first sign, with the “Shanksville Salutes the Heroes of Flight #93” message. Like the others, it is covered with messages and signatures, and Benson did not want to give it up if its display could not be guaranteed. But where the other sign remains in her garage, this sign has found its way another resident, Father Al, who persuaded Benson to lend the sign to the Flight 93 Memorial Chapel:

I thought it needed to be, you know, seen. And you know, I didn’t know where it would go, but I thought, you know, maybe the Smithsonian Institute would want it or something. But Father Al kept bugging me and … I let him use it. [laughter]

Although Benson’s front yard memorial incorporated signs, it differed from the other signs discussed here. The signs above primarily exist to be seen, whether their
function is to direct visitors to the site, to say something about a place, or to express support and remembrance. Benson’s yard, however, became something more: A destination in its own right. Signs are not physical destinations: One passes a road sign and takes note of it, perhaps stopping for a photograph but then moving on. Yet those people who came to visit at 2 a.m. were not merely driving by and noticing the signs, they were stopping to interact with them. The Flight 93 impact site was the original draw to the Shanksville area, but over time other permanent memorial structures have arisen. This study turns next to examination of other such secondary destinations for those seeking the site of Flight 93.

Structures and Symbols

The evolution of Josie Benson’s front yard memorial into something larger and more interactive sets it apart from signs that exist mainly to be seen, yet ultimately it dissipated, its components going into storage or to an archive or finding their way to other locations. This memorial was never intended to stand indefinitely, but other such “satellite” sites have been built with more permanence in mind. The development of such sites is another aspect of image-making in the Shanksville area.

Certainly this is not to suggest that the Flight 93 impact site is not the main draw for visitors to the area, but its proximity seems to spur the development of such “secondary” sites. It may be that one place, the impact site itself, was not sufficient to house the multiple meanings that link Flight 93 to the area. The memorial structures found in this region attempt to embody different aspects of the crash, often with strong links to the region. In visiting these, one hears stories that differ from the main Flight 93 narrative, some of which only began after the impact. This section examines two
significant structures in the area, the Flight 93 Memorial Chapel and the memorial statue and garden at Shanksville High School.

The Flight 93 Memorial Chapel

If driving to the impact site from Somerset, one is likely to follow Stutzmantown Road, turning left from eastbound Route 31 just after the windmill farm comes into view on the left. Interestingly, this is not indicated by anything other than a standard road sign pointing out the turn for Shanksville, and it can be easy to miss if distracted by the giant white windmills. After about 2.5 miles on Stutzmantown Road (also known as the “Boulevard of Heroes,” according to the chapel’s website), one comes upon a small white chapel on the left (see Figure 6.12). A bell tower and metal torch stand in front, and a sign reads “UAL Flt 93 Memorial Chapel.” There are three flags: The American flag, on the highest pole, flanked by the Pennsylvania state flag and another red, white and blue flag that may be less familiar, the “Thunder flag,” created for the chapel. Where the chapel comes from and what it holds is largely due to the determinations of Father Al Mascherino and the donations of others.

Origin of the chapel. Father Al, the creator and caretaker of the chapel, was already known in connection with Flight 93 in the area for an essay he wrote, “Thunder on the Mountain,” which he said “was circulated and published and printed in various

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15 A complete description of the Thunder Flag’s symbology is included in the “souvenir passport” available at the chapel for a $3 donation, or from the chapel’s website. The meanings of its three colors and four stars (which represent the four planes) are described, and this description also notes that “the final proportions of the flag design are derived from the Heart of the America [sic] Flag.” A diagram is included to explain this latter statement; the flag actually mirrors a proportional, blown-up section of the American flag, incorporating three stripes of red, white, and blue stripes and the four bottom-right stars.
The use of key words and imagery in this essay alone suggests that Father Al is a man who is very conscious of symbolism – the terms “thunder” and “heroes” that appear throughout the chapel grounds have their origins here – and he described the many religious elements he perceived in the Flight 93 crash as his motivation for building a religious structure:

All those … indications, on the sign, and the tributes, and the tokens that were left behind, and the people going to the churches, and the example of the heroes themselves onboard Flight 93, when they found out that they had been hijacked as part of a greater plan … . And finally when it was time for them to act, at 10:00, they said a prayer together, I understand from reports it was the 23rd Psalm. And that demonstration of faith, and prayer, inspired me … because there had to be different people from different churches and different faiths onboard the plane, and yet they prayed together. That to me was a demonstration of what faith really is. … And so when I began to think of what could possibly be used to memorialize that day, seeing the tributes left in Josie’s yard and the kinds of things spontaneously raised up by the people, I thought that the appropriate memorial would be religious, you know, to honor God, to honor faith, to honor the faith of the heroes, to honor the faith of America.

Although Father Al had a religious response in mind, however, the chapel was not his first choice. Having written his “Thunder on the Mountain” immediately after September 11, his first inclination was a response that was “literary in nature, to write a saga or an epic poem or something about the heroes of Flight 93, invoking the name of God and bringing in this idea of faith.” In late October 2001, however, on one of many trips between Shanksville and Somerset, he noticed a “for sale” sign in front of the chapel; this building was the former Mizpah Evangelical Lutheran Church. Built in 1901, in service to the area’s predominantly German Protestant population, the church had since 1969 been used as a storehouse for seed. On reaching Somerset, Father Al

16 The essay begins, “Tread gently on our hills, be aware of where you are. You are welcome here among us,” and ends with a similar phrase. The essay may be read in its entirety at http://www.flt93memorialchapel.org/tour/thunder.html.
immediately called the realty agency, only to find that church had already been sold. He abandoned that structure but not the idea and was looking into more expensive churches, one about 30 miles north in Johnstown, when the realty agency contacted him to say that the chapel’s buyer had backed out and Father Al was first on the list.

The asking price was $18,900, but Father Al had only $300 in his bank account at the time. With ten other people also interested in the building, he persuaded the bank to accept a $100 binder fee to temporarily hold the chapel, but the bank required a total $800 to truly bind the sale for him. He raised this money through selling some of his possessions:

I had a lot of antiques, I had a lot of silver dollars that I have collected over 25 years, and Hallmark wanted them, see, these things were part of my … retirement plan, that I would have these, in fact, I always kinda carry … just a silver dollar, just to remind me, of how important those silver dollars were to me. … Over the 25 years preceding 2001, I would collect these things and buy them whenever I could, when I really needed it, I had them.

Those silver dollars and antiques would come in handy in the future as well: Father Al sold a number of them to raise the $6,400 down payment, and they continue to finance occasional costs. But with the fees paid, he turned to preparing the chapel for his purposes. Years as a seed storage barn had led to extensive dry rot and vast communities of rodents in the walls, and he eventually stripped the building’s interior down to the bare studs. For a time, the labor of stripping walls and hauling dirt, scrap, nests and insulation fell largely to Father Al. As work progressed, however, passerby

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17 The chapel in 2008 was largely supported by donated utility services and money from visitors and larger donors (gift shop purchases also go into the operating fund), but Father Al said he still sells the occasional antique or silver dollar to make ends meet.
began to take note of the chapel, even if only as a place to stop for directions to the impact site. One such query led to the chapel’s first volunteer:

The first real volunteer came February 28th [2002]. Actually he was from Uniontown, which is 65 miles away, but he came to visit where the plane crashed … and stopped to ask if he could use the port-a-potty. I said, yeah, I said, go ahead, but when you’re done would you come in and give me a hand with moving this lumber? … And he did, he came in. But then he, we worked together for a little while, and he said, well, I’m retired, he said, I can come up one day a week to help you, as part of my retirement contribution. And he did, every Thursday then, up until September, he was here every Thursday, back and forth, from Uniontown.

One volunteer led to more, according to Father Al, and he continued to find his barter-based approach to be helpful for recruitment: “Other people started showing up, as activity started to pick up, they could see things going on, and a lot of people would … stick their nose in the door and say, what’s going in here? I’d say, well come on in and find out. Pick up that broom as you’re coming in.” Donations eventually began to include more than labor alone. His piecemeal budget (still largely based on the sale of silver dollars) and decision not to go into debt meant Father Al purchased building materials in installments of about $50 from the local Eighty-Four Lumber hardware store. Curious about these transactions over time, in late August 2002, the manager asked what Father Al was working on. He passed the story on to the store’s owner, Maggie Hardy Magerko, who decided to provide a $23,000 grant to finance the materials. Not only that, she suggested it would be good for the chapel to be opened in time for the first year anniversary. Noting Father Al and his volunteers were not up to this kind of timetable, she told him, “if you don’t mind, I’ll do it for you instead.” Father Al said he “didn’t mind at all.” This work began on August 31 and was completed at 4 p.m. on September
10, a process that is documented by “Before” and “After” images on display in the chapel (see Figure 6.13). The chapel held its first memorial service on September 11, 2002.  

Design elements. Like the chapel itself, the items that fill it are the result of donated time, money, labor, and materials. Some were created specifically for the chapel or more broadly in remembrance of September 11, others are existing artifacts of the victims or of the different impact sites. Symbolic elements of the structure that were created for or donated to the chapel include a stained glass window, the bell and bell tower, a sanctuary lamp and outdoor torch (the “Lightning Torch”), and a 16-ton granite monument, which stands behind the chapel, dedicated to the crew of Flight 93.

The interest in symbolism that Father Al credits with the idea for the chapel itself permeates its components as well. Many of these were designed or donated with some specific symbolism in mind, and often with Father Al’s guidance. One of the stained glass windows, for example, was donated by Congregation Emanu-El Israel, a synagogue in Greensburg, Pennsylvania, whose members read a story about the chapel in March 2002 (see Figure 6.14). The window came from a synagogue that had been built in 1901, like the church, and Father Al explained that this symbol fit well with his understanding of Flight 93 and the September 11 attacks:

I saw it as a magnificent gift, to pay tribute to the heroes of Flight 93. And it wasn’t given in memory of any particular one, or in honor of any particular one, just given to honor Flight 93, and to be part of this chapel.

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18 According to Father Al, the chapel is not linked to any religion; its mission statement, declares it is a “secular non-denominational Chapel, and serves as a spiritual refuge and place of meditation and prayer. The Chapel is open to people of all faiths and is available for individual faith groups to worship together under the direction of their respective religious leaders.” Its services are listed as “ceremonies and observances,” but it is available “for religious services of all faiths” as well as “weddings and appropriate private ceremonies.” See also its website, www.flt93memorialchapel.org (retrieved June 29, 2008).
… I really did want the window, for the simple reason … on September 11th, 2001, the terrorists said, death to Israel, death to America. … And the reason why I wanted that window was because of that, death to Israel, death to America.19

This example illustrates two criteria that, according to Father Al, determine whether a donation to the chapel is accepted: The donation must honor Flight 93, and it cannot include religious symbolism. The symbolism of the synagogue window, which tops one wall of the chapel, was extended by the addition of a mural and American eagle on the opposing wall (see Figure 6.15), so that, according to Father Al, the chapel could literally stand between Israel and America. Yet with the embargo on religious imagery, the synagogue window was originally a concern. Father Al said the rabbi convinced him the donation was appropriate:

I didn’t want any religious symbol, no crosses, no crucifixes, no statues of the Blessed Virgin Mary, nothing. So that everybody could feel at home, feel that if they wanted to use it or pray here, there would be nothing that would prevent from praying. … And [the rabbi] said, we don’t have any religious symbols. She said, we’re the ones that don’t believe in engraved images, remember? … She said, anybody of Jewish origin could wear a Star of David, and they might be Christian or Catholic. Doesn’t mean they’re Jewish. So these symbols are not religious.

Although the chapel design seems to encourage symbolism wherever possible, the above case shows that it must the “right” kind of symbolism. The other requirement, that

19 This is a greatly abbreviated version of Father Al’s explanation. It was clear that he is very passionate about this idea, to which he attributed the motivations of the September 11 hijackers and their supporters: “All these years later, with the president of Iran, every time he opens his mouth, he says, death to Israel, death to America. … The way I see it, the reason why they say that … is because both of us, Israel and America, believe in one God. And that God is the God who made us free and equal, and the terrorists do not want us to be free, do not want us to be equal, and as I tell the people, make no mistake about it, they do not want you free, they do not want you equal, they want you dead. … So I wanted that window to help emphasize the function of Israel throughout history as a target of terrorism, especially in World War II. … That is what ultimately is confronting the United States. They want to destroy us from the face of the earth, and so we share the objective legacy of Israel and America together.”
the contribution honor Flight 93, has also led to a number of items being ruled out. In
describing the iron works (the sanctuary lamp and the chandelier) donated by area
blacksmith David Weimer, Father Al explained why these meet the criteria where other
ccontributions do not:

Dave saw his function and participation in something important. I mean, he wanted to design that, he wanted to help with that, he wanted to manufacture it, the Lightning Torch. He really sees it in the context in which it is situated. And there are others who see that function, and want to insert themselves into it. And they would be possibly people … who are, who have an ulterior motive. Either to tag along or to tag onto or somehow … take advantage of the notoriety of the chapel. And so everything has to be in proportion.

A “proportionate” contribution, according to Father Al, is one that is significantly integrated with the chapel’s (and his own) vision. Wiemer’s contribution involved multiple sessions and discussions, and ultimately was a “noble involvement.” In contrast, he presented cases of individuals seeking to sell their memorial items there (there is a gift area) in return for a percentage given to the chapel. Such items, whether proportionate or not, tend to be in the form of smaller contributions than chapel fixtures and will be discussed in the following section.

The criteria for site inclusion, as well as the above idea of proportion, are apparent in most of the site features. The Flight 93 crew memorial, a recent addition that stands behind the chapel, is an obvious fit with the site (see Figure 6.16). The center obelisk is inscribed with the names of the crew and topped with a bronze airplane; benches listing the names of the passengers stand in a ring around it. This monument is so specific to the Flight 93 crash that the larger link to the September 11 attacks could almost be missed. One side panel reads, “In honor of the crew – United Airlines Flight 93 – September 11, 2001 – Forever in our hearts;” aside from that highly charged date, it could be a
monument to any plane crash. This is not pointed out to trivialize or challenge the structure, but rather to point out how strongly it aligns with the chapel’s vision. Its focus is set so squarely upon honoring Flight 93 and its victims that other aspects of the event are momentarily pushed to the site.

One final feature whose relevance to the chapel vision may not be so apparent is the “Thunder Bell” that stands outside the chapel. The half-ton steel bell, cast in 1860, is emblazoned with the message “Thunder Bell – Voice of Flight 93.” Although a bell is certainly not out of place at a chapel, the “Thunder” label is one that is also used in Father Al’s “Thunder on the Mountain” essay on September 11 and in the chapel’s “Thunder Flag” that symbolizes the attacks. The chapel is built around the “thunder” theme, as with the essay’s mention of “the Thunder that has shaken our mountains;” for the bell to be so thunderously named suggests a similar link or symbolism.

The bell’s relevance traces back in Father Al’s history. He encountered the bell at a church camp owned by a friend, Harold Knupp, where he ran a flea market. For whatever reason, Father Al took to this bell and its loud peal and rang it at 8 a.m. prior to every flea market until Knupp, spurred by complaints from the retirement community, tied up the cord. Through the years, Father Al continually tried to buy the bell, with Knupp at times threatening never to speak with him again but never agreeing. It was not until Knupp learned of Father Al’s plans to make the chapel a Flight 93 memorial that he decided to give it to him; the donation was revealed to Father Al not in person, but in a newspaper article (Knupp and the reporter had conspired to make it a surprise).

The question remains: Why this bell? Even when Knupp, whose father had once been the head of the Mizpah Church board, offered the chance of a bell that had once
been part of the church, Father Al pursued it. The reason, he said, was not one of
projection rather than connection:

He said, you want that bell for that church? Yeah. Well you can’t have it … but I know where the old Mizpah bell is. I can get it for you. I said, I
don’t want it. I said, because I know what that bell is like too, and it’s not
big enough. He said, why do you want it? Why does it have to be so big? I
said, I want to name it after Flight 93, so they can hear it across the hill, to
the crash site.

Objects like the bell have been included with the site not for what they are so
much as what they do. By their inclusion, the chapel has expanded its vision beyond
direct linkages. The donated images, objects and artifacts that it accepts typically have
some link to the Flight 93 event itself, but in cases such as that of the bell, some items
with no such link have been embraced for their evocative power. When judging donations
to the chapel, the criteria of appropriate symbolism and honoring of Flight 93 do not
apply only to objects with a literal linkage.

Donations and artifacts. Photographs, paintings, and donated pieces line the walls
of the main chapel area, but many more have been offered than are displayed. As with the
permanent chapel fixtures, Father Al is selective, perhaps even more so given the great
number of small items that people wish to contribute: “The things that you see, you see
there aren’t a lot, if we let everybody leave their things here, we would have as much
here as they do down at the site itself. And that’s not a function of this chapel. This
chapel is to give homage to God and to honor the heroes of Flight 93.”

Some of the images and objects that fill the chapel are clearly linked to Flight 93
or September 11. Artifacts and pieces from the World Trade Center and Pentagon sites
have made their way here, and Father Al encourages visitors to touch and hold these:
“It’s as interactive as I can make it.” This interactivity extends to the portraits of the
Flight 93 crew and passengers, which are enshrined with votive candles in a separate room: “They’re in there in that room, reading the biographies, and you see them touch the portraits. You know, and there’s glass on there, but they’ll be going around the edges of the portrait … and they’re touching it. To get something close.” This idea of “closeness” has implications for how photography is used in memorialization, suggesting that the distance between the material photograph and the person it represents is reduced to practically nothing. For these visitors, to touch the photograph is to touch the person.

Objects belonging to the victims seem to have a similar effect, along with an additional connection to those who survive. Family and friends of the victims visit the chapel – Father Al has met family members of all 40 victims – and many have provided artifacts of the deceased. In one corner is a dress that belonged to passenger Honor Elizabeth Wainio when she was three years old, on loan from her mother. A newer addition is a model plane built at age 11 by co-pilot LeRoy Homer, Jr. (see Figure 6.17), which was donated at the 2007 anniversary by his mother, Ilsa:

The chapel was filled, and she had her family with her, and they brought this great big box in, and the son-in-law had made the plastic, glass display case. And they took these things out and set them up on the platform … I said, tell the people what this plane is, and she said, oh, she said, this belonged to my son. … He made planes when he was in school. And when he finished with each one of them, he would hang them from his ceiling in his bedroom. And she said, you know, when he went away to the Air Force academy to be a pilot, the planes are still there. … And she said, I leave this to you, in tribute to you who come here to honor my son.

Visitors’ interactions with the model plane, according to Father Al, have been similar to their interactions with the portraits: Touching the outer case and talking about the connection they feel to the plane’s maker. He has even had people say they are excited to meet him because he has met and shook the hands of those family members.
Rather than being situated solely in the literal site of an event, these examples show that meaning and emotion can be transferable to secondary places, even to people.

Some donations lack such a direct link but are included via their “proportion” to the chapel’s vision. These seem to often include something personal of their creator’s. One sign, from a Marine, notes, “Since I do not know of any [of the victims] who earned the eagle, globe and anchor, I am leaving them all one of mine – Semper Fi;” attached is his medallion (see Figure 6.18). Josie Benson’s sign, occupying a large part of one wall, is another such example of a Flight 93 tribute by an individual (see Figure 6.19). One object, a painting depicting the four airplanes used in the attacks ascending to a pair of waiting heavenly hands, was donated as a fundraising object. According to Father Al, this image belongs in the collection because of how successfully it conveys the intended emotion: “From a practical point-of-view, it’s not perfect, it is not perfectly executed. But from an art point of view, to convey the feelings of the artist in the work, and to have that feeling reproduced in the viewer, makes that a successful painting.”

Finally, as illustrated in the previous section, contributions may be understood to honor through their effect as well as their nature. The examples so far have all had some link, direct or indirect, to Flight 93. As with the Thunder Bell, however, some objects and images gain entry to the chapel merely by their power to evoke:

Last year, a woman, 90 years old … brought this doll in, it’s an angel doll. She said, I made this for my granddaughter, and … I wanted her to have it, but my granddaughter died. … And she said, even if you put it in the

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20 Presumably this image squares with the chapel’s ban on religious symbols because of its nondenominational nature; there are no indicators as to which deity is the owner of the hands. “Nondenominational,” as Father Al uses it, does not seem to refer to absence of references to God, only absence of references to specific religions. As a further example, consider the theme of the chapel’s 2003 observance, “One Nation Under God: A Testimony of Patriotism and Faith.”
corner or in the closet … in my heart I would know it’s here, and that would give me consolation. May I leave this here? I said, why don’t you put it there in the sanctuary? … And you should’ve seen the pictures, flashing. All she did was place it, on the floor where you see it, but that moment was so intensely important to her, and so profoundly emotional … she left here with tears, she said, I will never forget this day as long as I live. Those are the things that make things happen. She saw the connection between the great loss of life on Flight 93, the loss of innocent life on that day … with the loss of her [grand]daughter’s life.

This idea of “the things that make things happen” seems to be the ultimate determinant of an object’s link to the chapel. It can be seen in the artifacts from the September 11 sites and in the personal objects of the victims that have been donated, but also in the Thunder Bell and the painting and doll described above. At the most immediate level, a site of disaster is such a thing – the leaving of tributes at the Flight 93 impact site will be discussed later – but the memorial images and objects that spring up or become linked to a site can also spur action. The things that happen, as shown, may be tears, or contact, or the compulsion to leave tributes of one’s own. In addition, the example of the chapel shows how a secondary site can establish its own rules, separate from those of the “official” site; Father Al, not the National Park Service, decides what is appropriate for his chapel. These concepts are also applicable to the other Shanksville area structures and symbols to be examined.

The September 11th Memorial Garden

Not far from the heart of Shanksville, located on Main Street just east of Josie Benson’s house and Ida’s General Store, stands the Shanksville-Stonycreek School District building. Both the elementary and high schools are housed here, and the student body comes from Stonycreek Township and the boroughs of Shanksville and Indian Lake. Its approximately 500 students come from the 2,700 residents in the school district.
The district’s website proudly notes that, “despite its small size, the district graduates 98% of its seniors, sends 64% of them to higher education, and consistently scores above average on the PSSA [Pennsylvania System of School Assessment] test.” Even online, Flight 93 has a presence here; under “Other Links,” the website provides a “Flight 93 Memorial Project” link that takes one’s browser to the National Park Service’s Flight 93 page. But the school has created its own physical monument to the event: A memorial statue and garden.

The September 11th Memorial Garden spans the north side of the main school building, which houses the high school. The landscaped garden includes a walking path, stones engraved with quotations, and an unusual, tree-like sculpture just to the left of the main door of the building (see Figure 6.20). Like the chapel, the garden is a Shanksville area memorial to September 11, and also like the chapel, it is built around the vision of a particular group linked to the event. Where the chapel commemorates September 11 by honoring the victims of Flight 93, the garden (specifically its signature sculpture) was aimed at recognizing the part played in the Flight 93 aftermath by the residents of the Shanksville area.

*Origin of the garden.* In 2001, not long after the September 11 attacks, the school district was contacted by Cornell Companies, a publicly traded company “whose primary business is in the field of corrections, education, rehabilitation and treatment for adults and youth.” The company wanted to make some kind of contribution to the school

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22 The company has facilities in 15 states, including more than 20 in Pennsylvania. Their website (http://www.cornellcompanies.com/) states: “We partner with federal, state, county and local government agencies to meet their service needs through quality, cost-efficient services and programs, which in turn saves taxpayer’s money.”
district; in a later press release, it said it sought “to recognize and promote the ideals so prominently on display both on-board Flight #93 and in the community where the plane crashed.” According to Shanksville art teacher Jane Krause, the school district originally responded to the request by suggesting a donation of computers. The company, wanting something “more lasting,” suggested a sculpture instead, and the district agreed.

The company commissioned Pittsburgh artist Jan Loney to develop a sculpture and garden for the Shanksville school and requested that Loney work with the school and student body throughout the process. Krause, as the school’s only art teacher, was closely involved, serving as a facilitator for student brainstorming and a conduit between Loney’s and the students’ creative processes. The student planning stages began in January 2002, incorporating sketches, clay models, and brainstorming sessions. All students, from kindergarten through 12th grade, were involved, and Krause said the sculpture’s theme rose from their ideas:

We collaborated on a design that to do with something with hands, helping hands. What the students came up with as a repeating theme was that the Shanksville community had this crash happen in our backyard, but no one in our community was injured or killed. … So since there were so many heroes that were killed, Shanksville became helpers, you know, they were helping the rescue workers, the kids would collect pennies to buy gum and life savers to take out to the rescue workers, and the people in the community would bake pies and stuff and take it out to the people.

The “helping hands” idea for the sculpture, according to Krause, did not trace from an individual or group, but was something “that was just repeated over and over.”

Beyond the conceptual level, however, the imagery initially took on many forms. Some

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of the original sketches and models took a literal approach, depicting people holding hands or hands lifting up objects, while others were more conceptual ideas incorporating the shapes of hands into flames or other imagery (Krause still has a number of these sketches and clay pieces). The process began to move in this more conceptual direction:

There were some drawings of hands being in like a sculpture of something that is made out of hands, that hands become something. At one point we did a column of aluminum foil hands, just to see how much space that would take up if we had 500 hands in a sculpture. And so I think that started the tree-ish kind of pod idea, was seeing how not just making them a literal, people holding hands, but more of what can the hands represent?

Loney, the artist, drew on these ideas in her final design for a “pod-based” sculpture. Her idea was for a tree-like structure as the support for 22 large pods cast from Fortan, a gypsum-based building material similar to concrete. Into each pod would be pressed the hands of every person affiliated with the school district at the time (see Figure 6.21). This idea was approved by the school board, and the casting took place in Shanksville.

The casting process involved “every kid, faculty member, bus driver, cafeteria worker, teacher,” according to Krause. One challenge of the process, she said, was making sure that each pod had a mix of hands from different sources: “We didn’t want all little hands in one pod and all big hands in the other pod, and so it was kind of a challenge to make sure you didn’t miss anybody” (she and Loney also kept track of whose hand went where). The pods were then shipped to Pittsburgh to be connected to the base structure (a contingent of older students traveled with the pods to Loney’s studio to help assemble the sculpture). The final sculpture was hoisted into the garden with cranes and installation equipment lent by regional company Highland Tank.
In addition to the sculpture, the project included a landscaped garden and walkway. Nine stones in the garden bear quotations chosen by the student body – Krause said each elementary and high school grade decided on a quotation, and the school board chose nine from this list to be inscribed on the stones. The quotations came from Adlai Stevenson, William Jennings Bryant, and George W. Bush, and include Flight 93 passenger Todd Beamer’s “Let’s Roll.” The garden itself was designed by one of Krause’s students who worked summers for a landscaper (who was also a faculty member). Cornell Companies also “asked prominent Americans, as well as the victim’s families, to recommend book titles that promote the ideals on display in Shanksville that day,” donating copies of these to a memorial collection in the school library.²⁴

The garden was dedicated on May 17, 2002, in a ceremony attended by several family members of the Flight 93 victims. As with the other memorial structures examined, the ongoing response to the garden took some getting used to. Because it stands immediately outside the windows of first-floor classrooms, Krause said, the regular visitors were at first a distraction to students in those classrooms:

I think it’s like anything you just walk past everyday, you just don’t take time really to think about it. … They’re used to it now, it doesn’t even bother them when people are here visiting because it’s happened so often that they’ve grown up now knowing that people just come here to visit.

The above narrative shows the memorial garden as it was produced through synthesizing the many ideas of the school district and student body. Its link to the area

does not end with the student body, however. As with other memorials in the Shanksville area, community connections further integrate the structure with the larger area.

*Community connections.* Although the extensive involvement of the student body with the garden was something encouraged by Cornell Companies and orchestrated by Krause, there are many other ways in which the larger Shanksville area community became involved with the project. During the planning of the garden as well as years later, residents gave of their time, skills, and resources to help the work along. The “helping hands” symbolized in the sculpture are also embodied by the acts of those around it.

There is a sense of ownership, or perhaps stewardship, in the region’s attitude toward Flight 93, and this seems to manifest itself in volunteerism. Simply being in the region, for some, means stewardship is a foregone conclusion. Krause, for example, described the assistance of the Highland Tank company, a Stoystown manufacturer of steel storage tanks, as driven by their own physical proximity to the impact site:

“Highland Tank is out on [Route] 30 [to the north of the site], we’re here [to the south], the crash is almost right between us, so they felt pretty involved too.” This is not to say that all residents of the area are fully in support of all memorial efforts. When the plans for the memorial garden were first announced, Krause said, some older students wanted nothing to do with it:

When I had the kids working on the designs, the high school students at that time, they were like, ‘I’m sick of this, I don’t wanna hear about it, I don’t wanna talk about, I don’t wanna think about it, I want it to be like it was.’ … [So] a couple of us said, okay, back off, we’ll work with the little kids for a while, see what they think. Well, then finally we came up with the final, then they [the high schoolers] started to get interested.
The students who were in sixth grade when the sculpture was built are now graduating, and Krause said it has become a homing point for students, especially those who have since left the area: “They’ll wanna look for their hands because they remember.” She and Jan Loney have kept notes for each pod on whose hand is whose, and Krause said she is often asked to identify individual handprints.

The volunteerism seen inside and outside of the school also exemplifies the interconnectedness of the area. Scott Haas, the designer of the hand-painted direction sign on Lambertsville Road, was also involved in sandblasting quotations onto the memorial garden’s stones. Haas helps out at a local sign shop “just for fun;” he recalled his work with the memorial garden while discussing the sign that he made. Another contributor is, perhaps not surprisingly, Josie Benson, whose son Chris was one of the students who had traveled to Pittsburgh to help Jan Loney with assembling the sculpture. She has been helping plant flowers at the garden every year since its creation, but said that this year looked doubtful:

Usually we planted flowers there every year, but some of the people, like one, something’s wrong with her knees, the other had this bad allergic reaction, and she couldn’t get the dirt, and the other one went on vacation, and so they said, well you could plant ‘em yourself, and I said, eh. So there aren’t any, there’s just what comes back this year, but when the lady comes back from vacation I said I would help then if she still wanted to do it then.

In an earlier interview that day, however, Jane Krause had said the local Brownie troop would be coming over the weekend to plant and tend the garden. Benson was thrilled with this news, but she was not surprised: “See, that’s how it was on September 11th. Everybody wanted to help, and whatever they could do, it seemed like whatever you needed, you got.”
Thus far, the Flight 93 site has led to a number of secondary memorial sites that came into being soon after the September 11 attacks: Benson’s lawn site, the chapel, the garden. The community effort in creating and maintaining the memorial garden recalls Father Al’s description of “things that make things happen.” Visitors to these sites often seek interaction, handling artifacts, leaving messages, or seeking handprints. In addition to finding the logistical support they need, these secondary sites have also spawned images and objects themselves. The memorialization process in the Shanksville area did not end with the impact site itself, nor with its offshoot sites; it has continued to echo.

Images, Objects, and Interaction

The memorializations examined thus far are fairly rooted in the physical sense. Signs direct or declare, and structures become destinations and places to house other items, and these functions are performed in one place. The viewer must come to them. Yet memorial objects may also be mobile symbols, able to be passed along, duplicated … or sold. Placing a flag in one location does not stop the donor from placing copies elsewhere. Indeed, duplication may make a symbol more powerful, for symbols require recognition of what is symbolized in order to function.

Images and objects function in several ways at the Flight 93 impact site and in the Shanksville area. Some symbolize the event or its materials (artifacts or memorial works), and the intended meanings of these tend to be made widely known. Others, however, bespeak more specific and personal meaning that may not be revealed; objects left at the impact site in tribute, for example, often provide no explanation of where they came from and why. Finally, communicative media play a role in the forms of individual photography and artifacts taken from the news media.
Symbolic Images and Objects

Gift shops are a seemingly inevitable addition to the scene of any event, and the Shanksville area is no exception. When driving through the area, even years afterward, one is likely to see signs advertising Flight 93 merchandise (see Figure 6.22). Both the chapel and the National Park Service office in Somerset have objects related to the September 11 event for sale. As people in the area first became aware of plans for the chapel, one of the earliest structures, the potential for crass merchandising was one of the major concerns: “‘I can't speak for everyone in Shanksville, but there is a sense of responsibility to keep this as pristine as we possibly can,’ says [Pamela] Tokar-Ickes [one of Somerset County’s three commissioners at the time]. ‘The T-shirts, the salespeople, we can't keep it totally out. This is America, after all.’”\(^{25}\) It would be naïve to deny profit as a motivation for all such sales, but it also seems overly cynical to assume there is no goodwill in them, especially when considering the ambassadorial role taken on by so many in the Shanksville area.

All Shanksville stores seem to offer Flight 93 merchandise – one can buy Flight 93 hats or t-shirts at Ida’s along with one’s groceries – but there is probably the most variety in the local gift shop. Creekside Country Store in Shanksville is located just east of the post office, at the corner of the intersection where impact site visitors following Stutzmantown Road from Somerset turn left onto Bridge Street; if one misses this turn, Stutzmantown Road becomes John Street, and the store stands immediately on the corner.

The store, which opened in September 2005, deals mainly in locally made crafts, but also does a brisk trade in lottery tickets.\(^{26}\)

Because of the store’s proximity to the main route, owner Wendy Chisholm has regularly been asked for directions by wayward visitors. Creekside sells a number of September 11 and Flight 93 items, and according to Chisholm,

Most of it is me asking people [craftmakers and artists] to make something that I want, because I’ve had requests for it. … People that are visiting the area and they want a small remembrance, but they don’t want to pay a lot. Refrigerator magnets are big because they’re inexpensive and they can remember. Something that they can put in a scrapbook. A lot of people buy postcards to put in their scrapbook, even though they’ve been to the site and taken their own pictures.

The form of such objects, then, may be expected to tend toward the small, portable, and affordable – in addition to postcards and magnets, Chisholm sells keychains and shot glasses, and Father Al describes how many of the trinkets he sells or gives away are smaller items such as pins or wooden nickels (further, both said some or all of their proceeds go to memorial funds and upkeep costs). Yet though the objects themselves may be trifling, choices must also be made as to what is depicted on them, and this is where the use of symbols seems to enter. Overall, symbols seem to take one of two approaches: Representing the event, or representing the materials involved in its memorialization.

*Event symbols.* Some symbols are designed to represent the event itself. Although some such depictions are literal, incorporating scenes of crashing planes or burning buildings, they are often more abstract. The appeal in such cases is more based in emotion than in evidence, showing the image-maker’s ideas about the people involved or

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\(^{26}\) Creekside began selling lottery tickets after Ida’s, just a block away, stopped selling them. My interview with owner Wendy Chisholm was repeatedly punctuated by ticket buyers, and she said it’s a large proportion of her business: “Sometimes, if it weren’t for lottery, I wouldn’t talk to anybody.”
what the event meant. The chapel’s painting of the Flight 93 planes ascending to heaven is an example of this kind of image. Event symbols try to show what the event means, and they tend to seize on certain themes to do so.

Numbers play prominently in many Flight 93 symbols, and the number 40 in particular. This is the number of passengers and crew who died in the crash, and it resonates in a number of images and practices. At the impact site, a bell rings 40 times on anniversaries. The planned official memorial will incorporate the number in its “Tower of Voices,” which will include 40 white aluminum wind chimes (the tower will also stand 93 feet tall, echoing the number of the plane that crashed there). But the number is not only employed at the impact site. One item Chisholm sells is a mug that she designed (see Figure 6.23), which bears 40 stars and the message, “Remember the Heroes of Flight 93, September 11, 2001, Shanksville, PA:”

Mugs, that was one thing that I had a lot of calls for, so I designed this mug to honor the heroes of Flight 93. And, there’s actually forty stars to represent the 40 passengers and crew. … It’s always about remembering the heroes. Because I firmly believe that the passengers on board were heroes. They were doing what they could to stop that plane from getting to wherever it was going.

One object that draws on this number is literally attached another memorial object, the Shanksville Volunteer Fire Department’s tanker truck. The truck includes a port-a-pond, a piece of equipment used mainly in rural firefighting for carrying water to scenes with no fire hydrants, and the cover for the port-a-pond is embroidered with 40 American flags symbolizing the Flight 93 victims. According to Karen Shaw, this cover has become a memorial object that visitors have interacted with:

27 As with The 9/11 Commission Report, the hijackers are not counted in this number.
As family members have visited the fire station through the years, they’ve signed this cover around one of the flags that might represent, that would represent their loved one. So they think of this truck as a rolling, working tribute. … It’s a vital piece of firefighting equipment for the community, but it also honors the memory of the passengers and crew.

The truck’s “rolling tribute” status goes beyond the port-a-pond cover. Purchased after the Flight 93 crash, it includes red, white and blue hoses, a bronze plaque listing the names of the passengers and crew, and a painting depicting an eagle, the American flag, and an image of the American flag flying from the boom of the dragline that overlooked the site until recently. The tanker truck painting’s multiple American flags are a common symbol in memorial images, but a number of original flags have also been produced in memory of both September 11 and of the individual attack sites. Four such flags fly from atop the chain link fence at the temporary memorial; the strong winds at the site have left them tattered, and their flapping can drown out presentations at the site. One of the four is the “Flight 93 flag,” which was designed by Gene Stilp of Harrisburg, the state capital of Pennsylvania (see Figure 6.24).

28 This flag, like many of its kin, echoes the design of the American flag, but the blue field contains a ring of stars surrounding a large “93,” and the top three white stripes bear the message “Our nation will / eternally honor / the heroes of Flight 93.” Father Al’s own “Thunder Flag” is rectangular slice from the “heart” of the

28 Stilp, a political activist, has a fondness for visual symbols in his messages. He known in Pennsylvania state government for his use of props, which have included placing a giant pink pig on the steps of the state Capitol (on 10 separate occasions as of 2005) and traveling with a toaster to protest a state electricity rate increase. See Barnes, T. (2007, February 5). Political watchdog battles for change in Harrisburg, Pittsburgh Post Gazette. Retrieved on June 29, 2008, from http://www.post-gazette.com.

29 Stilp is also an honorary member of the Shanksville Volunteer Fire Department. He has said that “first responder” issues are his passion and is also a volunteer firefighter and EMT in Dauphin County, where he lives. See Race, M. (n.d.). Self-described “nobody” is state's most vocal political activist. The Citizen’s Voice (Wilkes-Barre, PA). Retrieved June 29, 2008, from http://www.citizensvoice.com.
American flag, containing four stars and one strip each of red, white and blue, and the informational booklet available at the chapel goes into detail about what the flag’s colors and symbols mean (the stars, for example, symbolize the four planes involved with the September 11 attacks).

In addition to the several flags presented at the impact site, others in the area have had flags thrust upon them. A Flight 93 flag hangs in the back stairwell of the Somerset Daily American newspaper; reporter Vicki Rock said it was received unexpectedly soon after September 11 while the newspaper was building its new office:

When this was all going on this building was being constructed. So this place was all torn up. So people were coming in and he came in one day and said, you don’t have a flag. I said, I’m sorry we do have a flag, but because of the construction our pole is down right now and he said, no, no, no, you need a flag, and he handed it to me and I just blanked out and didn’t think to ask the gentleman his name and he left.

Such apparent desire to disseminate event symbols appears in many ways in the Shanksville area. Limited space and different ideas of what constitutes an appropriate symbolic response, however, means that not all images can be displayed everywhere. One case is that of “Freedom’s Angel of Steadfast Love.” Angel imagery has been popular with regard to the Flight 93 impact site. Some sources choose to refer to the crew and passengers as “angels of freedom,” and soon after the September 11 attacks, 40 slate angels appeared at the temporary memorial (see Figure 6.25). Lei Hennessy (now

30 Many September 11 commemorative flags have websites explaining their different symbologies. These include the Remembrance Flag (http://www.remembranceflag.com/), 9-11 National Remembrance Flag (http://www.911remembranceflag.com/), and Flag of Honor (http://www.biellc.org/; this site also includes a “page of shame” listing “merchants who have ordered and received the Flags and now will not pay for them.”). Interestingly, most such sites make little or no reference to other commemorative flags, but a useful (though incomplete) listing is available at http://www.crwflags.com/fotw/Flags/us-911.html.
Hennessy-Owen), a resident of Jennerstown, 15 miles northwest of Shanksville, used the angel theme in creating her “Freedom’s Angel” sculptures, steel side profiles of the titular angels that she has made in a variety of heights. The angels are available for purchase—$25 each—from her website, which also includes links to various media profiles of her work as well as higher-profile angels she has donated; these include angels for Iraq War figures PFC Jessica Lynch and Corporal Pat Tillman as well as one donated to President George W. Bush’s hometown of Crawford, Texas, for the wedding of Bush’s daughter Jenna.\footnote{Frederick, R. (2002, September 12). They came from far and wide to Shanksville just to be there. Pittsburgh 
\textit{Tribune-Review}. Retrieved June 25, 2008, from http://www.pittsburghlive.com/x/pittsburghtrib/news/specialreports/oneyearlater/s_91037.html. One of her angels, an 18-foot model, was also present at Hennessy-Owen’s own wedding, which was held on the first anniversary of the September 11 attacks. Following the ceremony, her husband drove the angel to the temporary memorial site. “She’d planned a ‘Dances With Wolves’ wedding, but switched it after giving thought to the Sept. 11 anniversary. She figured she’d finish the day with friends, and a few beers, and a celebration on her own terms. ‘That’s my message,’ she said, the angel just an outline in the dark. ‘They can beat on us, but they can’t beat us.’” See also Hennessy-Owen’s website, www.deliveringangels.com.} Images of the angels can be found throughout Somerset and the Shanksville area. Josie Benson has photographs of them collected amongst the many images she has saved; Diane Thompson, a resident who was living abroad during the attacks, has her own pictures of an angel that once stood near the site. They are recurring features in both front yards and individual photographs (see Figure 6.26). On the other hand, the angels were not permitted to be placed at the temporary memorial site, so Hennessy-Owen set one up at the intersection of Buckstown Road and Skyline Drive, to the south of the site.\footnote{Leona, K. (2003, September 12). “Volunteers honored for 9-11 heroics.” \textit{Daily American} (Somerset, PA), p. 3.} When Hennessy-Owen suggested to Father Al that an angel be included in the Flight 93 Memorial Chapel, he also refused. Although the responses of others seemingly show the
angels are “things that make things happen,” Father Al felt the publicity behind the angels did not honor the passengers and crew of Flight 93. Ultimately, some degree of control over what gets in appears to exist at all the Flight 93 sites, but though the different memorializations seem to share some grammatical elements (e.g., the numbers and flags described here), there does not appear to be a uniform set of rules across the sites when it comes to event symbols.

**Material symbols.** As the body of Flight 93 artifacts and structures has grown, these materials have themselves been echoed in the creation of images and objects. Objects from the event itself have been recreated in images, but so have the structures and symbols that have sprung up around it. Material symbols differ from event symbols in their “objective” nature – one might dispute what an angel represents, but an object from a site or image of that site is linked in a more immediately visible way. This is not to say the meaning of material symbols is inherent, only that they provide a clear link to what it is they purport to represent.

Figurines from the Cat’s Meow company are a prominent form of material symbol in the Shanksville area. Cat’s Meow, based in Wooster, Ohio, “has been turning special moments into lasting memories for over 24 years with our unique wooden keepsakes,” according to its website. These keepsakes tend to be wooden block cutouts painted with objects or landmarks, most often buildings, and the website’s menu includes categories for “Bible Stories & Religious Places,” “Nautical & Lighthouses,” and “Patriotic & Military Collections,” among others. Each Cat’s Meow piece includes the silhouette of a small, black cat: Casper, the company mascot. The website goes on to claim, “Our keepsakes make the purr-fect gift, preserve history, and add a special touch
to any decor. With Cat's Meow, you can hold precious memories, cherished moments, and the times of your life in the palm of your hand.”

Both Wendy Chisholm and Father Al have commissioned Cat’s Meow keepsakes that commemorate the various sites, and these are available at the store and the chapel (some may be purchased at either of these places or online, others are exclusive to one location). The sites and objects that have been “preserved” (to use the company’s language) include the fire truck, the painting on the back of the fire truck, the high school (including the memorial garden), the chapel, the “Lightning Torch” from the chapel, and the crew monument from the chapel, the most recently designed (see Figure 6.27).

According to Chisholm, “just about anywhere you go you can get a Cat’s Meow made from that area,” yet there are far more keepsakes of the Flight 93 impact site than of the others. The website does offer a keepsake of the memorial beams of light at the World Trade Center site as well as one of a “Unity Tree” with ribbons and a flag commemorating September 11.

Memorial materials have also been drawn on for a set of commemorative postal cancellation marks. A cancellation is “a mark placed on a stamp by a postal authority to show that it has been used.” Cancellations in general are not nearly so widely collected as postage stamps, and unlike stamps they may include only cancellation information

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34 These items are all included in the site’s “Patriotic and Military Collections” page, which gives a price, short description, and date of creation for each item. One additional item in this section, “Scene, New York City Skyline,” shows Manhattan (including the World Trade Center towers) with the Statue of Liberty in the foreground. Although no mention is made of September 11 in the description, this item was introduced on September 18, 2001, making the inclusion of the towers an interesting unexplained choice. There is also a Pentagon figurine, but this was introduced in 1999.
(i.e., mailing date and origin of the stamp) without any kind of image. Commemorative cancellations, however, can be closely linked to a single region. Sometimes they are designed by local artists or available at only a single post office, which allows for much more place specificity.\textsuperscript{36}

There has been a commemorative cancellation available from the Shanksville Post Office for all but one of the September 11 anniversaries. Once again, this project is closely linked to Father Al. Having seen commemorative cancellations elsewhere, he asked about the process of making one at the Somerset Post Office but was told he would not qualify to make such a stamp. The Shanksville postmaster, however, told him otherwise:

She said, well we have them all the time, and they’re on the board. They post them on the board, this one’s coming up, this one’s coming up. And I said, well, find out what you can do to get one. She did it! … So I said, find out if we could do one for the first anniversary of September 11th. [The postal authority said,] Yes, that would be wonderful if we could do it at Shanksville, that would be fantastic, a small little post office having its own cancellation mark. So I said, okay, I’ll do it.

The first cancellation mark was unveiled at the Shanksville Post Office to coincide with the first anniversary; Josie Benson, who was helping out at the post office at the time, said the event left her so busy that she missed the bus taking people to the

\textsuperscript{36} Some examples from the U.S. Postal Service include cancellations commemorating the Flushing (NY) Remonstrance, the semiquncentennial anniversary of the town of Hopkinton, Rhode Island, and the character Yoda from the \textit{Star Wars} movies (admittedly not a regional figure). Many cancellation marks are designed to compliment similarly themed stamps, and the USPS also sells commemorative panels that combine a sheet of specialty stamps with a related cancellation. One such panel in its Black Heritage series honors writer Charles W. Chestnutt with a pane of 20 stamps bearing his likeness and a postcard with a stamp and cancellation mark that reads “Black Heritage – Charles W. Chestnutt – January 31, 2008, Cleveland, OH 44301 – FIRST DAY OF ISSUE.”
impact site for the anniversary ceremony. That first stamp was “basically words,” which Father Al said was due to the short amount of time he had to make it, and it featured the phrase “Boulevard of Heroes,” his preferred name for Stutzmantown Road where the chapel stands (see Figure 6.28). For designing the cancellation mark, he received from the U.S. Postal Service a large framed reproduction of the “Ground Zero Spirit” stamp, which is on display in the chapel.

Father Al has designed the cancellation mark for every year but one, 2005, when there was no stamp due to a miscommunication. Because of this, he said, each year’s cancellation mark shows a material symbol not from the impact site but from the chapel: “Each theme is picked having to do with something with the chapel, because it’s the anniversary and it draws attention to the event. But I’m not associated with the event, I’m

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37 Benson enjoys telling this story as the time she jumped out in front of a bus. “I was at the post office and … they were having a ceremony over there for the first cancellation thing, and then you were supposed to be able to go get the bus at nine o’clock. Well then, no more buses! They weren’t letting people to go, I mean, it was like really disorganized. I was supposed to be on the bus cause I had a ticket to go to the service out there, and I couldn’t get there because they weren’t letting people on the bus. And so I had my son take me out the road to, Lambertsville Road, and they said I couldn’t go, and the police stopped us and said, you can’t go, and then they wanted to put me in the cruiser, and I says, no, I said, I’ll just stand here, I don’t need to get in the cruiser, I said, call Suzy or someone, I’m supposed to be there. And you know, I’m just crazy, you know. So the bus is coming, and it has my neighbor, the mayor, and all the people that were at the thing at the post office, but I got stuck over there and I didn’t get to go up to the school to get this bus. And they say, well, here comes the bus, I said, yep, that’s the bus I’m supposed to be on! And so I got out in the middle of the road, I’m going like this [waving], and the bus stops, and I jump on, and I said, yes I am, I says, ask anybody here, I’m supposed to be on the bus!”

38 In that year, he said, a resident had complained to the postmaster that someone else should be able to design the cancellation mark. “I said, well let them go ahead and do it. … This was like May and June, before September, maybe even March. Well as time went by, people were asking me what I was going to do. … It came right up to the last minute, I mean the last possible minute, this was like August. … So finally we searched it out, tracked him down. And he just kinda said, oh, that’s more trouble than I thought, I’m not gonna do it, just tell him to do it. Well, even though I had done it before and I knew what was involved, at that point it really was too late for me to do anything, and I couldn’t.”
associated with the chapel.” In addition to the text-based first anniversary cancellation mark, with its “Boulevard of Heroes,” the cancellations have also depicted the Torch of Liberty (2003), the chapel itself (2004), the crew monument (2006), and the Thunder Bell (2007; the bell was rededicated this year). The cancellation marks are offered beginning September 11 and remain available for several weeks, with the post office usually filling several thousand requests for them.39

This link to a satellite site does not seem to have dissuaded people from seeking cancellation marks. Although she did not have specific numbers available, Benson said a number of people send self-addressed stamped envelopes to the post office each year to be cancelled with the commemorative marks. Local residents also collect the images, and both Benson and Wendy Chisholm have multiple cards with each year’s cancellation marks shuffled in with their photographs of local anniversary ceremonies and events. Some prefer to combine the cancellation marks with other objects and images: Chisholm, for example, has gotten them on locally made Flight 93 postcards. Father Al himself tries to get cancellation marks on as many items as possible. He has a “Visitor’s passport” that has been marked with each year’s mark (it is nearly out of space), and a drawer full of postcards, newspapers, and even t-shirts, all bearing both the cancellation marks and the necessary postage to mail them (see Figure 6.29).

The above examples describe material artifacts the represent materials from memorial sites rather than the sites themselves. This is not to say the impact sites are never represented, but the temporary memorial that stands nearest to the site is seemingly

39 For example, in 2006, the fifth anniversary of the attacks, 7,000 requests were received. Buchnowski, P. (2007, September 28). Flight 93 postal-cancellation mark nears expiration. Tribune-Democrat (Johnstown, PA).
rare in symbolic representations; one exception is the chapel’s painting of four ascending planes, which includes the Flight 93 crash site alongside those of the World Trade Center and Pentagon. Another is the painting from the Shanksville Fire Department’s tanker truck, described in the previous section. This may be one of the richest examples of layered symbolism at the Shanksville site. The image itself is a collage of symbols, both of the event and of materials, and has itself been duplicated and disseminated in the form of photographs and the Cat’s Meow keepsakes. One element of the painting that has not yet been discussed, however, is the image of the dragline. The inclusion of the dragline image in this painting is significant for its specific link to the Flight 93 site, which Karen Shaw, discussing a photograph of the dragline, explained:

The draglines … they’re enormous, and if you’re not familiar with strip mining, as we are here in Western Pennsylvania, you have no idea what these machines are for or how they work … and there’s an American flag flying off of this shot. … the Pennsylvania state police, on September 12th, they were on that high ground as part of the perimeter overlooking the site, and they climbed the boom and flew an American flag from the top of that dragline, and that remained there during the investigation, and it was very inspiring for all those who were working at the site, and … at Shanksville, at Flight 93, this was the equivalent of the three firemen raising the flag from the rubble in New York City, and the flag … the huge flag that was draped over the side of the Pentagon.

The draglines were, until their dismantling, a key presence at the crash site. Many residents have stories involving the flag hangings (there have been several), and in some cases, the presence of the draglines has led visitors to create stories of their own: Shaw told how some visitors to the impact site have asked if the draglines were part of the recovery operation from Flight 93. This kind of connection-seeking has been present elsewhere in the Shanksville area. At the chapel, for example, visitors have asked Father
Al if a cemetery across the road is somehow involved, even wondering if the graves belong to the Flight 93 victims.

The making of connections is part of the meaning-making that goes on at the Flight 93 and the larger vicinity. Residents as well as visitors engage in this behavior. In the above example, Karen Shaw has made a link from the dragline flag image to iconic scenes from other impact sites; in another case, an impact site visitor might place a bumper sticker honoring the victims of the April 2007 Virginia Tech shootings or the 2005 Hurricane Katrina disaster. Other objects do not present clearly identifiable connections, with some people leaving behind small items such as hair bands. Beyond the visible items left at the site, individuals interact with the sites through photography, making images for reasons specific to them. The Shanksville area has become a network of memorial images and objects, and the next sections will examine the ways in which individuals interact with these.

*Tributes and Balance at the Sites*

The elements examined thus far – physical places and objects – are necessary nodes of interaction, but discussion is also needed of what is done at and with these symbolic things. This final section explores individual interactions with memorial sites and objects. Addressed first is the phenomenon of tributes and leavings. Tributes are items of personal meaning that are left at memorial sites, and their display, care, and archiving are matters that face the caretakers of the site. The use of communicative texts, from individuals and the media, is examined next to consider how personal photographs and journalistic texts are used to interact with the memorials, as well as how these have been used to memorialize that which is no more.
The leaving of tributes at sites of disaster or memorial is an old practice. Flowers and trinkets left at gravestones are a sight familiar to many, as are handmade roadside crosses at the sites of fatal highway accidents. In an annual ceremony, the United States President presents a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknowns in Arlington National Cemetery, and current President George W. Bush has presented wreaths at each of the September 11 impact sites. Such leavings and tributes may be from individuals or groups, and may reflect a variety of motivations and personal meanings. Though we can speculate on what these meanings are, the objects left by others often include a story or explanation, leaving subsequent visitors to draw their own conclusions.

The main voice on tributes in the Shanksville area is Barbara Black. Now an employee of the National Park Service’s Flight 93 Memorial office, in 2001 Black was a curator with the Somerset Historical Center, and she was one of the earliest volunteers helping with the Lambertsville Road memorial. She began collecting, preserving, and archiving objects left there, and eventually at the temporary memorial site, after an October 2001 meeting with the park service. This is allowed, Black said, because the park service has legal access to the site and grounds; ordinarily objects entering a collection require a deed of gift, but tributes are considered abandoned property and may be collected without such documentation.

The term “tributes” used here comes from Black, who said the term traces back to the Vietnam War memorial wall. Pam West, who was in charge of curating and collecting objects at that memorial, attended the October 2001 meeting and told of the “incredible things” that had been left at the memorial wall: Personal messages, sonograms of victims’ children, even a motorcycle. “She was my National Park Service contact,” said Black,
“so she provided some procedures to me, of what they had been doing at Vietnam. And we kind of talked through the process, and … really, the word ‘tribute,’ I think, evolved out of that.” The Flight 93 site, she said, seems to attract a different approach than other park service sites:

Most other sites don’t have tributes being left. It’s still happening at the Vietnam wall. It’s still happening at Oklahoma City. And that’s about it. And it’s really a phenomenon that’s happening in the lifetime of the visitors. Vietnam was in the lifetime of those who lived through it. Oklahoma City was in the lifetime of those who lived through it, and now Flight 93. … At Gettysburg they’ll leave a floral wreath, or … mostly just flowers, ribbons, flags. Those types of things are generally not kept. … and people tend not to leave a real message like that there.

The “real messages” of Flight 93 site tributes span a wide range, from the inexpensive and common to the unique and even valuable. With the relative newness and infrequency of the tribute phenomenon, examining their types and the ways in which they are managed is still relatively uncharted territory (even though the objects from the Vietnam memorial have long been archived, it is only recently that plans have been proposed for a museum display of that collection). Thus, although the variety of tributes in Shanksville is vast, it will be useful to present a picture of what they are and who has had to deal with them.

“Common” and rare tributes. Images and objects dot every available space at the Flight 93 temporary memorial. Even before leaving one’s car, one cannot help but notice

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40 Legislation authorizing creation of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Center was signed into law on Nov. 17, 2003. The building will be built nearby the existing wall but underground, so as not to “encroach on the … open space and visual sightlines.” In addition to displaying tributes left at the memorial, the center will “educate the public about the Memorial and the Vietnam War.” Items left at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial are currently collected each day, tagged and archived. The archives are not open to the public, but a “rotating selection” is displayed at the American History Museum of the Smithsonian Institution. See http://www.nps.gov/vive.
the bumper stickers and handwritten messages that cover every inch of the railing that surrounds the parking lot (see Figure 6.30). Within the temporary memorial site, the most immediately noticeable feature is the large chain-link wall that bears an immense variety of images and objects: hats and t-shirts, signs, license plates, and many flags, just to name a few of the more frequently seen types. Several uniforms have been left at the site over the years, including a Shanksville Volunteer Fire Department jacket signed by the firefighters who were first responders to the Flight 93 crash. A closer look reveals that every available horizontal surface is dotted with tiny objects, with everyday objects such as coins and rubber hair bands some of the most common (see Figure 6.31). These items may appear mundane, yet their presence suggests a compulsion to leave something, even the ordinary items of one’s pocket. Black said they may also reflect something personal in their very ordinariness:

Things that you wear on your body. Things that you wear close to you. Those are symbols also of you. You choose to wear this type of earring, or you choose to put your hair up in this band, or you choose this necklace. When you go and pick out a pair of sunglasses, you try on ten pair and then you decide that this is the one that you like, that makes you look the way you want to look. That’s a reflection of you. It’s worn close to the body, it’s a personal expression … you take it off your body and you leave it there as a tribute: “I have been here. I have come to honor you.”

In fact, the practice of leaving tributes in memory of Flight 93 precedes the temporary memorial structure, tracing back to the earliest informal memorial structures on Lambertsville Road and in Josie Benson’s yard. Although Benson and her family were responsible for many of the larger signs in her yard, both residents and visitors contributed a variety of objects and leavings to the site; a child’s toy fire helmet and crosses from religious groups are just some of the tributary objects she has photographed. She also said she considers written messages, left on her signs and in a book she
provided, to be an important form of tribute, and one that should be better incorporated at the main impact site:

Since they have the [visitor log] books up at the memorial, they need to have a sign inside or something, right where you’re writing, you know, you’re allowed to do this in those books. And no one does, they just sign their name and where they’re from. And I mean, people get emotional there and they need to write what they feel, like they used to. Some people do but not very many.

The kind of messages that Benson felt are needed are of a more interactive sort, allowing visitors to become part of the memorial rather than simply adding their names to a list. A desire for interaction is suggested by the earlier examples of visitors linking the objects they see at the sites to the Flight 93 narrative, and such connections have been made to tributary objects as well. Barbara Black gave the example of a uniform left at the Lamberts tlle Road memorial:

One of the first things left at the site, where people were leaving tributes, was a United Airlines flight attendant uniform, a woman’s dress. And it was laid on the ground, and people came by and just stared at it. And some people … mistakenly thought that it was, that it had belonged to someone on the plane. It did not, we knew that, because there was nothing intact, that large, that really was left. … It was of great interest to everyone who was there. Roses, flowers were left on it … because it was just incredible to see this flight attendant uniform just lying on the ground.  

In most cases, Black said, the stories behind such objects remain untold, but the story behind this uniform eventually came out: Months later, after the uniform had been removed from the site for preservation, a United Airlines flight attendant who lived in the area came forward and said the uniform was hers, laid at the site in honor of her co-

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41 Josie Benson has her own story about encountering the uniform, a story that actually comes from her deceased friend Kim: “The one day when she – I wasn’t with her – she went out and she saw there was an airline stewardess’s dress laying there on the ground, and she took a picture of her niece with it … and … it was really, you know, gave you the shivers.”
workers. Some times, according to Black, the curators get lucky with unusual items. A nondescript beige brick left at the impact site was accompanied by a note revealing it to be the gift of a United States special forces unit, which had taken the brick from the compound of Mullah Muhammed Omar in Kandahar, Afghanistan. Without the note, she said:

It would have been just a brick, with no story, no definite way of knowing what its connection was. … Is it just something that somebody had in the back of his truck, and he didn’t want his nice poster with all these signatures to blow away, so he just put the brick on top of it? Could’ve even been that, and had absolutely no significance as a tribute at all, unless we had the story behind it.

The brick’s mundane nature would make it easy to overlook without the note; even with such a document, one cannot be absolutely certain of authenticity, yet the story is absorbed into the mythology of the place. Other objects involve more recognizable symbols that allow an educated guess as to their intended meaning. With religious items, for example, Black said, “you can make a fairly good reason why someone would leave something.” Some leavings are so highly personal, specific, or unusual, however, that there is no way to assume anything about the story behind them:

There was a wedding ring left in a ring box. And it was a legitimate one, it wasn’t costume jewelry, it was a real gold band. What does that mean? Would it have had some connection directly to one of the 40 passengers and group? We don’t know. You could make up stories forever, and not really know until someone came forward to tell you exactly what it meant.

Highly valuable items like this are rare among the tributes (and are quickly archived to keep them safe). Far more common are small objects such as coins,

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42 The text of the note reads: “This brick is from the compound of Taliban leader Mullah Muhammed Omar in Kandahar, Afghanistan. On October 20th, 2001, U.S. special forces attacked and seized the compound. It is now used as a U.S. base from which attacks are launched against the Taliban and al-Qaida. Placed here in tribute to the first warriors of the global war on terror by members of the 19th Special Forces.”
hairbands, sunglasses … items one is likely to have in a pocket.\textsuperscript{43} Nor are such items limited to the impact site itself. Although the items left on display within the chapel are closely regulated by Father Al, behind the building the monument to the Flight 93 crew is typically covered with coins and small objects. One of the duties of those overseeing a memorial site, then, appears to be managing the memorial objects that people bring with them. Whether one leaves these objects to be seen, removes and archives them, or even discards the objects, in the Shanksville area the phenomenon of tributary objects appears to be a necessary consideration.

\textit{Preservation and maintenance.} Even at the earliest memorial sites, the tributes soon began to pile up. Many of them were perishable, such as drawings, poems and signs left at the site. In addition to tending her own yard, Josie Benson said, “me and my friend Kim we would go out there [to the Lambertsville Road site], cause we knew some of this stuff was gonna get ruined. And we would, if it was gonna rain, cover stuff that shouldn’t get wet.” Barbara Black began her own involvement through the historical society for which she curated, continuing her work after site management was taken over by the park service: “One of the things that we know how to do is basically take large groups of stuff and make some sense out of it. … I’m trained as a curator and a conservator, and so I [also] know how to take care of objects that have been left out in the rain, that need cleaning, and that type of thing.”

\textsuperscript{43} Money left at the site is collected as quickly as possible and placed in the donation box at the park service office in Somerset for integration into the general fund. “We don’t want the volunteers who are out there to be responsible for cash,” Black said.
The cataloguing process has been underway for some time, and had to be restarted when the park service came on board in 2002.\textsuperscript{44} Black, who visits the site periodically, brings tributes back to the park service office for cataloguing in groups as they start to become weathered; site volunteers also collect objects that are too delicate to leave for long. About one-third of the collection is stored at the park service facility in downtown Somerset, mainly items that are either unusual or not catalogued. The remainder of the collection is kept in a remote storage facility several hours away.\textsuperscript{45}

Cataloguing is based on a numerical index for each tributes, indicating its site of origin (FLNI, for “FL-ight NI-enty-three”) and number in the collection. Beyond this, each item is classified by type. Broadly, tributes are first divided up along dimensional lines (e.g., flat objects, three-dimensional, oversized), then by type (e.g., statues, stuffed animals, toys), then subdivided within type as necessary. The index page for one box of flat objects, for example, includes sub listings for pictures, collages, postcards, signs, drawings, photographs, news clippings, music (sheet), journal pages, and book jackets.

According to Black, “every single object has its own unique number [and] it’s all put into

\textsuperscript{44} The original indexing system was one that Black had used in her other curating duties. When the park service took over site management, records had to be converted to its indexing system. This new system is unfortunately less detailed. Under the old system, a tribute was indexed by site, year of collection, collection batch, and item number within the batch; the park service system indicates only the site and the number of the object. One figurine, for example, was re-indexed from 93M2002.44.24 (the old system) to FLNI 1804 (the park service system). Considering that the park service has used this system for its sites since the 1800s, however, Black said she felt it would be unrealistic to ask for an exception.

\textsuperscript{45} According to Black, this records management storage facility is also used for record storage by county repositories, the Social Security Administration, and the National Archives.
a computer, so that if I want to know how many Virgin Mary statues we have in the collection, and where they all are … I can go right to it.”

The park service archives are surely thorough and systematic, but some have purposely held their tributes apart from it. As mentioned, Josie Benson has contributed many of the materials from her yard memorial to the park service but retains the two signs she feels are most significant. To her, these signs must be seen, and without a guarantee that they would be displayed, she was not comfortable with donating them: “I thought it needed to be seen. … I didn’t want to put it in a cave.” There is a balance reflected here, between the desire to display and the desire to preserve. Both Black and Benson have been some of the primary caretakers of memory in the Shanksville area, and each has had to make decisions about whether to leave tributes visible but exposed or preserved but hidden.

Tribute objects face risks beyond weather. Both the wedding ring and the many coins left at the impact site, for example, are objects that invite theft even if they are officially considered abandoned property. Although vandalism at the site has not been much of an issue – security was removed from the impact site in 2007 when federal funding ran out, citing a lack of incidents – it does occur in the larger area. Father Al, 47

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46 Black estimated the number of Virgin Mary statues in the collection at “probably have a couple hundred.”
47 See Swauger, K. (2007, January 10). Flight 93 security budget dwindling. *The Tribune-Democrat* (Johnstown, PA); and Swauger, K. (2007, February 21). Troopers to handle incidents. *The Tribune-Democrat* (Johnstown, PA). Security duties were handed over to state police in February 2008. An appropriation of $1 million, secured soon after the crash by U.S. Rep. John Murtha, D-Johnstown, had been partly used to fund round-the-clock security at the site, an expense of $4,000 to $5,000 per month. Although the Somerset County commissioners initially tried to come up with funding to maintain security at the site, commissioner Brad Cober acknowledged that “We’ve been on site since 9/11, and we haven’t had any incidents.”
who made some of the earliest signs pointing visitors to the site in 2002, described how
difficult it was to keep these signs posted around the area:

I had about 50 of them that I made, and … from March, until August, that
year, all 50 signs had been stolen. There was only one or two left that were
still available. … One I kept in front of the chapel, so as they slowed down
at the chapel, they would see the impact site is further. [The builders]
made the other sign based on my design. And we had about 50 or 60 of
those, and over the course of time, they have all disappeared as well. So
now when I put up a sign, it’s a very simple sign. … No design on it or
anything, it’s just simple words. And they have lasted pretty well, they
stay in place pretty well, but they still disappear.48

Despite such occasional issues, however, the Flight 93 tributes have been looked
after with considerable care. Between the interest of individuals and of larger agencies,
the role of tributes has seemingly been accepted into the nature of the site. In fact, the
design of the official memorial incorporates a number of niches in the wall surrounding
the “sacred ground” area where the plane crashed, something Black said she had
specifically requested:

People feel very strongly when they come to this memorial. … We feel as
though this is going to continue for quite some time, and that once the
memorial is built, they still need an outlet to be able to express
themselves. And they will tell us how they want to express themselves, we
don’t try and influence them. And although the chain link fence will not be
a part of the permanent memorial, for many different reasons, we wanted
to have a way for them to still leave objects.

The collected objects will continue to be archived and stored, and Black said the
hope is to build a collections facility at the official memorial; this is “down the road a

48 Not even Father Al was above suspicion in the sign thefts: “They were in storage in
one of these rooms, of the building. And one of the volunteers who worked here, one day
I came in and he had already beat me here. He said, I’m very disappointed in you. I said,
what’s the problem? He said, well I never expected you, a priest, would do something
like this. All those signs back there … you’re the one that’s been stealing the signs.
Because they had been disappearing … and I would replace them. And I started laughing,
I said, no, I don’t steal the signs, I make the signs. … These are all the ones that I’m
going to use to replace the ones that disappear. And that’s what I did.”
bit,” however. The reason for the preservation, she said, is to allow adequate time to judge and understand the meanings of the tributes: “It’s too soon to know whether it’s important to save them or whether they really have no meaning at all. And at some point, someone could make that decision, but right now, we felt that it was important to save them.”

While the site awaits construction of an official Flight 93 memorial, the temporary memorial site itself is, in a way, the largest tribute of all. Standing several hundred feet from the actual point of impact, it is almost completely informal aside from the parking area and booth erected by the park service. Because no official monument may be placed at the site, the wall, flags, and markers are all independent tributes, themselves marked with smaller leavings. The signs and structures that have appeared in the Shanksville area are tribute-like themselves, informal projects wrought by individual ideas about what a memorial should be and whom it should honor.

Unlike those tributes, structures and symbols, however, the temporary memorial itself will not be preserved. The wall will come down, and the parking area with its bumper stickers will be cleared to make way for the official memorial structure. The niches surrounding the “sacred ground” area are an acknowledgement of how visitors have interacted with the site, but the memorials that currently stand at the impact site will one day be no longer exist, and some elements, such as the draglines, are already gone. This fact is neither wonderful nor terrible, but once again, a balance seems to be reflected, in this case a balance between informal and official memorialization.

Yet the past is preserved, in a way, by the many residents and visitors who have shown and recorded the site and its memorialization. Through the news media and
through individual photography, a record has been made of what has happened and what was once there. The final components of this case study examine how the ongoing story of Flight 93 has been recorded in these texts.

Journalism and Its Functions

Early on, local newspapers (the *Daily American* in Somerset and the *Tribune-Democrat* in Johnstown) enjoyed a front-seat view of the investigation that other publications would have to get through wire services. When the flight data recorder was found on September 14, 2001, for example, the story in the *Daily American* came from a staff reporter.49 Because of the site’s nearby location and the many things that proximity includes, the area’s newspapers have developed a sort of “September 11” news beat that is not unlike more typical beats that cover police, courts, or business stories. These reporters have other duties, but also can be consistent in their involvement with site stories and connection to the survivors and officials so often involved with stories.

At the *Daily American*, September 11 stories tend to fall to reporter Vicki Rock. Rock has worked for the newspaper since July 1979. In that time, she has covered “practically every beat imaginable, from courthouse to police to now I’m doing education, medical, or, as Brian [Whipkey, the paper’s editor] says, anything else that comes up that we need you to do.” Her September 11 duties are a de facto beat, not an official one, and although she acknowledged that role, she was also clear that others have been involved with the coverage:

> When something of that magnitude happens in such a small newspaper, everybody went. I wasn’t sent to the scene, initially, because I was actually out of the office doing another story when the plane crashed here,

other people who were here were sent to the scene and I was sent to cover the families’ arriving. The people who did go to the scene are no longer with the paper...one of them is part time, so now I cover the Flight 93 meetings and task force memorial commission, and anytime a Flight 93 story comes up, and it is something that is not during my normal work week, then I’m the one who will do it.50

Being a journalist in the area means knowing how to cover Flight 93, but also how not to cover it. People’s lives in the area have certainly been affected, but, as Rock’s hybrid beat shows, beats such as crime, health, and education remain more pressing everyday concerns. Finding a good balance in local coverage while fielding outside interest in the site is part of the challenge faced by local media.

Covering Flight 93

History images. Like most newspapers, a portion of local anniversary coverage was devoted to what happened in the September 11 attacks and how they have been officially memorialized. Archival images played a role in this, especially in special sections. In 2002, for example, the Daily American published a 98-page special edition that included a number of archival photographs from the days surrounding the attacks, along with locally written stories, obituaries of the Flight 93 victims, and many local advertisements. That section was sold separately for $4.95, but the newspaper also published special anniversary sections on September 10, 11, and 12, and these had similar

50 See Rock, V. (2008, April 3). Families of Flight 93 meet with Extreme Makeover. Daily American (Somerset, PA), p. 3. Rock’s September 11 duties extend well beyond official meetings and survivor interviews. In an April 3, 2008, story, for example, she reported on a visit to the area by a crew from television program “Extreme Makeover: Home Edition.” The show’s producers were seeking families from the Shanksville area and larger region (reportedly from as far as Pittsburgh) as candidates for a home makeover. Some of the families of the Flight 93 victims showed television crews around the area, although Gordon Felt, president of Families of Flight 93, said they “[did] not want to insert themselves into the selection process. … This will also publicize the Flight 93 National Memorial.”
makeups – page 2A of the September 10 edition includes a trio of images from the three impact sites, taken on or very near to the day of the attacks. Other well-known images from those days, depicting New Yorkers fleeing the towers’ collapse or President Bush’s speech at the demolished Pentagon wall, also make up these sections. More rare, said Whipkey, are post-impact images of the Flight 93 site:

Because there wasn’t an actual rescue and the FBI came in and denied access, the pictures that actually hit the site were limited. We had a lot of photos coming in to the thing. There was one of a police on horseback saluting the family when they were first brought there on the charter bus … or this big media circus out there … but there just wasn’t a lot to photograph. We ended up with some pictures of people leading into the town of Shanksville, had their own make-shift memorials in their yard for people driving by.

Images of the dead and destroyed appear throughout the commemorative publications and anniversary coverage. “Mugshot”-style images, head-and-shoulder images of individuals, are quite common in these publications; they accompany the victims’ obituaries in 2002’s 98-page edition, and make up a center-spread collage in a 2006 special section. In addition, mugshot images have been used to accompany stories about visits from the victims’ families, often juxtaposed with the more active images of the survivors’ activities.

Visitor activities. Visitors are a significant part of coverage of the Flight 93 site, and anniversary coverage tends to include at least a few images of outsiders at the site. These occasionally focus on “average person” visitors (rather than locals, officials, or victims’ family members), but such images are rare and their captions tend to use nonspecific words such as “groups,” “crowds,” or “droves.” The Daily American sometimes uses wire service photographs of nameless group scenes at the Flight 93 site, which may seem surprising given its proximity. One such image in 2005 included a
photograph and caption that left things fairly anonymous in tone: “A group gathers at the Flight 93 temporary memorial site in Shanksville at sunrise Sunday.” In 2004, a similar wire photo showing nameless groups at the site ceremony accompanied the lead front page story on September 13. One must keep in mind, however, that Daily American reporters are typically required to multitask (there is only one staff photographer). Thus, said Rock, “We probably use a lot more submitted photos [from freelancers and citizens] than most newspapers.”

The most prominently featured visitors tend to be victims’ family members and officials. Family members are commonly shown interacting with the site or as featured guests in ceremonies, but sometimes these stories are more surprising. One Daily American front page from September 11, 2006, shows Joseph Nacke, son of Flight 93 victim Louis Nacke, and his wife Angela Ruggeri holding their newborn baby, Giovanni, who was born at 10:45 a.m. September 9th at Somerset Hospital. The baby was born during the couple’s September 10th visit to the site; in another coincidence, his birthdate was the same as that of his famous grandfather. An image of Louis Nacke, the same one commonly used with other Daily American stories about the Flight 93 victims, is also included with the story.

Officials are also common presences, and they are shown in both archival images and in their trips to the impact site. President Bush is shown visiting in 2002, albeit in an Associated Press photograph, and lesser visiting dignitaries have included former

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51 See Nephin, D. (2005, September 12). Families, friends gather to remember Flight 93. Daily American (Somerset, PA), p. 13. This page is labeled “state” and includes another wire story about storm planning in Pennsylvania. Its depth in the newspaper and “other news” heading suggests that the content may largely be filler material.

Pennsylvania Governor and Homeland Security Director Tom Ridge, Pennsylvania Governor Mark Schweiker (both in 2002), Secretary of the Interior Gale Norton (in 2003), and in 2005 a group including Pennsylvania Governor Ed Rendell, Senator Rick Santorum, and Attorney General Alberto Gonzalez (none of these were pictured in Daily American coverage). Bush also stopped in the nearby Johnstown area on September 9th, 2004, to stump for re-election; this image ran on the Daily American’s front page, and the newspaper also ran images of protestors at the event on page 2. He again visited the Shanksville area for the 2006 anniversary, but the event was open only to family members and there were no news photographs in the Daily American.

Another kind of “visitor” is memorializations brought to the Shanksville area. These have included a traveling banner of signatures in 2002, and a totem pole in 2003, to name a few. According to Rock, there are limits to what visits the newspaper can and will cover, but something is usually possible:

If nothing else, we try to at least get a photo. But then, some people will call, individuals, and say, well I’m going out there and I’m going to leave a patch, and I [say] I’m sorry we can’t cover everyone. But when it’s larger groups, like there were three teenage boys who walked here from Ohio. Well, that was a very good story. I got an advance before they got here and I covered their arrival because they were trying to raise money and that was quite a walk that they did. So we do look for the more unusual angles.

Visiting memorializations are not common, and the images seen tended to be nationally prominent affairs rather than tributes made by individuals (the above example of walkers from Ohio being an exception). Far more common are images of what has been done locally.

*Local activities and logistics.* The bulk of Flight 93 news coverage depicts residents engaged in their own memorialization activities, many of these set away from
the site itself. A page from the 2002 anniversary titled “Signs of Patriot Day,” for example, shows a variety of patriotic displays from local sites such as Fleetwood Folding Trailers, Friedens Elementary School, and a Sheetz gas station. Satellite sites have a presence, especially the chapel, which has in some years functioned as an alternate location for observances when access to the impact site has been closed off.\textsuperscript{53} Symbols made in memory of the event have also been depicted, including a giant flag covering Jennerstown speedway,\textsuperscript{54} a commemorative quilt,\textsuperscript{55} and Father Al’s cancellation marks.

Some stories unfortunately lack an image, as with one describing the response to September 11 editorial cartoon in the Somerset High School student newspaper that was critical of school administrators’ handling of the event.\textsuperscript{56}

An area of coverage that is distinct to the area is that of infrastructure. Memorial services do not happen in a vacuum; visitors stay in local hotels, eat at local restaurants,  

\textsuperscript{54} See Slavik, C. (2002, September 13). Displaying Old Glory [Photograph caption]. \textit{Daily American} (Somerset, PA). The 15,000 square foot flag, crafted by Ted Dorfman of Greensburg, PA, was first displayed on the track in 2001, but made a return appearance for the first anniversary.
\textsuperscript{55} See Rock, V. (2005, September 10). Woman inspired to quilt by Sept. 11 events. \textit{Daily American} (Somerset, PA). The quilter, Karen Baumgardner of Tuscumbia, AL, was originally from Johnstown. She made five quilts in all, for the three sites as well as the New York City fire and police departments, and had previously made quilts about the Columbine school shootings.
\textsuperscript{56} See Rock, V. (2006, September 9). Pastrick: Paper reviewed, not censored. \textit{Daily American} (Somerset, PA), p. 1. On Sept. 11, 2001, administrators had shut off the school televisions on which older students were watching the attacks unfold; their stated reason was to keep students from leaving school for the nearby site or to check in with family members. The next edition of \textit{The Eagle’s Echo}, the student newspaper, “[showed] the administration cutting the cord on a television showing the attacks.” Although administrators were not happy with this interpretation, they chose not to censor the newspaper, instead providing an explanation for their actions in the following edition.
travel on local roads, and ask local residents for directions. Whipkey pointed out that this creates a unique perspective for the surrounding area:

We’ve been really pinpointed as a place for motorcycle runs. We have groups of more than a hundred motorcycles that are going to the three crash sites. They go on these large group rides, and if you like motorcycles it’s fun, but if you’re sitting in traffic and you see a hundred motorcycles … or you’re getting off the turnpike and you have a hundred people needing to pay the motorcycle toll fee you … it could create some issues.

The logistics of “hosting” the impact site involve security, traffic, and financial concerns. It also means that threats to the site are also threats to immediate residents. When a suspicious package was found at the memorial in 2002, it was the top front page story; the accompanying image showed a state trooper at a news conference about the package. Elsewhere on this page and others, images of ceremony planning and preparations have been included. Other logistical stories tend not to employ images, possibly because their subjects are often abstract financial concepts such as costs or revenue. Whipkey said he is a strong advocate of journalism’s role in preparing the area for the changes to come:

It’s hard for everybody locally to get a good grasp on what it actually is, but I think, five years from now is when they’ll realize what Flight 93 means to Somerset County. Our busiest road in the county is from the Courthouse heading north on Center Avenue. On a Friday afternoon, there’s a little bit of traffic, and people will complain, in the back of my mind I say you haven’t seen anything yet. What that means for commercial development, jobs, our economy, I think is gonna, actually be a financial boost for our area. What it will mean to our quality of life will be an issue. People who live around Lambertsville, their quality of life will never be the same.

57 See Rock, V. (2001, September 10). Suspicious package found at memorial. Daily American (Somerset, PA), p. 1. The package, an abandoned cooler, was removed from the site under the direction of the Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms. State police reported that the cooler contained “three canisters labeled ‘Three Mile Island.’” The contents were not determined to be dangerous.”
The above examples are clearly linked to the Flight 93 site, yet also show the business of ordinary life going on in Somerset County. For visitors, the impact site is a destination, but for residents it is part of life. Other news continues to happen in the area, and journalists work to balance their Flight 93 coverage with the many other subjects affecting the area’s residents.

Covering Other News

Although memorialization of Flight 93 and the September 11 attacks has become part of life in the Shanksville area, it is not the extent of activity there. Likewise, news coverage is not devoted solely to that event, even as the anniversary draws near. The time of year, for example, is a significant one in this area. Since well before the attacks, fall in Somerset County has been marked by multiple festivals. In 2002, Whipkey, then city editor of the Somerset Daily American, referred in one column to “the five seasons of Somerset County:” fall, winter, spring, summer, and festival. The Somerset County Fair of mid-August is just a kick-off for a slate that includes the Farmer’s and Threshermen’s Jubilee in New Centerville, Whiskey Rebellion in Berlin, and Mountain Craft Days, to name but a few, and images of princesses, prize-winners, and honored organizations regularly dot the front pages. According to Whipkey, the coverage keeps the events separate because the community tends to keep them that way:

They are wholly separate things. If they’re going on, we cover them both. They hold them separately, [although] the Centerville Festival has been honoring the Flight 93 with a flag ceremony they have during the ceremony [and] the Woodmen Of The World Insurance Agency has some kind of flag ceremony to remember everybody because but…usually it happens the week leading up to so it’s the week right after Labor Day.

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Beyond the events of the season, September 11 anniversary coverage has shared news pages with elements both local and global: A Somerset teacher’s strike in 2003, Hurricane Katrina in 2005, and deaths such as those of famed quarterback Johnny Unitas in 2002 and “Crocodile Hunter” Steve Irwin in 2006.\(^5^9\) In September 2002, the first anniversary of the attacks was a definite presence in local newspapers, but it was not the only disaster in the news there. One prominent set of stories, on an event that had also gained national media attention, dealt with the aftermath of the Quecreek mine flooding earlier that year.

From July 24 to 28, 2002, nine coal miners working for the Black Wolf Coal Company were trapped by underground flooding in Quecreek Mine, located in Lincoln Township, Somerset County.\(^6^0\) Trapped 240 feet below ground for 77 hours, the men survived “on little more than a corned beef sandwich split nine ways;”\(^6^1\) unlike many mine disasters, all nine trapped coal miners were saved. The event reached the national consciousness: Beyond widespread news coverage, several songs were written about the event, including Buddy Miller’s 2002 “Quecreek” and Anais Mitchell’s “Quecreek

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\(^5^9\) See *Daily American* (Somerset, PA; 2003, September 15), p. 4. This cartoon by house artist Larry Terrill plays on the area’s most prominent issues with its tongue-in-cheek suggestion that the area could become better known for the teacher’s strike than for Flight 93 or Quecreek. In the grand tradition of editorial cartoon caricature, it also suggests Chinese men’s daily attire has not changed much in the last few hundred years.

\(^6^0\) See Slavik, C. (2002, September 4). Ventilation system fixed in Quecreek deep mine. *Daily American* (Somerset, PA), p. 1. The mine was flooded by more than 50 million gallons of water let in by accidentally digging into the neighboring abandoned Saxman Mine. An out-of-date map was later blamed for the accidental digging.

Flood” in 2004, and a television movie was broadcast in 2002 on ABC, with a casting call for extras held in Somerset on September 7.

The ongoing Quecreek story was similar to that of Flight 93 in both disaster theme and national prominence at the time, and in September 2002 there were several *Daily American* front pages almost entirely made up of text and images from these stories alone. The proximity of the sites, Rock said, is not always something other news sites realize:

There were passengers on [Flight 93] from other countries. … so the news media in those countries keep interest in it. It’s funny, one day somebody from the BBC called wanting to talk about the mine rescue. So I talked to them, hung up the phone and five minutes later somebody from the BBC called and wanted to talk about Flight 93. I said, do you think they realized they’re calling the same place?

Quecreek, however, had far more elements local to the area. Not only is mining one of the signature industries of Somerset County and southwestern Pennsylvania, but the players in this story were all local residents; in one story, a visitor to the Quecreek mine site remarked, “I didn’t know any of the guys personally, but I remembered their names from playing football against them when I was in high school.” The story from

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62 Entering “Quecreek songs” into the Internet search engine Google reveals even more songs written about the event. Other writers of Quecreek-related songs include the Dropkick Murphys, Tom, Betty & Nathan Druckenmiller, the Mountain Laurel Bluegrass Band (although the Mountain Laurel is Pennsylvania’s state flower, this is actually a California-based group), and John Larimer, a singer from the area.


64 See Rock, V. (2002, September 9). Many follow lure of stardom at local casting call. *Daily American* (Somerset, PA), p. 3. Most of those who turned out, according to news accounts, were from outside the Somerset County area. Would-be actors’ motivations ranged from wanting to be part of “a bit of history” to just thinking it would be fun. Some had more specific ideas about who they did – and did not – want to play: “I want to play a family member, not the news media,” said one woman.

which that quote is drawn notes the increasing number of visitors to the area and links Flight 93 and Quecreek in terms of their impact on the county: “If there was ever two events to put Somerset County on the map, a plane crash and a mining miracle would definitely fit the bill, according to the thousands of visitors flocking to see the two sites.”

Although the above story incorporates predictions of how visitors to both sites will impact the area (one business director noted “a low-key approach to selling items” at the time), the visitor involvement it depicts is focused on the Quecreek site. Visitors are depicted at Quecreek in the photograph accompanying the story, and this site is the focus of their included comments (although it is noted that one group came “after first stopping in Shanksville to see the Flight 93 crash site.”). These observations are not intended to point out some imbalance of coverage, but rather to note that, even on September 10, 2002, a story in one of the area’s main newspapers chose in this story to emphasize another site over the Flight 93 site.

September 11 and Flight 93 have clear presences in the Shanksville area’s local news. There has been a considerable amount of September 11 anniversary coverage in the newspaper, both in anniversary editions and throughout the years; even the above story is accompanied on the page by an article titled “Three schools plan classes on Sept. 11.” Rock said that readers do respond to the newspapers’ coverage choices: “When the miners were trapped, somebody anonymously wrote us and said it’s a good thing to finally see something on the front page other than Flight 93. So some people are tired of

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As both Whipkey and Rock said, Flight 93 has become a part of life in Somerset County and the Shanksville area, but that part does not overwhelm the whole.

Interacting with Media

One additional duty of media in the Shanksville area has been to serve as an information source for other media seeking to cover the area. As an obvious source of expertise on local affairs and character, both Whipkey and Rock have found themselves the subjects of interviews, informal and formal, by those seeking to tell a story about the area to others. The *Daily American* offices have received calls from around the world, including some unusual requests for images, according to Whipkey:

People wanted to know about our community. I remember one night it was real busy trying to get the paper out and they put a call over to me. … This guy from Egypt wanted the satellite flight coordinates of Flight 93 so that he could take a satellite picture of the coordinates. … I think we ended up putting through the non-emergency number of the 911 center to see if they could get him some coordinates.

Sometimes the interactions with other media can be frustrating. Rock said that sometimes preconceptions of the southwestern Pennsylvania area seem to have colored outsiders’ perceptions:

They tend to be a little condescending, ‘Oh, these sweet little rural people’ A thousand people who are moonshiners and … you don’t even wear shoes, that sort of thing. We have a college education, we live in houses with indoor plumbing, we really do!

Whipkey said he has experienced this perspective in some other dealings as well, such as during the Quecreek story:

There was actually a television reporter by Laurel Mountain Inn who was by this old, run-down, dilapidated house standing there talking about people living in Somerset County. It wasn’t anywhere near an accurate picture of the vast majority of residents of Somerset County but it … you

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67 This study is no exception.
fall into sometimes a stereotype of somebody who lives in the woods. … We do have a handful of people that are struggling that way, but of course, there are homeless people in the city.

The “source” role has not been limited to area news media. When the movie United 93 was released in 2006, journalists sought local residents for their reactions. In local newspapers, a mix of images accompanied these stories, including mugshots of residents with their thoughts and images of people entering theaters or viewing the movie. Some others focused visuals on the link to the impact site: An Associated Press story that ran in the Daily American included an image not of the movie but of a kneeling visitor at the temporary memorial site.

Using local residents as informants for what the area is doing or feeling is common practice, and individuals who have been prominent in past coverage are likely to draw future attention. Josie Benson has been interviewed countless times about her yard memorial and role as an Ambassador, but sometimes, she said, she just doesn’t have much to say:

Every month, on the 11th, all the reporters would come in … for the first year. You know they even called me right before New Year’s Eve? I don’t know who, I can’t remember who called, wanted to know what we were doing here in Shanksville to celebrate New Year’s. And I said, well I don’t know … I suppose there’ll be small house parties. We’re not having fireworks or anything.

This interaction can also go the other way. Some local coverage portrays residents mid-interview, commenting directly on the arrival of journalists to the area. One such piece, titled “Deputy interviewed,” shows a local sheriff’s deputy being interviewed by a

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Russian television crew at the impact site.⁷⁰ Residents such as Benson, Karen Shaw, and others have in their own collections images of a number of well-known media personalities who have come to the site.⁷¹ According to Rock, the original impact attracted about 200 out-of-town journalists; for the first anniversary, “they registered seven hundred and they say there were more there who hadn’t registered.” Photographs of the media “villages” that have appeared in the area around each anniversary are also common, strange pictures of fleets of high-tech communication vans set against the rural landscape. Residents of the Shanksville area are not merely passive sources to be recorded, they have made images of their own. The pictures that residents have taken are the final subjects of this case study.

Individual Photography

Over the course of case study interviews and research, residents were also asked about photographs they had taken since the September 11 attacks. Four people participated in interviews about their photographs. Talking about these photographs often led to the stories behind the images, but the interviews also showed the links and meanings these individuals saw in the images that they had made. Some of the images

⁷¹ In particular, Benson is a fan of CNN personality David Mattingly, and she has a number of pictures of his visit from the six-month anniversary – after several mentions, she pointed him out in one pictures, adding “Oh, there’s David Mattingly … he was real!” Her Mattingly fandom was once exploited by a group of friends that may or may not have included her husband (he denies it): “David Mattingly, you know, from CNN? He calls, and I’m thinking, okay, it’s my friends playing a joke on me, because they called me one time and asked me, because I’m always watching the weather, if I would be the weather person for Shanksville. I mean this is before 9/11 and stuff. Yeah, and you know, they’re teasing me, and then pretty soon they’re all laughing in the background, drinking, and they’re laughing, you know, cause I fell for it. So you know, this David Mattingly calls, and I said, uh huh, yeah, sure, uh huh, and it’s really David Mattingly from CNN.”
depicted long-gone scenes, such as the draglines that once stood at the site, while others evoked stories of friends who had since died; some photographs of ceremonies or memorials appeared in multiple collections, while others were more rare. The photographs they made are personal even though they depict the aftermath of an event that affected many others, and through these interviews a better understanding may be gained of what this event meant to those who live with it.

All of the interviewees currently live either in Shanksville or the larger area. The collection and arrangement of the photographs differed for each person, from ordered albums to stacks and envelopes. Wendy Chisholm has a small stack of photographs kept in the store, and shuffled in with these are postcards and Flight 93 cancellation marks: “I did really have aspirations of putting together a scrapbook, and this is as far as I’ve got.” On the opposite wall, she has a mini-gallery of framed photographs of the impact site and its environs. Josie Benson’s collection begins with an album that chronicles most of the first year after the September 11 attacks, then dissolves into various envelopes and boxes of photographs and other commemorative materials; she described how her collection has gotten less rigorous over time, noting, “I have all kinds of different things. I do need to definitely make some kind of sense out of all this. I don’t even know where it all is.” Diane Thompson, an amateur photographer, chose to discuss a small selection of her photographs made from her negatives. Although originally from the area, Thompson was living in Korea during the September 11 attacks, and did not return until fall of 2002. Karen Shaw’s photographs are preserved in two identical albums. The first is almost entirely images from the first year after the attacks, and the second contains subsequent images.
Shared Scenes

Images of certain scenes, objects, and events appeared frequently across the different collections, especially in images from the first year after the attacks. One of the earliest of these subjects is the flag ceremony held on Veteran’s Day, 2001, in the heart of Shanksville. Flagpoles were dedicated on Main Street, just across the intersection from the Benson’s house. Officials such as state representative Bob Bastian delivered speeches from the bed of a pickup truck parked in the lot of Shanksville United Methodist Church (“They asked World War II veterans to raise the flags that day, all at the same moment,” said Shaw), and a 5K race was also held.

The images of the ceremony were a mix, some depicting the event in general while others focused on friends and family members. Shaw, Chisholm, and Benson all have images of the ceremony, showing the official speakers (“He’s retiring,” Chisholm pointed out of Bastian), the veterans ceremony (Benson also has a picture of the World War II veterans and described their unison flag-raising), and the 5K (Shaw pointed out her brother-in-law in one picture from the race). But there were personal scenes as well. Chisholm, trying to remember the year of the ceremony, was aided by a picture of her son standing by the newly dedicated flag: “This is a good while ago because he’s not little now. … He’s thirteen [now], but he’s about 5’9” or 5’10”. Actually, yes, they were all wearing orange, they’re Tiger Cubs, so that had to be in 2001, I guess.” Benson also had some initial difficulty recalling the date of these photographs, but was able to narrow it down to November by recognizing a sign she had made for the 5K race: “We had a sign for that too. It said something about the 5K and had, you know, for people to sign. They came later. They didn’t stop … [during] their race.”
Photographs of the impact site itself were naturally a common theme, but there were differences in what was focused on and what the images evoked. Thompson, for example, said the event did not hit home until she visited the site in 2002, not long after returning from her several years in Korea. She was drawn to one tribute there in particular, a firefighter jacket signed by the Shanksville fire department, of which her cousin Keith was a member:

Seeing the fireman’s jacket and my cousin’s name just made it real for me. He and his mom were in the home when the plane flew over and it rattled everything in the house. Barb was telling me this because Keith won’t talk about it. Keith said that was an airplane, or something’s going on. And within seconds his cell phone was going off cause he’s a volunteer fireman. And he just lives, you know, a couple miles, maybe … so he was there immediately. Keith never told me what he saw or what he did. He just didn’t. I know he’s been interviewed … a few years ago. He was the one that spoke on behalf of the first responders.

Media presences at the site were another common subject, especially when big names were present. Shaw and Benson each have pictures of when Katie Couric, then with NBC’s Today show, visited for the six-month anniversary of the attacks. Shaw’s images also include several family members of the victims – Lisa Beamer, Alice Hoglan, and Lyz Glick – who were interviewed for a Today show segment (she noted that the images were given to her, not taken herself). Benson’s images include one of Couric with “Little Nevin” (Nevin Lambert, the only eyewitness to the Flight 93 crash), and these elicited from her an explanation of how some good came of that day:

He lives up there by the plane crash. But he led a sheltered life, and he has like a harelip or something … I think his mom passed away like maybe a year before this happened. And he never got out and about, didn’t talk to people, they kept him home, and … he was an ambassador. … You couldn’t understand him talking, but then his speech improved from talking so much, I guess. … But that plane crash there I think was good for him. I mean, it helped him, from losing his mom and dad and living there alone … it gave him something, because he had really nothing but
the cows and the garden, and the only thing he said he would see would be the mailman, once a day. He’d always tell that story to the people, and all these thousands of people come … it was good. That tragedy, I think, was good, you know, helped him.

Images of the draglines that once overlooked the impact site elicited a number of personal connections to those objects. As mentioned above, the image of the American flag flying from one of these crane-like structures is part of the collage that adorns the Shanksville fire department’s tanker truck, and Shaw had described it as the signature image of the Flight 93 site. On September 11, 2001, the dragline had been out-of-service for about 10 years, yet Shaw said many outside visitors wondered about connections between the event and its surroundings:

They would see the scrap yard at the top of the hill and think that those were plane parts, and they would think that the draglines across the road from the temporary memorial were involved somehow in the recovery of the plane … and they would see the pond and think that’s where the plane crashed, so we really had this feeling that people … also needed to talk about their, *their* September 11 experience really.

For those familiar with the area, none of these misconceptions would hold, and yet a fascination with the draglines seemed to persist in the images; these structures seemed significant to their September 11 experience as well. Benson and her family are more closely connected to the draglines than most. One of her photographs shows her husband, Don, in the process of hanging the signature flag from the dragline boom.\(^72\) Another shows the family standing in the bucket of the dragline, an area off-limits to most: “There was this tape, like, you couldn’t get through. I said, we’re the Bensons. ‘Come on under! We’ll get you through!’” The draglines figure in many of her other images.

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\(^72\) There have been two such flag raisings on the dragline. The first, described earlier, was by a Pennsylvania state trooper. Don, an employee of the dragline’s owner, PBS Coals, was asked to hang a new, larger flag.
photographs as well, including one depicting a strange non-human skeleton found in their vicinity (Benson: “Leave it to us to take pictures like that!”). Thompson had no pictures of the draglines, yet her pictures of the temporary memorial led even her to bring them up: “If you look across the way, across the road, you’ll see those big old cranes. I just love that. I think that’s cool. I just think it needs to be left alone. … You know, we’re kind of messy here … and I like the dinosaurs across the road. The draglines. They need to stay.” Even with the draglines disassembled, their likeness seemed to evoke strong feelings in some.

A few shared images were made by people other than those who own them. In addition to other kinds of images (e.g., postcards or non-photographs such as cancellation marks), a number of photographs have copies circulating in the area. One in particular, local photographer Valencia McClatchey’s image of the dark cloud rising over the impact site, appeared in several collections. For some, the image evoked stories beyond its own notoriety. Benson, who knows McClatchey, said the picture was even more remarkable for its detail: “She told me that when the FBI blew this up as big as they could, that there’s these two gray streaks, and she said that you could actually see pieces of the plane. … You could see two gray, like, streaks coming out.” 73 The McClatchey image is also the one that was displayed on a wall in Chisholm’s shop, Creekside Country Store,

73 See Hamill, S. D. (2007, September 11). A Sept. 11 Photo Brings Out the Conspiracy Theorists. Retrieved June 29, 2008, from www.nytimes.com. As noted, conspiracy theorists have seized on the details of the photograph in attempts to disprove the official explanation of the Flight 93 crash. “They claim the mushroom cloud is from an ordnance blast, not a jet crashing; the cloud is the wrong color for burning jet fuel; the cloud is too small and in the wrong position.” Examining the photograph in her living room, Josie Benson and I tried various ways to see some finer details of airplane particles in the cloud but could not. She eventually resigned herself to not being able to see it, adding with a laugh, “Well that’s a poor quality picture. The FBI probably did something to it. It’s a conspiracy. I don’t know. And here I am on tape too.”
along with several other images of the impact site and the Shanksville area (see Figure 6.32). Chisholm has a unique link of her own to the image: She once lived in the farm in its foreground, and images of it are hung alongside the McClatchey image. “We lived there and we thought that we’d buy it and we didn’t,” Chisholm said, “and I ended up with these pictures and I thought what better place to display them so that I can let people see.” The wide circulation of the picture has affected the current owners of the 94-year-old red barn as well, who plan to spend thousands to keep it in good condition for future visitors trying to recreate the image.74

**Individual Images**

The photographs examined thus far hold certain qualities in common. They depict the Shanksville area, and all involve something shared, whether an event or ceremony, an object such as the temporary memorial or the draglines, or a scene such as the McClatchey photograph. Despite the personal and specific meanings that they may evoke in their makers, these images would be generally recognizable to most people familiar with Flight 93 and the Shanksville area. Other types of photographs, however, do not share this quality. These tend to be personal in their recognizability as well as in their evoked meaning. Such images tend to require more background information in their description, and even then may not be graspable by one who was not there. They may not even be recognizable as part of the Flight 93 aftermath story, yet to the image-makers they are just as significant.

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Such images may elicit a personal anecdote, showing how the event affected lives in simple ways. As Shaw read through her album of images, past images of the flag dedication ceremony and 5K, she suddenly broke out in a laugh. The picture that had gotten her attention showed her husband Terry, the Shanksville fire chief, with his arms around the neck of assistant fire chief Rick King (owner of Ida’s General Store). A necktie in mid-knot is around Rick’s neck, being secured by Terry. Due to their role as first responders to the Flight 93 crash, the Shanksville firefighters were frequent guests at ceremonies and events, requiring extensive travel in dress uniforms. The photograph, Shaw explained, shows a side result of their sudden celebrity: “One of the interesting things that happened that I learned of, as Terry and Rick did almost all of this speaking for the fire company, Rick never knew how to tie a necktie [laughter], and so Terry would have, often tie his tie for him.” The picture is a strong contrast to many of the other images in Shaw’s book, which depict many ceremonies, services, and volunteers at work, and shows a different face of life-in-progress in the Shanksville area.

Other images can add information to known scenes. Chisholm’s wall display is one example of this, showing her own link to the farm in the well-known McClatchey photograph. Another of Shaw’s photographs shows how much can be elicited by a seemingly simple image. The photograph depicts 10 Shanksville firefighters in dress uniform, standing in front of the department’s fire truck. In the top right, a huge American flag dips into the frame. The image, which was given to Shaw, may seem unremarkable, similar to many images of the emergency personnel who responded on September 11. Yet for Shaw, the meaning of this photograph involves much that is unseen:
This photograph just certainly reminds me of those days. I am at the fire station, and this gigantic American flag that’s flying at half-mast … on September 11th I went to borrow a small refrigerator from a friend of mine in the community. We had no refrigerators at this … there were no facilities to cook or prepare food, there were no bathrooms even. Anyhow, when I went to pick up the little refrigerator, this friend of mine said take this great big American flag, there’s no flag flying at the fire station. So I brought the little refrigerator and the great big gigantic American flag back to the fire station and we put up the big flag.

Finally, although the vast majority of the images that were shared depicted scenes from the Shanksville area, some showed other places. Many times these photographs showed the Shanksville area being “brought” to other locations; the volunteer fire department especially became a traveling representative of the first responders to the Flight 93 crash, and Shaw’s albums in particular include many images of the travels of her husband and his fellow firefighters. But some few images did not involve the impact site or surrounding area at all. Thompson, who returned to Somerset County in 2002, said she experienced a different America. After her flight home landed in Florida, just a few days prior to the September 11 anniversary, she drove to visit a friend in Springfield, Missouri, before returning to Pennsylvania. On the way, she said, she tried to get a feel for what people were thinking:

I had a CB, don’t ask me how, and I was listening to the truck drivers talk about September 11 … saying where they were at the time and the one common statement was that they all thought we were at war immediately. Most of the comments I got were still pretty angry, and wanted revenge … I don’t think that’s right. But I did not make, I had to keep that to myself for quite a while. You know, because, because, it’s just not … we’re kind of a revengeful society.

Visiting her friend Susan in Missouri, Thompson said she was surprised to learn from her how constant the media coverage of the event had been; “we didn’t get news reports every hour on the hour over there [in South Korea]. … So I just got it vicariously,
through newspapers, and … it just didn’t have the impact.” 75 Even to this day, she said, she still feels “separated” from the event, but she showed a photograph from her trip home that made a connection with her:

This one I am in Kentucky. And this is on September 11, 2002. I’m driving from Florida. And this, I don’t remember the name of the town, you can see here it says Paducah. … This is just a little bitty burg that I was driving through. And this was their salute, I guess, to the firemen. And it was just on the corner of this street. You can see it’s like fire helmets and stuff. And I thought that was kind of neat, kind of lonely looking, but very simple. Not crowds of people swarming the streets or anything like that. And it was almost quiet I think. I think the first year anniversary just seemed quiet to me. I stopped the car, got out and took the photo.

The memorial depicted in this photograph would not be out of place in one of the other Shanksville photograph albums. It is small, incorporating the symbols of America and emergency personnel so common to many other images commemorating the attacks; it could have stood in Josie Benson’s yard. Yet for Thompson, it evoked a great deal about the country she had returned to, even years later, and she went on to describe what it was like being back on American roads:

I do remember that drive, I was just back in the country for a few days. I had been overseas for two years. I don’t remember which state, maybe in

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75 Despite her separation from American news coverage, however, Thompson actually found herself better informed on the day of the attacks than some in the United States: “It was about 11:00 at night on September 11 and I was sleeping and my phone rang and a friend of mine, who was also an English teacher there called me and asked me to turn the TV on. And so I did and what I saw on TV was the Twin Towers. We didn’t get any English-speaking channels, so it was all in Korean, so neither myself or Rob, my friend, knew what was going on. … And we ended up just talking on the phone back and forth to different teachers and we kind of ascertained what was going on. And in the meantime I got a phone call from a girlfriend of mine who lived in Springfield, Missouri. She called me because she knew my grandfather lived in Somerset County and that my aunt lives outside of Shanksville. And she called to ask me if I knew what was going on. … So that’s really, when I got the skinny on what was going on. I called my sister in Wisconsin and I said, do you know what the heck’s going on? And she hadn’t even turned the news on.”
Tennessee, I had to pull over because I just had this overwhelming feeling of how bad it had been in the United States and I’m, I’m bawling … I’m all by myself, and I’m in this car. South Korea’s very small. You can drive around the whole country in probably the same amount of time it takes you to drive to Florida. So, it’s very small, very tiny and I just remember driving and, and, just how big America is. And I just broke down. Had to pull over and start crying.

An image is not merely its visible elements. Some images, true, are familiar in form or content, but those elements that are recognized are not the extent of what can be communicated. As we have seen, simple pictures can elicit complex reactions, evoking the circumstances of the image’s creation or even meanings whose sources are unseen in the picture. The above pictures of a place present not only physical details, but the experiences of those who live there.

Functions of Photography

When photographing tragedy, or the memorializations of tragedy, how does one decide what to capture? Benson readily admitted that she has a massive amount of pictures: “It’s ridiculous, isn’t it? I mean I have so many! But, you know, you didn’t wanna miss something, you know, that might be history.” Diane Thompson, too, said historical merit is part of the reason she photographs: “Maybe someday somebody will find my photo album, it has, you know there’s photos in it. You know, years down the line or something.” This urge to preserve, and the fear of missing something important, resembles others’ reasons for their own memorial activities, be they building a chapel or collecting the tributes, large and small, left at the impact site. Inherent in the approach seems to be the idea that anything could be important, so the more that is documented, preserved, and memorialized, the better.
Each participant was asked why they have the photographs they do, and what they have done with them since taking them. Some of the interviewees had not looked at their photographs in some time, or had never shown them. Others had regularly used them to explain life in the Shanksville area after the attacks. Josie Benson seems ready to get out her photographs at a moment’s notice. At her husband’s class reunion one year, people wanted to know all about her experiences; the next time, she came prepared: “I took the book along. To show them the pictures. And you know, everybody was just real interested.” Karen Shaw, on the other hand, said she has not shown her photographs to others in years, nor has she looked at them herself in that time. The choice of what to photograph is only one of the decisions facing the photographer. One must also decide which images to share, and why.

Finally, any photographer must come to terms with his or her own work. Even if the work is never shown to others, it is a material image to be reckoned with. One’s photography may be a personal means of recollection; Thompson said her photographs serve “to make it real for me. … I don’t have it for any reason but for myself, really.” As the examples in this section show, a photograph is certainly a way to remind oneself of actions, emotions, and experiences. Yet Shaw believes that too much reliance on photographs as memory aids can be a danger:

I don’t want the photographs to become my memories. There are a lot of other … things that were not photographed, or experiences that were not captured in film. Really every experience up at that temporary memorial is … I rarely go up there that I don’t have some kind of an experience with a visitor or a tribute that affects me, in some way. … I think that’s true for every volunteer. I really do. It’s not unique to me or to my experience.

The people interviewed spoke about their photographs as aids to memory, as documents, and as tools for storytelling. They are truly “things that make things happen.”
Others have found this function in other things, as with Father Al, who carries a silver dollar at all times to remind him of the many other such items he has sold to finance his chapel. However, the interviewees have noted the limitations of images as a form of communication – one can show an event and tell a story, but experience exceeds what has been photographed. The examination of photography as a memorial practice shows how images may be similar, but the meanings attached to them are as unique as the individuals who make them.

Conclusion

The original interest of this research was in how people have used images to memorialize and interact with catastrophic events in their own backyards. Although this interest remained unchanged throughout the project, the means of investigation did not. The initial intent was to conduct a resident-employed photography study of the area surrounding the Flight 93 crash site, distributing cameras to residents and asking them to use them to document the area. As I learned about the area, traveled it, and met its residents, I noticed that signs of 9/11 were everywhere – literally in many cases – and the need for a more complex method to address the use of memorial imagery in the Shanksville area quickly became clear.

The Shanksville area is home to a depth of imagery where each image or object points to others. The residents investigated here soon began connecting back to each other, so that the nephew who painted the site-direction sign was also the free-lancer responsible for parts of the school’s memorial garden, which was tended by the woman who orchestrated the first informal memorial. Throughout, the desires to help and to make something meaningful were clear. It is possible that the memorializations that have
sprung up away from the impact site itself, structures such the Flight 93 Memorial Chapel or the Shanksville High School Memorial Garden, have arisen partly in response to the continued absence of an official memorial.

As the earlier examination of media coverage of Shanksville has shown, however, such off-site phenomena have been absent from anniversary coverage, at least by major newspapers. Perhaps it is due to a literal way of thinking about who is affected by disaster: Unlike the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, there was no building where residents were working in that field north of Shanksville (though the coal companies who owned it employed a number of locals). Yet though they lost none of their own, the attacks did affect those living in the Shanksville area. Many individuals responded, and many turned to visual means – photographs, drawings, signs, structures, artwork – to memorialize the event and convey its meaning to others.
CHAPTER VII: DISCUSSION

The previous chapters reinforce the idea of September 11 as both a global and a local phenomenon. At the media level, although images of the World Trade Center in New York received the great bulk of coverage across all newspapers, there was also considerable local and regional emphasis in the kinds of photographs examined. The Washington and Pittsburgh publications each represented “their” sites far more extensively than did other newspapers, and the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, though not geographically near any impact site, localized the story in its own way by covering the responses, perceptions and outcomes of its own region.

Images of the Shanksville site in newspapers were few, and tended to focus on activities at the impact site itself, yet the images, objects and tributes found in the Shanksville area show a far richer interplay of memorialization and meaning-making, with residents emphasizing and minimizing different aspects of the event and its aftermath. One who saw the impact sites of September 11 solely through media coverage would likely be unsurprised by the few images of Shanksville and the even rarer depictions of off-site activities there: Newspaper anniversary coverage has depicted the Shanksville area as essentially a field with some trinkets that is visited by “ordinary” Americans and does not suggest there is anything more to see. The relationship between the media and regional pictures shows the complexity of telling such a story.
To provide further understanding of the results that have been presented, this section applies the guiding concepts of place and collective memory to those findings. Zelizer’s (1995) six premises of collective memory are used to explain how memorial imagery has functioned at the media and individual levels. In addition, throughout this research relationships were observed between the different memorialization practices at the regional level: A temporary memorial arose at the Flight 93 impact site, but satellite sites also appeared in the area, with a network of tributes and symbols surrounding it. Further, newspaper coverage showed such practices elsewhere, even in places where no impact had taken place. To assist in understanding these relationships, a model of memorialization practices in the Shanksville area is proposed.

Application of Premises

The guiding concepts of place and collective memory will frame discussion of both levels’ findings. As has been argued in chapter two, Zelizer’s (1995) premises of collective memory may also be applied to place. Both concepts may therefore be understood as material, usable, particular and universal, partial, processual, and unpredictable. Also drawn on is Sack’s (2003) “geographically aware position” that situates place at the intersection of mental, social, and natural areas of influence. This perspective holds that places both enable and constrain actions, which in turn construct and maintain those places. Used in concert, both Zelizer and Sack aid in understanding both what memorialization is and what it does. This section links these guiding concepts to what has been observed in this research’s two levels of analysis.
The Material

The material premise refers to those elements of collective memory that exist in the physical world (Zelizer, 1995). This is embodied in the artifacts, objects and images that are built, exchanged, and interacted with. Place, also, is linked to physical surroundings and structures and the meaning with which they are endowed (Tuan, 1977). The material premise can be twofold in images such as photographs, which may depict something but are also material objects themselves. It also includes stories and routines, acts that are non-physical yet are “things” in the sense of occupying a place and time (Zelizer, 1995); places, likewise, are constituted by physical materials, social rules, and personal routines. Thus the many ceremonies, parades, and moments of silence involved in memorializing September 11 may function as materials, especially when reproduced in news or personal photography as objects to be seen.

At both the media and regional levels, materials are central to conveying what a place is and how an event should be remembered. The image type category used in analysis of the media level was developed without regard to the collective memory premises, yet it identified materials as a distinct type of images seen across all newspapers; in fact, material images were the second most common type overall, accounting for a quarter of all images examined. The kinds of materials depicted in media photographs included memorials and tributes, sites and artifacts, and “communicative texts” such as books and television images. All newspapers showed materials at the impact sites and in their own coverage areas. Sites were shown during memorial ceremonies but also to show progress (or the lack of it) in developments there. These on-site images tended to be similar across newspapers – one could find a fairly similar image
of President Bush at the Ground Zero wreath-laying in most any publication. Differences came in the materials shown from off-site. Pictures of individual monuments and publications varied far more greatly across newspapers, and the informal memorialization activities of residents were generally not seen in outside media.

At the regional level too, materials had a strong presence, and this is reflected in the case study narrative. People in the Shanksville area have created an array of signs, structures and symbols to commemorate Flight 93, the September 11 attacks, and the area’s role in these events. What’s more, the material presence at this site can also be described in terms of the image type category. The impact site itself is the focal point of the area’s memorialization activities (sites and artifacts), leading to the formation of the ambassadors; site artifacts such as the draglines also play a significant role, as have objects from other sites (e.g., the World Trade Center rubble on display at the memorial chapel). The many structures and symbols that have arisen (memorials and tributes) show how the material premise goes beyond the site itself. Individuals create sites of their own, or bring their tributes to sites, or create symbols that move on to other places. Materials communicate as well (communicative texts), not only in the forms of books and media texts but in the directive and supportive signs on the roads and in the yards of the area.

*The Usable*

Collective memory is usable, “always a means to something else,” and helps to make connections over time and space (Zelizer, 1995, p. 226). Usability has different trajectories: Socially, it solidifies communities through belonging and exclusion; politically, it deals in the establishment and maintenance of identity; and culturally, it conceptualizes memory as an active, meaning-making enterprise. These trajectories also
are found in the concept of place, which has been defined by its insiders and outsiders, characterized by social and ideological rules (Lefebvre, 1974; Sack, 2003) yet also as “raw material for the creative production of meaning and identity” (Cresswell, 2004, p. 39). In the case of September 11, materials and acts were used to evoke memory and to connect and define the events and places involved.

The usability premise is closely linked to the material premise. Usability is involved at the media level in images of materials and of rituals and practices. The impact sites are shown as usable, places for individuals to visit, leave tributes, grieve and observe ceremonies. Off-site images show the ways in which individuals use objects (e.g., images or belongings of victims) as well as each other, holding loved ones close or telling their stories to others. The newspapers and photographs themselves are usable elements of the collective memory, showing the way the sites once looked, the faces of victims and survivors, or the ceremonies that were held in other places; the news media may be used to see what others are using.

At the regional level, usability is most immediately evident in the ways in which memorial structures declare identity. The September 11 Memorial Garden at the Shanksville school declares the community to be one of “helping hands,” and it literally solidifies that particular community through their visible handprints in the sculpture. By contrast, the chapel’s focus on “honoring the heroes of Flight 93” describes a political identity rather than a social one: When Father Al described how the chapel symbolizes everything he believes the “terrorists” oppose, he made a connection between his monument and a larger political tradition. Symbols, such as the crosses and angels at the temporary memorial and in the Shanksville area, make usable memory by linking the
event to a religious tradition. Through their structures, signs and ceremonies, the
residents of the Shanksville area have used their place to make meaning of September 11,
but have also used September 11 to make meaning of their place.

*The Particular and the Universal*

The materials made and the practices performed involve both the individual and
the group; collective memory exists not in one place or the other, but in the “vibration”
between them (Zelizer, 1995). Place as well may be understood to exist at the intersection
of individual and social meanings (Sack, 2003). As individuals and groups use collective
memory for their own purposes, they push and pull each other; some aspects of the
concepts are emphasized or diminished, and events may “shatter or reinforce” former

The media level seems at first glance to exemplify the group but not necessarily
the individual. Newspapers, after all, serve a body of subscribers numbering in the
hundreds or thousands, so they are far more likely to seek broad appeal than to target
coverage to any one person. Yet the “particular” element of this premise does not only
refer to individuals, but also to groups and areas. In fact, the particular-universal premise
should be understood as relative; in one case, it describes an individual-community
relationship, but in another it might stand for a town-state or nation-world situation. Thus
the different publications’ “official” September 11 images are balanced with local and
off-site images of what has been done around the area. Focusing on the nearby impact
site over others is one example of the particular-universal premise at work, as is focusing
on local memorializations for a newspaper not geographically linked to any impact site.
In the Shanksville area, individual photography provides one reflection of the individual-group premise. When people take photographs of monuments or events, they participate in group meaning-making; at the same time, the photographs and stories behind them are their own. One of the earliest post-event ceremonies in the Shanksville area, the November 2001 flag dedication, was seemingly photographed by most people in the area. Many images of this event depict similar scenes: State Representative Bob Bastian making a speech from the back of a pickup truck, Josie Benson’s lawn memorial, the 5K race, and the flag itself. These elements are the official components of the event itself, so it is unsurprising that they are common. Yet Karen Shaw also pointed out her brother-in-law in the race, and Wendy Chisholm, in discussing an image of her son at the base of the new flag, went on to talk about how big he had gotten in the years since. The larger group will likely not remember how Shaw’s brother-in-law placed in that race, but it is through her and others that the race is remembered.

*The Partial*

Because collective memory vibrates between individual and group, in the materials they make and the ways they use them, it is always partial. This partialness premise is not one that can be resolved through quantity; no matter how many memories are examined, the “truth” of collective memory is not attainable (Halbwachs, 1980). Likewise, because place changes with individual meaning (as well as social meaning and physical practice), there are as many senses of place as there are people (Sack, 2003). The inability to assemble a complete picture of place or collective memory is also linked to ideology: Partialness may also be a product of what the individual or group is
ideologically unable to see (Lefebvre, 1974; Zelizer, 1995). Thus bringing partial accounts together provides for a fuller picture, but partialness is never fully resolved.

The partialness premise is made very clear in the examination of newspaper photography. The newspapers presented image sites and situations in vastly different proportions, and the same was true for image types. In general, a given newspaper presented far more off-site memorialization images for its own location than for any other. That a newspaper would focus on its own coverage area is clearly not an earth-shaking revelation, but it shows the partial nature of such accounts. Consider newspaper images of the Pentagon site. As a high-security military complex, the Pentagon is clearly less accessible to visitors and photographers than downtown New York City or a vacant field in Pennsylvania, so it is not surprising that few images depict that site. At the same time, most of the victims at that site were residents of the area, and many left behind grieving friends and family. Readers of the Washington Post saw considerable coverage of these people and what they were doing – and regional supplements to the newspaper provided even more coverage – but readers of other publications did not. Place situation, coupled with journalistic norms, tells some stories while omitting other, and the result is always partial.

Partialness is also evident when comparing the media images of Shanksville with what is seen in the area: Where newspaper images are few and rarely depict anything other than the impact site itself, the Shanksville area is laden with memorial objects and practices. The partialness premise can also be seen in the rules that govern the different memorial sites in the area. The temporary memorial is an unofficial structure, so the voices of individual visitors are perhaps louder there than elsewhere; certain objects, such
as Lei Hennessy’s angel statues, have been barred from the site. The school memorial garden was designed to emphasize a particular portion of the Flight 93 story, the contribution of the Shanksville area; this structure is usable precisely for its partialness. The annual cancellation stamps, designed by Father Al, have thus far depicted only images from his memorial chapel, emphasizing one part of the area’s memorializations over others.

Some residents have tried to address partialness through their collections. Barbara Black, in the employ of the National Park Service, oversees the collection, archiving, and preservation of tributes from the temporary memorial site. Nearly all materials are saved: “It’s too soon to know whether it’s important to save them or whether they really have no meaning at all.” Josie Benson, operating as an individual, is guided by a similar philosophy. There is “too much stuff” in the boxes of photographs, documents, and materials that she maintains, but “you didn’t wanna miss something that might be history.” In these examples, the response to partialness is the attempt to save everything in the hope that someone will later be able to determine what was worth saving.

*The Processual*

Collective memory and place are processual concepts, constantly undergoing change. Collective memory requires forgetting in order “to put aside … what no longer matters” (Zelizer, 1995, p. 220) in a process that links recollection with commemoration. Regarding place, diverse groups can invoke competing, even contradictory senses of place that can change over time (Williams & Stewart, 1998), and the arrival of new groups can change one’s attitude toward a place (Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001). This
premise interacts with the others: New materials are created, new groups are formed, and new individuals provide different perspectives.

The processual premise is apparent at the media level in the long-term development of the visual story of September 11. Over the years, certain survivors are featured over and over while others vanish, and children who were too young to understand in 2001 talk about their feelings years later. The processual is observed in material elements, and each year one can observe the impact sites being cleared, repaired, and prepared for memorialization. The processual becomes usable; during the 2005 anniversary, coverage of the Hurricane Katrina disaster took precedence on many pages, and the September 11 response was recollected to make sense of the failures in the more recent event. Certain image types fade as time goes by – history images, which include pictures of the dead and of destroyed structures, dropped off soon after the first anniversary. Media cycles exist over years, not only days.

In Shanksville, the processual premise can be seen in the creation and solidification of memorial images and objects. Signs and structures were among the first arrivals to the site, and as time has passed these have themselves become represented in symbols such as cancellation stamps and figurines. The park service workers who collect materials from the site have honed their procedures over time, and they now prepare for the upcoming transition from an informal site to an official one – the chain-link wall and its tributes will be removed to make way for something (literally) more concrete.

*The Unpredictable*

All of the above categories interact to make collective memory an unpredictable thing. As the process moves on, the world changes, and any of the above premises may
take a sudden turn. Place, too, progresses, and Lefebvre’s (1974) original argument against a determinist view of space may be seen as embracing the unpredictability of place. Both time and space conspire to keep collective memory and place unpredictable. Time, detached from linear chronology, becomes a social reconstruction whereby early events are renamed in accordance with later ones (“retrospective renominalization”) and commemorative dates are used to remember more than one event (“collapsing commemoration”) (Zelizer, 1995). Space begins to diffuse from the immediate event site as satellite monuments, sites, and artifacts provide additional anchor points for memorialization. To expect memory to remain fixed, to be recalled only at a determined place and time, is therefore naïve.

In the media, the unpredictable diffusion of space is documented in images of off-site memorializations. In addition to depicting the impact sites, all newspapers, whether near an impact site or not, used images of people, ceremonies, and monuments in their own coverage areas. These most frequently involved the rituals and practices and perspectives image types. Perspectives images sometimes involved residents who were involved with rescues or had lost a loved one, but also showed residents who were not directly connected to the event. Likewise, images of rituals and practices showed the actions of locals, who made memorial objects and participated in parades and ceremonies. One may certainly predict a newspaper to cover its own area, but the images recorded show that responses to the event were not bound to the place where it happened, nor did newspapers limit themselves to such images.

Unpredictability also characterizes the continuing efforts to create an official memorial for Flight 93 at the regional level. It was not predictable, for example, that the
draglines and other existing features at the impact site would become linked to the event in the minds of so many visitors. More generally, the expansion of Shanksville area memorializations beyond the impact site itself shows the unpredictability of space; in another link, a memorial has also been erected in Union City, California, near San Francisco’s Bay Area, the destination of Flight 93. Consider also the outcry by a vocal few over the design of the planned Flight 93 memorial, who see in the ring of red maple trees that bounds the site a “red crescent” symbolizing (to them) Islamic extremism. The brick left in tribute at the temporary memorial shows time-based unpredictability, the above-described retrospective renominalization, in its note: “Placed here in tribute to the first warriors of the global war on terror,” a reference to the currently agreed-upon story that the passengers and crew of Flight 93 fought back against the hijackers and forced the plane into the ground. This story, once considered speculation, is now so widely accepted that it has been engineered into the current “War on Terror” narrative. The unpredictability premise shows that, in memorialization, not even the linear progression of time can be assumed.

The discussion shows the collective memory premises at play at both the media and regional levels of memorialization. Materials are created and used to make sense of the attacks; both individuals and larger collectives provide partial windows onto what the event is understood to mean; and these activities are part of a continuing process of meaning-making, that despite examinations such as this, is ultimately unpredictable. We may, however, describe what has taken place in order to better understand it, and this description may be helpful in understanding how memorialization may take shape.
elsewhere. To this end, a model of memorial practices in the Shanksville area is proposed.

**Model of Memorialization in the Shanksville Area**

The process of memorialization in the Shanksville area is ongoing. New materials and practices continue to appear, and the relationship of their meanings continues to change. Assembling a visual model of what has taken place in this area does not purport to fix what has happened there, but it can help to make sense of the relationships between the impact site and the memorial activities that surround it in that place.

**Memorialization Within Place**

To begin with, there is the impact site. In the case of Shanksville, this site is the field where Flight 93 crashed. A temporary memorial has appeared here, and in the future it will be the location of an official memorial. But, as we have seen, the practice of memorialization is not limited to this physical spot. This site is “owned,” ideologically if not yet literally, by the United States and its agent, the National Park Service, whose decisions dictate what may happen there. The site is a primary place that exerts influencing, affecting and controlling forces (Sack, 2003). Certain objects and tributes are excluded (e.g., certain angels, or the draglines), and this exclusion will eventually apply to the temporary memorial objects themselves when the official site is built.

By contrast, the greater Shanksville area is out of that ideological jurisdiction even though it is the larger place where the crash happened. The Shanksville area still has ideological rules pertinent to memorialization (one could likely not erect a shrine to the hijackers there), but more freedom of practice is available; off-site memorialization may be more specific, personal, or even, as Diane Thompson called it, “messy,” without being
transgressive. In addition, the variety of signs that point the way to the site are not bound by any official language, so image-heavy signs like that of Scott Haas stand alongside more text-centric directions. These objects are all part of a ring of satellite memorializations, linked to the impact site by their relation to the event and by their spatial proximity (See Figure 7.1). These may be physical monuments and locations (the impact and satellite sites, represented by circles) or fixed signs related to some such destination (represented by diamonds).

![Figure 7.1](image.jpg)

In addition to the signs and satellite sites, symbolic images and objects began to appear soon after the event. Peirce’s (1991) concept of symbols links this level to the previous in how both these symbols and satellite sites such as the chapel depend upon recognition of what they symbolize. In terms of these models, however, the symbols of this ring differ from the previous group because they are not fixed in place. They can be
moved, exchanged, purchased, and, in many cases, duplicated. Images and objects that symbolize the event or the impact site thus make up a second circle of memorialization (see Figure 7.2.1); they are represented by small diamonds. Further, as time passed, some of the satellite sites were themselves represented in symbols, as with the cancellation marks that depict elements of the chapel or the Cat’s Meow figurines that depict memorials such as the garden, chapel, and memorial tanker truck. These objects also fill out the symbolic circle (see Figure 7.2.2).

Figure 7.2.1. Figure 7.2.2.

As all this goes on, tributes are continually being left not only at the impact site (see Figure 7.3.1), but at the satellite sites (see Figure 7.3.2). These are represented in the model by triangles.
The previous examples deal with tributes left by area residents, but tributes also come from people from outside the Shanksville area (see Figure 7.3.3).

The leaving of tributes returns the discussion to the matter of rules and control. It is up to the site proprietors which symbols may be left, how long they may be left, and
what is to be done with them. In the case of the temporary memorial, the structure itself is
the result of informal leavings, having been relocated to the impact site from smaller
memorials on Lambertsville Road and Josie Benson’s front yard. The policy there is thus
inclusive, both with regard to what may be left and what is collected by the park service;
in fact, because of land ownership issues and the site’s temporary status the only items
that are excluded are larger and more formal leavings. By contrast, satellite sites with
more specific visions also have more specific rules for inclusion. Father Al maintains his
policy that objects in the chapel must honor Flight 93, and he is the sole determiner of
this. At the Shanksville school’s memorial garden there are no clearly designated rules,
but its location in front of the school limits the extravagance of what may be left (unlike
at the temporary memorial, there are no large visitor-made signs or structures), and the
garden tends to be free of tributes.

Different memorializations take place with different degrees of situation and
mobility. Satellite structures and signs appear in the vicinity to direct visitors, to provide
alternate locations to visit or to espouse particular visions of their own. Symbolic objects
may represent not only the literal details of the event, but the emotions of those who
experienced it; over time, the elements of related memorial structures are also
represented, an example of how space can diffuse as it is used in collective memory. And
throughout, a wealth of tributes from residents and outsiders are left wherever they are
permitted, at the event site but also at other locations that become available.

Memorialization in Media

As this process has gone on in the Shanksville area, news media throughout the
nation and world have been explaining September 11 to their respective audiences, and
the use of images is an important part of showing what a place is and what has happened there. In the language used in this study, these images may be on-site, off-site, or non-site: News images may show a given impact site and events there (on-site), images of the larger vicinity (off-site), or images from other locations like St. Louis (non-site). Showing off-site images creates a more complex picture of an area and its memorialization activities. Off-site images tend to show memorializations beyond the official, and these can be more specific (e.g., the chapel or garden), personal (e.g., individual photographs), or even problematic (e.g., objects and symbols not permitted at the impact site). These images also can show the area as more than just the site of the event, and newspapers near impact sites tended show more off-site activities for the site near them than for other sites.

The coupling of the media and regional levels of analysis in this study provides explanatory power to the models. As “on the ground” memorializations happen in Shanksville, newspapers make decisions about how best to explain what is happening there, and how it all relates to the September 11 narrative. Describing the places involved with the event is part of these explanations, and place may presented as the authority for an account, as actionable information for readers to use, as a social construction that includes or excludes certain interests and ties, as setting, or even as the primary subject of the story (Hallin, 1988). The presentation of place is a framing decision, “select[ing] some aspects of a perceived reality and mak[ing] them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described” (Entman, 1993, p. 52). Depending on the news production or publication, different decisions are
made in framing place and the activities that take place there. In large part, these decisions stem from a constructed idea of a newspaper’s audience (Sumpter, 2000), so decisions about insiders and outsiders to that audience must be made (Schudson, 1989). The model thus far has described memorialization activities in terms of place, but coverage of those activities may differ across insider and outsider media.

**Insider coverage.** All newspapers show activities at the impact site, but beyond this there is a difference between insider (serving a given site) and outsider (other sources, whether of other impact sites or not) coverage; “All places exist somewhere between the inside and the outside views of them” (Lippard, 1997). Insider coverage shows how the event affects “us,” the constructed audience for a given place. The location of the site makes a physical link to the event that influences the meaning of the place (Sack, 2003; Stedman, 2003). The images in local newspapers such as Somerset’s *Daily American* show residents at significant places (e.g., the Ambassadors who volunteer at the site) or doing significant things (e.g., constructing monuments or holding memorials). Images of visitors likewise focus on the (culturally) significant; these rarely depict “ordinary” outsiders, instead focusing on visits from officials and notables such as the victims’ family members or President Bush as well as prominent traveling memorials. The memorializations of residents may at times be no different (on their face) than those of outsiders but are made meaningful by their physical location at the scene of the event; visitors are depicted when their significance is on par with that of the site. In each case, place is key to media depiction.

Coverage also demonstrates how the event, though significant to life in Somerset County, does not wholly define the area. This, too, is evident in the *Daily American.*
Although Flight 93 becomes quite prominent around the event’s anniversary, even then there is a clear distinction made between that event and the other matters affecting the area. Other local disasters such as Quecreek are given prominence, even occasionally outweighing Flight 93 stories where appropriate. Nor has the newspaper reframed the festival season there as one of sadness and reflection on the events of September 11; the princesses and local honorees that appear on front pages throughout the season are celebrating the area’s heritage, not mourning the victims of Flight 93.

*Outsider coverage.* As with insider coverage of a site, outsider coverage also shows how the event affects “us” and how it has been memorialized. Yet the “us” of this coverage is different from those of the impact site, and coverage reflects this difference. “Man wants to order his experiences of the world; not surprisingly, the world so ordered revolves around him” (Tuan, 1977, 93); in this case, “man” and “his” might be replaced with “News media” and “their audiences’.” For newspapers lacking immediate physical connection to an impact site, outsider coverage thus also seeks to demonstrate how “we” are linked to a site or to the event as a whole, and this mainly takes the form of images of tributes (quilts, gifts, moments of silence) or perspectives (remembrances of those who were there or lost family members but also of local individuals not directly linked to the event).

Even for a newspaper serving one impact site, its audience remains outsiders to the others, yet an interesting wrinkle presents itself. Despite their different physical locations, the September 11 sites at times seem to share a place-ness in their activities and their coverage. In the Shanksville area, for example, individual photography showed banners expressing solidarity with the Pentagon and World Trade Center sites.
monument carved from a World Trade Center girder was donated by the New Jersey Port Authority to the chapel. And each year, motorcycle riders from within and outside the Shanksville area make a ride between the three sites. Naturally, the September 11 attacks influenced people throughout the nation and world, and this study does not go to say that those living at the impact sites have a more true understanding of these, but those physically linked to the sites do seem to feel a connection, and they have acted upon this.

*Models of coverage.* This discussion suggests a link between the above model of memorialization and media coverage. For both insider and outsider media, September 11 coverage has been largely a journalism of “we.” News routines frame place, both the place where we live and the places where others live and where things happen. These places are framed in the news so as to be understood by the audience, an audience that journalists construct not specifically for this event but over time, through their routines and reporting and editing decisions. The model of memorialization in a place may thus be used to explain how a place and its memorializations are covered.

The impact site itself is always covered, as earlier analysis has shown. It is in coverage of off-site and non-site activities that news frames differ. For insider anniversary coverage in Shanksville, all circles inside the dotted “place” line are covered: The site itself, satellite sites, symbols, and tributes (see Figure 7.4.1). Elements from outside do exist in coverage, but are addressed sparingly, and are generally only depicted at the impact site.
Figure 7.4.1.

For outsider coverage, the site itself is also covered. Other coverage, however, tends to be limited to tributes that come from outside of the impact site's place (see Figure 7.4.2). For example, the St. Louis *Post-Dispatch* shows what St. Louisans are making or doing at home or are sending to other places. Off-site activities at the impact sites are rarely depicted in outsider coverage.

Figure 7.4.2.
The models are presented as opposites to underscore what was observed between the media and regional levels. The Flight 93 impact site stands as a consistent subject of coverage for both insider and outsider media; it may only receive a handful of wire service images, but as part of the original event, it is always portrayed in anniversary coverage. The rings beyond this, however, show that the site’s universally perceived news value does not extend to residents’ memorializations. Thus, anniversary coverage actually reflects two news values: The physical, embodied in the impact site, and the local, what “our” residents are doing. For outsider media, the memorial work in the impact site’s vicinity is not a concern.

Conclusion

In both examples, the coverage is largely a journalism of “we.” The impact site itself is the only consistent physical presence in media depictions of memorializations. Beyond that physical location, newspapers show what their residents are doing, not how memorialization takes place at the physically affected sites. Although the event’s impact sites were prominent in all coverage, the memorial acts depicted show more concern with locality than with proximity to the event.
CHAPTER VIII: CONCLUSION

Beyond the discussion of the study itself, its implications and links to larger areas of theory will be discussed in this concluding chapter. Although this research has used two levels to provide a richer picture of place and memory, the selections necessary to such work produce certain limitations. Choices made in selecting publications and locations for analysis, in developing the image type category, and in choosing units for coding all factor into what this study can show, and these limitations are described below. In addition, this section explains how such limitations can provide direction for further research. Following this, further implications of the work to the study of journalism and culture are discussed.

Limitations and Future Research

Limits of Sampling

This study’s most obvious limitation is the selection of data for consideration at both the media and regional levels. At the media level, selection decisions were made to investigate the study’s guiding cultural concepts of place and collective memory and to examine how the anniversaries were framed in the news; these decisions emphasized certain kinds of coverage while likely excluding others. Images in anniversary editions (September 10, 11, and 12 for each of the first five anniversaries of the attacks) were examined to provide a picture of a time when memorialization of the attacks was certain to be in the news, but an examination of images related to the event throughout the year
might reveal different image uses. Likewise, the study examined the three major newspapers serving each of the impact site, with the St. Louis newspaper examined as a “site-neutral” addition, in order to get at the interaction of place and news imagery in anniversary coverage. Research that examined different variables of newspaper size and site proximity could provide additional understanding of the role of place in the news media’s disaster coverage.

In the study’s regional level of consideration, the selection of the Shanksville area for case study of memorialization practices is both a strength and a limitation. The Shanksville area was chosen based on a perceived absence of coverage of this site (which was borne out by the content analysis), as well as Gans’ (1979) observation of “small-town pastoralism” as a common American news value. Again, this reasoning shows two variables that could be changed in future studies. For example, noting the extensive media coverage of the World Trade Center site, one might examine memorial practices in the New York City area. Although a case study of all such practices in the city would be difficult, if not impossible, research could examine smaller communities there. A study of practices in a neighborhood where many firefighters or policemen live, for example, could provide understanding of both memorialization and of those particular groups. Nor should the Pentagon be excluded from consideration; indeed, because the Pentagon site itself is difficult for civilians to access, it would be useful to examine the local memorial work done away from the impact site. The study’s examination of practices surrounding an impact site might also be altered: St. Louis’ memorial work was depicted at the media level, but what does this look like on the ground? A multiple-case study of site-neutral
memorialization could reveal useful differences and commonalities in such areas’ practices.

One final choice made in this study was that of the levels themselves. Examining the media and regional levels provides a useful picture, but these are not the only levels at which place and memory operate. Two ideas that were excised early on from this study may be useful future directions. First, there is potential for investigation of a non-news media, or entertainment, level. This study has examined memorialization in a relatively non-fiction sense, but there are also popular movies that directly address the attacks, such as World Trade Center and United 93, and others that are set in prominently post-9/11 world. How are the events and places of September 11 framed in such fictional media? Also of potential value would be investigation of an individual, outsider level of meaning-making. This study has examined memorialization by place residents and by major media, but what of the many outside visitors who come to the sites? Investigation of the images they make and what they do with them is one way to apply the concepts of this study to future research.

*The Image Type Category*

The content analysis also served as a test for the image type category developed for this study. Overall, the category seemed useful for description of disaster anniversary coverage, but there were some recurring weaknesses. The subtypes of “outcomes,” for example, at times seemed somewhat arbitrary. Despite training of coders, the “world today” and “ongoing response” subtypes of “outcomes” images were often muddled and seemed to require too much subjective judgment. Greater distinction of these two subtypes is necessary for further use of the image type category. Further, the “juxtaposed
symbols” subtype (also in “outcomes”) was an idea that seemed useful in category
development but in practice was rare and sometimes perplexing – for example, several
images appeared to show security, suggesting the “ongoing response” subtype, yet
juxtaposed those security images with some national monument. Considering the
fondness of many photographers to overlap symbolic images, this idea has merit, but
perhaps should be removed from the image type category to make its types more
mutually exclusive.

Other issues were also present at times. The “perspectives” type needs further
clarification of what it entails. Initially, coders would sometimes code any image of a
family member as “perspectives: family and friends.” Clarification and rewording of the
codebook appeared to solve this, but it is a sign of why testing and training are necessary
for further applications of this category. Site and situation were at first misunderstood in
relation to certain image types, but corrections and clarification (as they appear in the
attached codebook, Appendix A) led to near-perfect agreement on these. Most
problematic was their relation to the “history: dead and departed” and “materials:
communicative texts” subtypes. With regard to the former, it was decided that “dead and
departed” images show a person or thing, not a determinable place (though exceptions are
possible, as with past images of buildings). For the latter, it was determined that an image
of a communicative text such as a book or television image shows that (unlocatable) text,
not a place. One example was a book cover that included an image of the World Trade
Center. Through the guidance of the “What does this show?” question, coders determined
that this image showed a book, not the World Trade Center, and should thus be coded as
“materials: communicative texts.” Similar determinations were made for texts such as
movie and television stills, plays, and photographs (where the focus was the artist’s work rather than the subject).

With further development through constant comparison of other disaster anniversary texts, the image type category could be a useful addition to how we consider media coverage of such events. A possible next source of analysis might be anniversary coverage of 2005’s Hurricane Katrina. This subject would provide both similarities (a situated disaster in a prominent city; ongoing response; evacuee and nonresident perspectives) and differences (natural rather than man-made disaster; widely acknowledged government failures throughout) to test and develop the category and aid theoretical development. Thus far, image type has generally served as an exhaustive, relevant, and mutually exclusive set of categories. The next step would be to test it against other similar phenomena.

Statistical Limitations

Frequency and percentage data were provided for all hypotheses and research questions in the content analysis, but a greater degree of statistical precision would be useful for future comparison and research. The inability to meet the requirements of the chi-square statistic for some comparisons suggests that the approach of examining only one image for each news page may have been too limiting. Consideration of all images from 2002, for example, would have provided a number of history: dead and departed images from the New York Times’ “Portraits of Grief” series, made up of obituaries of the World Trade Center victims; as it was, images from this category were fairly infrequent. One frustrating result of the sample used was in the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette’s apparent
absence of coverage of the Pentagon. Such images were run in that newspaper, yet these were not represented by the sampling system.

These sampling limitations are not lethal to the analysis, however, which provides a thorough description of image use. With regard to chi-square, considering all images may still have not met its requirements in all cases: The low image use in intervening anniversaries, especially in 2004, would likely have not added much to the tallies for those years. Further, study of the prominent top-left page position presents useful analysis of image use in prime news page real estate (e.g., Adams, et al., 2007). It may be useful to continue coding all images, but it is likely that their proportions will remain similar. Future studies might also incorporate more complex statistics, such as log linear analysis, that not only can confirm the presence of differences among the categories, but can identify with precision where and what those differences are.

Further Implications for Journalism Research

The investigation of cultural concepts has been shown here to be an aid to the study of journalism. The cultural approach taken in this study does not privilege the practice of journalism or hold it apart from other modes of meaning-making. Instead, journalism is included within a culture whose meanings are linked to concepts such as place and collective memory. It is true that the news media is a source of information about the world for many, but it is not the only source. Further, the practices, routines, and texts that comprise the news media are not formed wholly within the newsroom (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996). They are the product of individuals, who, in spite of news norms, engage with culture in different ways. Carey’s (1974) assertion that the news media is culture, not separate from it, informs this conclusion: By studying the elements
of culture, we may better understand both how it informs the news and how the practice of newsmaking constitutes culture.

Culture, however, is quite complex. The findings of this study suggest that it may be fruitfully investigated by focusing on the cultural agents that make it up: Place, collective memory, or frames, for example. Doing so does not suffice to explain all culture or cultural meaning, but according to Geertz (1973), getting “to the bottom” of such meaning is not possible in any case. Fortunately, the constructivist paradigm that informs this research is “transactional,” seeking to better understand the interaction of situational, alterable realities (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). By investigating the interaction of cultural concepts, we may provide a rich description of their area of overlap.

In this study of September 11 memorialization, these cultural concepts intersect within any given image, object, or text. The significance of the event and the traditional nature of news routines dictate that all newspapers must depict the impact sites during anniversaries, at least for the time being. From that shared base, however, the place is framed quite differently, and the number and content of photographs in the Somerset Daily American differ significantly from those in the New York Times. Gans (1979) noted that the actors presented in news stories may be knowns, the politically, culturally, economically or socially recognizable, or unknowns, “ordinary people prototypical of the groups or aggregates that make up the nation” (p. 8). This study suggests that greater weight should be given to influence of place on the known/unknown distinction. An outsider looking at a Daily American photograph may see an “aggregate” of unknowns congregating at the impact site, but to a subscriber they may be instantly known, even tiresomely so. What’s more, the premises of collective memory hold this contrast to be
completely natural, and incorporating this concept allows the additional understanding that material artifacts such as these newspaper clippings may be used by both individual and group as evidence that may be partial, contradictory, and unpredictable.

This study also informs the “fractured paradigm” of framing. If frames are central to culture (Goffman, 1981; Van Gorp, 2007), then the constructivist approach requires that they too be examined at their intersections with other concepts. On the one hand, framing is a practice by the message producer, who selects message elements to be made more salient and promote some kind of interpretation (Entman, 1993). On the other hand, for audiences to receive a frame in the intended way, they must not only recognize the frame, but must privilege it over others, and each individual has the potential to negotiate that reading in a different way (Hall, 1993; Van Gorp, 2007). “Because frames are part of culture, the actual frame is not encompassed in media content,” but through a dynamic framing process that exists in social interaction (Van Gorp, 2007, p. 63).

The analysis of the media level in this study shows how images are used to frame both “our” site and “theirs.” Across the list of newspapers examined, more complex imagery was used to represent local memorialization than that of other sites. The case study shows that complex memorial work has happened through the years in the Shanksville area, yet this is invisible in the coverage of media beyond that site. Instead, the annual images of impact site ceremonies are surrounded by images of local memorializations. Even when no impact site was nearby, as with St. Louis, local activities were predominantly what was shown. The resultant frame is one of locality: Residents act, and regional media uses those acts rather than those of outsiders to frame the event.
As noted, the reverse is technically true at the Shanksville site, where coverage choices emphasize that the area is more than Flight 93. Yet the rationale behind these decisions may be a similar one. In news page decisions, but also in memorials such as the “helping hands” sculpture at the Shanksville school, residents of Somerset County and the Shanksville area have approached the Flight 93 crash as a way to show who they are. According to Brian Whipkey, the *Daily American* editor, the area has been treated like an “afterthought,” yet in his view, it could be the perfect place for tying together the story of September 11:

It’s like they have this extra paragraph: When you do September 11, don’t forget to include there was a fourth plane, three sites. Shanksville has the location and the ability to be the country’s place to tell what happened on Flight 93. You go to the Pentagon, they don’t want anyone in there asking questions. New York City, they want to get back in their economics, ground is so valuable, everything is going on. Out here in Stonycreek Township, we have acres and acres and acres. This is the place to tell what happened on September 11. … It’s like a blank canvas out there. Use it to preserve the history of that day out there.

To Whipkey, the Shanksville area could be the site for remembering the event. For other editors, their own place’s memorials tell the story. The implication is that, regardless of site, September 11 did happen here, wherever “here” happens to be. Taken in concert, the proposed insider and outsider models of coverage may inform the investigation of other disasters and their memorialization. The usability premise of collective memory informs this approach to framing catastrophe, suggesting that we will always use events to tell us about ourselves. Although the disaster is linked to a physical location that is revisited in annual coverage, the story is what happened to us.
Conclusion

Investigation of different levels of memorialization has showed two different faces of the Shanksville area. At the media level, it is mainly a field to be visited once a year. At the regional level, it is a complex network of memorial activities that extend well beyond the impact site itself. This is not to say that either of these levels is correct or incorrect in their depiction of the Shanksville area, or of any of the impact sites. Absolute “nondistortion” in coverage is not possible, for “when the news lives up to one standard, it may then be distorted in relation to another one” (Gans, 1979).

Within the practices of large and small news media, as well as within the memorial work of individuals and communities, there is an effort to frame events and present perspectives. News media can simplify messages to match existing narratives or to help its audience reach a satisfying conclusion to the story; narratives help make order of events, and such a sense-making frame is common when covering tragedy (Kitch, 2002; Zelizer, 1990). As the event is framed by different media and individuals, elements are minimized or emphasized to tell it in a way that is intelligible to some constructed audience (Entman, 1993; Sumpter, 2000). The process is evident in the concept of place, which can serve as a depicted setting (Hallin, 1988), a constructed and framed idea (Sharp, 1993) or as a factor influencing depiction of other places (Larsen & Brook, 2005; Myers, Klak & Koehl, 1996). The differences in depictions of the Shanksville area are differences of scale, not of truth, and they tell as much about their creators and their perceived audience as they do about the place and events themselves.

The journalism of “we” that this study describes is not unlike the memorialization processes at work in the Shanksville area itself. Certain memorial narratives are seized
upon while others are discarded. Niche visions emphasize more specific aspects of the event, such as the “helping hands” role of residents depicted by the school’s memorial garden, that might be diminished or eliminated in the official memorial. Just as large and small newspapers have been suggested to have differing concerns about their communities’ values (Reader, 2006), official and unofficial memorializations may depict different, even contradictory, values and ideas. The official memorial plan will make the Shanksville area impact site considerably less messy, at least on its face. Although some prefer an unfinished or informal site, others want to move forward to a resolution. Yet the freedom of off-site memorialization in the Shanksville area may come in part from the eyes of the world (through media) being on the impact site itself. For both memorialization and news coverage of an event, emphasis on an “official,” simplified and resolved message may alleviate the need for other memorializations and coverage to be all things to all people.
APPENDIX A

Codebook: Newspaper use of images in 9/11 anniversary coverage

The unit of analysis is the individual news image for 9/11-themed stories. News images are here defined as either photographs, information graphics, or illustrations. Photographs will be the great majority of news images, and because they are the emphasis of this study, only photographs will be coded beyond the news image category. The relation to 9/11 will be determined by image content and guided by context units. Each unit must be coded for publication information: Newspaper of publication (New York Times, Washington Post, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, or St. Louis Post-Dispatch), date of publication (day, date and year), and page (number and section, if available; e.g., A1).

Beyond publication information, there are three steps in coding an individual unit. First, the news image must be identified (photograph, graphic, or illustration); only photographs will receive further coding. Next, place is coded for by identifying the impact site depicted (if any) and the site-relative location (situation) of the image’s depicted objects or activities. Finally, image type is coded into one of five categories.

1. Unitizing News Images. First, the coder must determine that the story is presented as 9/11 related. Some images will clearly be 9/11 related through their content (e.g., images of ceremonies or memorial objects). Others will require the context provided by accompanying details: captions, headlines, surrounding stories and images, section headings, and design elements. Although this will encourage broad inclusion in many cases, it should stop short of logical leaps. For example, the war in Iraq might be reasonably identified as an outcome of 9/11, but an Iraq War image is not inherently 9/11 related so would not be coded without a context unit clearly providing that linkage for a given instance (e.g., a 9/11-themed section heading).

Once 9/11 relevance is determined, images may be coded. A story may contain several news images, and each news image should be counted as a separate unit. In most cases, news images will be clearly identifiable. Images may be photographs, graphics, or illustrations.

Photographs are images made with a camera, and have not been modified (digitally or otherwise) beyond stylistic changes (e.g., cropping, toning). News photographs are nearly always rectangular and accompanied by a line or two of explanatory caption text. When they are not (for example, a non-rectangular cutout of a person or thing), they are still readily identifiable as photographs through their appearance and the accompanying story’s context. Photographs do not incorporate text or drawing, with the exception of captions or headlines that are placed on the image. Technology may produce realistic, photograph-like images of non-existent objects, such as of planned monuments, but these should be considered illustrations.

Graphics and illustrations will also be coded but will be far less common. Graphics are combinations of words and images, usually drawn but sometimes incorporating photographs. Basic graphic types include maps, charts, diagrams, tables, and timelines. Typically, headlines and introductory text, or “chatter,” along with the graphic’s visual structure, will designate what constitutes a single graphic. Some graphics
will have no headline or chatter but will be clearly defined visually by shape or boundaries; this is the case with many locator maps.

Illustrations are typically drawn images, rarely using much if any text. Illustrations may contain graphic elements, but are distinct from graphics in how they convey emotions or ideas rather than specific information. Illustrations may also incorporate photography (e.g., collage), but are again distinct in using it to convey emotions and ideas. For this study, cartoons will be coded as illustrations.

Categories should be coded in the following order: publication, date, page, image type. After these, only photographs will be coded for subsequent categories. In all cases, context units (identified above) and this codebook should guide coding decisions.

2. Coding for Place. All photographs will depict a place (either an impact site or a non-impact site), and the objects, events and actions depicted in impact site images will take place either on-site or off-site. In all cases, the 9/11 nature of the image should be clear and not inferred.

Site: Does the image show one of the impact sites (New York City, Washington, or Shanksville), or does it show a non-impact site (e.g., St. Louis, New Delhi)? For the purposes of this study, “site” refers to both the physical impact site and the larger region and community in which it is located. For example, a 9/11 image from New York City that does not depict Ground Zero would still be coded as a site image.

Every photograph will depict a site. Code WTC (World Trade Center), P (Pentagon), SV (Shanksville), or NI (not an impact site).

Situation: Is an image situated at an impact site (the World Trade Center, the Pentagon, or the field north of Shanksville), is it situated in the surrounding region or community, or is it non-locatable (as with a mugshot or image taken from a media text)? Coders will code for one of two situation subcategories depending on how they have coded the image for site.

Although it is the home city of one of the study’s newspapers, Pittsburgh should be considered a non-impact site, not an impact site. Shanksville and its surrounding region would be coded as an impact site.

Impact site images will be coded as on-site or off-site respectively. An on-site image shows the immediate site of impact, focusing on history, events, objects or interactions there. An off-site image shows activities in the larger region or community beyond the site itself.

Every impact site will have a situation. Code ON (on-site) or OFF (off-site).

Non-impact site images will be coded for Pittsburgh, St. Louis (the two cities immediately served by two of this study’s newspapers), other American locations (cities, homes, American ships at sea), international locations (foreign cities and schools, U.S. military action taking place on foreign soil), and non-locatable images. For the purposes of this study, images not from an impact site are all equivalent to off-site images; like off-site images, they show the community’s activities beyond the site itself. Images not from an impact site will be coded.
Every non-impact site will have a situation. Code PIT (Pittsburgh), STL (St. Louis), USA (other American), INT (international), or NS (non-locatable site).

3. **Coding for Image Type.** There are five possible categories of image type, each of which has three to four subcategories. These are listed below. Although the categories are determined to be exhaustive, there may be cases where elements of several categories are perceived. In such cases, coders should examine the image and its context (caption, accompanying story, other associated images, section headings, and other news page elements) to determine its primary focus, always asking “What does this image show?”

**History** includes the images of the event, its participants, and of the linkages that have been made to it. This category is made up of three subcategories.
- **Event images** show what happened during the event itself. These include not only the moment of destruction or impact, but the immediate response from that day or days.
- **Dead and departed** includes images of what can no longer be seen, both victims killed and things destroyed. Such images come from prior to the event and show how things were or what they looked like.
- **Connections and explanations** attempt to explain how the event happened, what led to it, and may also attempt to make linkages to other elements of the past.

**Materials** are focused on objects; there may be people in the image, but the object is the main focus. There are four subcategories of materials.
- **Memorials and tributes** show things like shrines, official and unofficial memorials, and may also feature objects (“tributes”) left in remembrance. These may also show such objects under construction.
- **Sites and artifacts** are images of an impact site itself or objects at or otherwise produced by the events of 9/11; these images emphasize a site rather than things humans have done or left there.
- **Communicative texts** are media and textual objects. These may be 9/11 themed or the 9/11 linkage may be made by the story; context is necessary to identify these images because they may resemble other types of image (examples of media and text images might be book covers or stills from television programs). Drawings, photographs, and other artwork may also be considered communicative texts so long as they are not depicted as memorials and tributes. The coder should determine whether such an image is of a site or object (such as the World Trade Center) or is of a text that happens to depict that object.

**Rituals & Practices** show actions, both individual and collective, in response to the event. The category is made up of three subcategories.
- **Individual actors** are photographs of people or groups who have responded in personal ways; one example is an image of a man who has written a poem every day since 9/11. This type of image focuses on the individual person or group rather than what he, she or they has made (if the focus of the image is on the object, it would be coded as memorials and tributes).
- **Grief and interaction** are images of mourning and consolation that are personal and individual; for example, survivors comforting each other at Ground Zero. Grief and interaction images may also show interaction with objects or texts.
(e.g., a photograph showing viewers reacting to televised footage), but only if coders determine that such interaction is the image’s focus.

- *Ceremonies and events* depict larger, organized commemorations such as vigils, parades, and moments of silence.

*Perspectives* involve individual responses about meaning, not only with regard to the events of 9/11 but also the resultant actions, events, and texts that stem from it. The category is made up of four subcategories.

- *Survivors and responders* are those who were at the scene and immediately involved with the events of 9/11. This category also includes surviving entities, such as displaced or directly affected businesses.
- *Family and friends* are those who lost loved ones in the event.
- *Experts and officials* involve perspectives from official positions of authority.
- *Other individuals* are those who did not experience the event firsthand or through the loss of a loved and are presented as individuals rather than from any position of event-related expertise.

*Outcomes* show the world today and since the event.

- *Ongoing response* images show what is happening specifically in response to the event; examples are official acts or military response (so long as the 9/11 connection is explicit).
- *World today* images attempt to show what things are like now (such as images of economic activity).
- *Juxtaposed symbols* requires special attention. This type involves images of 9/11 outcomes placed in combination with existing symbols; examples are images of barred gates in front of national monuments and security guards patrolling sites like the Golden Gate Bridge. The seeming frequency of this type of images led to its being considered as a category of its own, and the presence of clearly identifiable symbols is what differentiates it from other outcome images.

Every image should be coded for the best match among the categories. Code each image as both its image type and image type subcategory; a *dead and departed* unit is in the *history* category, so would be coded H:DD. Code images as H:EI (history: event images), H: DD (history: dead and departed), H: CE (history: connections and explanations), M:MT (materials: memorials and tributes), M: SA (materials: sites and artifacts), M: CT (materials: communicative texts), R: IA (rituals and practices: individual acts), R: GI (rituals and practices: grief and interaction), R: EC (rituals and practices: ceremonies and events), P: SR (perspectives: survivors and responders), P: FF (perspectives: family and friends), P: EO (perspectives: experts and officials), P: OI (perspectives: other individuals), O: OR (outcomes: ongoing responses), O: WT (outcomes: world today), JS (outcomes: juxtaposed symbols).
Codebook: Newspaper use of images in 9/11 anniversary coverage

I. Coding for: publication, day, date, page

Coding unit: news image
Categories (for coding publication):
NYT: New York Times
WP: Washington Post
PPG: Pittsburgh Post-Gazette
SPD: St. Louis Post-Dispatch

II. Coding for: News Image

Coding unit: news image
Categories:
P: Photograph
G: Graphic
I: Illustration

III. Coding for: Place

Coding for: Site
Coding unit: photograph
Categories:
WTC: World Trade Center
PEN: Pentagon
SV: Shanksville
NI: Non-impact site

Coding for: Situation
Coding unit: units coded WTC, PEN, or SV
Categories:
ON: On-site
OFF: Off-site

Coding for: Situation
Coding unit: units coded NI
Categories:
STL: St. Louis
PIT: Pittsburgh
USA: Other American
INT: International
NS: Non-situated
IV. Coding for: Image Type

Coding unit: photograph

Categories:

H: History
   EI: Event images
   DD: Dead and departed
   CE: Connections and explanations

M: Materials
   MT: Memorials and tributes
   SA: Sites and artifacts
   CT: Communicative texts

R: Rituals & Practices
   IA: Individual acts
   GI: Grief and interaction
   EC: Events and ceremonies

P: Perspectives
   SR: Survivors and responders
   FF: Family and friends
   EO: Experts and officials
   OI: Other individuals

O: Outcomes
   OR: Ongoing responses
   WT: World today
   JS: Juxtaposed symbols
APPENDIX B

Case Study Protocol

I. Case study of September 11 memorialization in the Shanksville area
   a. This descriptive case study is built around a primary research question: How have individuals and institutions in the Shanksville area used images to memorialize September 11? No local lives or property were lost in the event, yet individuals have had to come to terms with what this event means to them. I believe there is value in studying the memorialization activities of this place, the vicinity of the Flight 93 impact, yet they have been largely neglected in the mass media.
   b. Theoretical frameworks for this study include the cultural concepts of place and collective memory and the theory/concept of framing.
   c. The protocol will be the primary line of inquiry and will aid in collection of data and selection of literature.

II. Data collection procedures
   a. Several contacts have been developed prior to data collection. Contacts at the National Park Service in Somerset, PA, are Barbara Black and Karen Shaw. Contacts at the Somerset Daily American are Brian Whipkey and Vicki Rock. Contact at the Flight 93 Memorial Chapel is Father Al Mascherino.
   b. Additional contacts will be made at the site, through the primary contacts or by making connections in the community on my own.
   c. Data collection will take place over two to three visits to the Shanksville area. Each of these visits will be divided between several areas of field work. These include scheduled interviews as well as interviews set up in the field, examining documents (e.g., anniversary newspapers), using the archived collection of tributes at the park service offices, and visiting the site and other memorials as I become aware of them.
   d. Preparation time prior to visits will involve scheduling interviews, reviewing previously collected data, and preparing follow-up areas for investigation.
e. Interview data will be recorded via digital voice recorder and will be transcribed after each visit. I will also maintain a dedicated notebook for memos both during the interviews and while going through archives.

III. Outline of case study report

a. Background of the site and area
b. Signs
c. Structures
d. Symbolic materials
   i. Symbols (objects people have made)
   ii. Tributes and leavings
e. Interaction with memorials
   i. News media
   ii. Individual photography

IV. Case study questions

Questions will be largely open-ended but will focus on the images and objects that individuals have made or interact with. The questions will be different as different memorial objects are encountered. Certain primary focus questions will be used to keep on track, and different sets will be used for residents and for journalists.

a. Journalists
   i. How have you used pictures in anniversary coverage of 9/11? How do you decide what to show? What have you tried to show? Where do you get pictures of the site? Of different sites?
   ii. How do you show the Shanksville area in anniversary coverage? Have you seen pictures of the area in other media? How does it look different or the same?
   iii. What kind of feedback have you gotten from readers on your 9/11 coverage and the images that you have run?

b. Residents
   i. Initial question: Can you show me the pictures you have taken? (these may be orderly arranged in an album, or haphazardly stored in boxes and
drawers. How they are collected will partly determine how we go through them) Subsequent questions will be used to address individual images.

ii. Tell me about this picture. What does it show? When/why did you take it?

iii. Have you shown this picture to anyone? Who? Why or why not?

iv. What does this picture mean to you? Has that meaning changed? Do any of your pictures have a particularly special meaning?

v. What does this picture say about 9/11? About Shanksville? About you? What do you think others might see in this picture?

vi. Have you seen any images taken by others that are meaningful to you?

V. Evaluation for conclusion

a. How is place constructed by the residents of the Shanksville area?

b. How do the memorial activities of Shanksville area residents align with the premises of collective memory?

c. Framing

   i. How do residents frame September 11, Flight 93, and their role in these?

   ii. How do residents frame their place and involvement in the event for others?
APPENDIX C

Field Notes: Process of investigating case study

The case study method integrates data from multiple sources. Yin (2003b) suggests six broad sources of evidence – documentation, archival records, interviews, direct observations, participant-observation, and physical artifacts – and my own study incorporated all of these to some extent. The process of identifying and incorporating these sources of data, however, was not wholly determined at the start of research. Although my research was guided by an overall protocol with defined areas of inquiry (see Appendix B), the evidence I used to serve that protocol spanned a greater extent than what I could have anticipated at the beginning of the research.

Before ever visiting the Shanksville area, I had the idea that I would visit the site (direct observation, participant-observation), that I would interview residents and area journalists, and that I would examine newspapers and records (documentation, archival records) as well as individual photographs and images (physical artifacts, documentation). What I did not know, indeed, could not know, is what form this evidence would take. I had no idea that the Shanksville area would be home to such an array of memorial practices, or that the makers of these varied memorials would be so interlinked. Even in light of the “everybody knows everybody” cliché of small towns, the way in which residents’ memorial projects informed others’ work was a great surprise, and as the content analysis suggests, this local memorial narrative is not a widely told story.

Although I prepared for my first trips to the area, identifying useful starting points such as the temporary memorial site and setting interviews with potentially key informants such as the journalists of the Daily American, these starting points led in unexpected directions. Because so much of the case study process developed “on the ground,” I include in this appendix a selection of field notes from my work at the Shanksville site. This supplement is intended to show how my process of research developed while in the field and to serve any who would like to try such an investigation of their own. They are reprinted in their original formatting, warts and all, for this purpose.

FIELD NOTES 04/03/08

This was a good working day. Interviewed two people at the newspaper, went through some microfilm of the paper, set up several interviews for Friday and Saturday. I’ve got six interviews done or scheduled, and two more potential contacts. Also passed the visitors center on Center St., so I’ll stop there if there’s time tomorrow. I also want to print more microfilm tomorrow, and I might have to rethink my Saturday schedule if I set up interviews then.

I learned today that it is a helpful tactic to mention that I’m in town for research. People seem to want to know more, and it seems more effective than cold approaching and spelling everything out right away. This way, it seemed easier to build up to asking if they wanted to participate or knew anyone who might. Didn’t knock on any doors, and I
don’t know if I will – this trip seems pretty full, but next time I might hit the Johnstown paper and some other sources. Below are the specifics.

Got to Somerset around 1030a and started at the library (Biesecker). I didn’t have much of a plan but figured I’d go through 2002 and 2006 (1st and 5th anniversaries). In the time I had, I wound up reading from Sept. 3-15 and printing all images from 10-12 in 2002 and some stories and columns. These provide some really good context for the time and what was going on here. For example, I found an editorial by Brian Whipkey (who I was interviewing later) about “the five seasons of Somerset County,” referring to the festival season of late summer/early fall, which surrounds Sept. 11. This makes me wonder further about how, if at all, remembering Sept. 11 has been incorporated into the existing festivals. Another columnist wrote that Somerset County was prepared to handle the event because of their experience with a severe tornado hit a few years earlier. What’s more, I got a better sense of the surrounding news stories at the day – I had forgotten about the nine trapped miners (in nearby Quecreek), which happened right around then and was a big story. There were also 4-page special sections on the 10th, 11th, and 12th, and a 98-page (!!!) one on the 11th.

Interviewed 9/11 reporter Vicki Rock and editor Brian Whipkey at the Daily American. They went together, which was a concern at first but worked out pretty well because they went back and forth, so the conversation was always moving (4/14: I now think such group interviews may be a useful way to interview journalists, or any subjects who are part of an institution, because they are talking about the institution as much as about themselves, and the interplay creates a greater depth of information). I was worrying that I didn’t get enough about images in there, but I regularly brought the conversation back to them and think I got everything I could on the subject – keep in mind that what you anticipate isn’t always the case. Good talk about the subjects’ roles, their interaction with other papers and journalists, their perception of outsiders’ coverage, and what they try to do with their 9/11 coverage. Their newsroom is converged, too, or at least their site has videos that reporters take in the field (mostly footage of interviews, but it’s still more than I expected).

More importantly, Brian and Vicki directed me to some people at the National Park Service, just down Main Street from the DA. I stopped in to talk with Karen Shaw there, who talked about the memorial site and gave me a lot of materials (the plan for the site, brochures for other area sites). They had dioramas and plans set up for what was to come, which I photographed. In addition, Katie said she’d be willing to talk with me about pictures she herself has taken, outside of her NPS role. I’m going to set up something for Saturday. The other person I was told to contact, Barbara, was out, but Katie left a message for her – Barbara called back this evening, and we’re meeting tomorrow around 2 (she’s calling me when she gets back to town).

Headed out to the site. On the way, I stopped at the auto shop with the handpainted sign (an outline of an airplane serving as an arrow with “93” and “1.8 miles” inside the outline) and was able to set up an interview with the guy, Scott Haas, who painted it – his uncle told me how he has an art degree from somewhere in Pittsburgh and he doesn’t
know why he’s wasting his time working on cars. Then in Shanksville I talked to a
to a woman, Diane, in a country crafts shop – she’s a photographer and is going to talk with
me about some of her pics over breakfast tomorrow. She also pointed me toward a friend
at a nearby store. He wasn’t in, so I’m checking tomorrow. Nobody was at the site and it
was crazy windy. The flags were all frayed too (4/14: Which a site attendant told me I
should mention to Barbara). Talked to the attendant for a little bit, but she had to leave.
Checking in at the hotel, I got the receptionist, Virginia, talking and she told me I should
try talking to her cousin (4/14: Gave me his name and number, and I think I’ll try to
contact for the May trip); she also told me how her mother died soon after 9/11 and that
her pug can see ghosts.

Tomorrow:
- 7:30a – call Diane for breakfast interview
- 9-12ish – Hit library for more microfilm and/or go to visitor center OR if I go
earlier I could try the Shanksville guy (let’s see what the lady says at breakfast).
- 12:00p – meet Scott Haas (painter) for interview
- 2:00p (ish) – Meet with Barbara from Park Service (she will call); set up Saturday
  interview with Karen
- After 5p – Call receptionist’s cousin?

FIELD NOTES 04/04/08

Another big day. Three interviews, a few hours in the library, and a lot of walking and
driving.

I got up at 7a to call Diane from the craft shop for our interview, but didn’t actually get
out of bed and call her until 730a. By then she was driving into Somerset to do her
laundry, so we didn’t meet for coffee until 945a. This interview was my first where the
participant talked about photos she had taken, and it went really well. Diane was a good
subject to begin with – lived in Korea for a few years (including 9/11/01) and had no
problem telling me her problems with the current administration. Some of her pics were
of the site and focused on a jacket hung by area firefighters, the first responders to the
scene. Her cousin was one of these, but she said he didn’t like to talk about the event (this
evening, she left a message saying she thinks he’s willing and will give me a call, but as
of 1035p I’ve heard nothing. maybe tomorrow…) (4/14: Never heard from him, but I’m
writing a thank-you to Diane and will mention it). She didn’t return to America until
2002, and she said seeing the jacket on the wall at the site was the first time it really set
in. I’m eager to look over this interview.

Not only was the interview good (and she bought my coffee!), Diane pointed me toward
some other possible sources. One was Wendy Chisholm, the woman who runs the craft
shop, so I stopped off in Shanksville on my way to interview Scott Haas, the auto body
guy. She was willing, but I had to get to the 12p interview so I told her I’d be back (also
met Rick King, another Diane recommendee, who also owns the general store (4/14:
Flo’s? Ethel’s? I can’t remember), and asked if he could show me some of what had been
donated to the fire dept. he said I should talk to the chief, Terry Shaw. more on that
After talking with Scott, I met with Wendy for a really fruitful talk. She showed me a lot of the 9/11-themed crafts she had ordered, work done by regional artists (a lot of this, including crafts and photos) (4/14: I asked if she thought 9/11 brought out the craftmakers, and she said the area has always been like that as a way to supplement income. On Lambertsville Road, on the way to the site, there are 2-3 frontyard signs for people’s craft shops, so it seems like it may be true). She then showed me some of her own pics from a 2001 flag ceremony in town (4/14: She let me take pictures of these. Also, she had a bunch of cancelled postcards – the Shanksville PO makes a new commemorative stamp every year, and you can send a SASE to them to get one. Need to talk to those guys). For some reason, I didn’t get any of the artists’ names from her, so I came out of this with no further leads. Not sure what I was thinking, but a good find, and my third interview of the day.

The interview with Scott Haas, of the auto body shop, was pretty brief. He was still covering for some guys at work, so it was interrupted by customers a few times. Also, Scott seemed not really talkative, and a little skeptical of why I was interviewing him, so all of that together didn’t help. I should have waited for his break, although I don’t know how much better it would have been. I tried to probe into his art school interest but didn’t get anywhere – he said it was more of a commercial design school. He did, however, note that he’d also sandblasted words on some stones for the Shanksville High School memorial garden, which was a neat connection (4/14: it was built in honor of 9/11). I stopped by there later for some pictures. All in all maybe 10 minutes, but it’s something.

On the way back, I passed another handmade sign that I’d seen yesterday at 30 and Lambertsville, right at the edge of the Highland Tank company. I stopped to see if I could find out where it came from, but the woman at the desk said she didn’t know but was sure it wasn’t from HT. Maybe check with municipal gov’t (4/14: Stonycreek Twp.? Stoysville?), since it would probably need some kind of signage permit?

Barbara at the park service was a no-show. Evidently she had worked too many hours and went home. I know it would have worked better had I been able to call ahead of my visit, and I need to do this for next time, but she had already called me last night, so I’m a little cheesed she couldn’t call back today to let me know. Anyway, I stopped in and talked to Karen, and our interview about her pics is on for tomorrow at 830a. She suggested that she may be able to set me up with someone else, either tomorrow morning or for my next visit.

With tomorrow, this will have been a good visit, and I’ve got multiple leads to follow up – I am leaving with things I would have liked to do with more time, and that’s a promising sign. While waiting for Barbara to call, I spent a few more hours at the library and printed the intervening anniversary years of the DA (2003, 04, 05), as well as copied some highlights from the Johnstown Tribune-Democrat. Another $16 on microfilm, and a couple dollars in change on the copier, so I may need to take out another $20 before my microfilm visit to the Carnegie to read Post-Gazettes. Also (this is embarrassing), I called and left a message with the fire chief, Terry Shaw, and only after hanging up did I realize that his last name is the same as Karen’s, and that the DA people had mentioned that her
husband is a fire chief. They are almost certainly married, and I am dumb. Didn’t hear
from him anyway, but maybe she’ll be able to set me up.

Possibly good idea that didn’t pan out: Talking to a local tattoo artist. I stood on the street
for a while convincing myself to do it, and then decided I’d at least look at the samples of
his work to see if he’d been doing a bunch of patriotic or 9/11 stuff. He didn’t, really, and
didn’t seem to inclined to talk much (although he had a lot to say about how good he was
and how he had all these international jobs). Still, might be interesting elsewhere in the
future.

For background, I picked up a shitload of historical brochures and a phone book so I can
stalk people from Missouri. I will need to mail the pile of stuff I collected, I think. Also, I
have not called Virginia’s cousin but still have his number – perhaps for the second trip.
Also also for the future, I’ll need to bug Father Al again about the stuff people have
donated, and try to get in touch with Kathy Baedecker [sic: should be Josie Benson) in
Shanksville, who had the first memorial there. Saw her house but didn’t have the time to
go knock. The final also: The Summit Diner on Central Ave. is an excellent greasy
spoon, and their Gob cake will kill you.

Tomorrow:
- Interview Karen at NPS offices at 830a
- Print microfilm of Post-Gazette (whatever I don’t already have) at Carnegie
  Library
- Possibly hang around this area a little longer if Karen has any good connections
  for today or if Diane’s cousin (who is also a Shanksville fireman) gets back in
  touch

FIELD NOTES 04/05/08

Wonderful interview with Karen. I got to the building early but was locked out (the NPS
office is just one of a series of storefronts in this big old building). Fortunately there’s a
side window, so I went and knocked and Karen let me in. I was a little concerned because
while she has seemed very interested in my project, she has simultaneously been oddly
reserved. Perhaps they just get so many reporters, students, and so on, that they’re sick of
it. Anyway, I started things up – she enjoyed the consent form because she is conducting
oral histories for the NPS, and was interested in how I did things. She had TWO albums
of photographs and an hour to spend. We only got through the first, but it was well worth
the time spent.

Prior to the images, we talked about her background. What I did not realize is that almost
all the NPS people here are area residents. I had assumed they’d have been sent from
Harrisburg or DC, thus once again proving the need to be able to put aside
preconceptions. Karen is a former RN from Shanksville and, as mentioned, the fire
chief’s wife. She originally applied for the NPS spot but didn’t get it, then came into it
after the first person left. Barbara, she told me, was/is head of the Somerset Historical and
Genealogical Society and started collecting the leavings at the site well before any NPS
involvement. Karen seems both proud and protective of her area, and it is important to be properly respectful in hearing her story.

The first album of pictures is essentially all from the first year since 9/11. Lots of focus on the firefighters, which makes sense. Karen told me that Shanksville has no city hall; in addition, the firefighters were the first responders and the most obvious face of the area to the national audience. Because of this, she says, many people sent their donations, art, whatever, to the fire hall, and a lot of it’s still there (I need to talk to Terry) – the dept. bought a new engine with the donations, and it’s emblazoned with all manner of patriotic imagery.

Some of the images aren’t Karen’s, and she always points this out (she won’t lend me any that aren’t hers). One image is of Terry tying a tie for Rick King; Rick never knew how, and with all the formal events the firefighters were being sent on, he had to ask someone for help. There are a number of images of the dept. in dress blues lined up in front of different events, donations, and so on; one in particular shows them holding a banner displaying solidarity with the other sites’ victims, and it is here that Karen tears up – I would not have picked this as the image, but that’s why people’s stories are so important to this study. After we go through the book, she goes back to the beginning (we had skipped it) and shows me the pictures of the site immediately after the crash. It’s all a blasted whole with tiny bits of wreckage everywhere.

Karen let me tag the pictures I’d like copies of and said she would scan and send, but still needed to decide if she’d be willing to do so (4/14: Still no word on these). In addition, she has recommended that when I talk to Barbara, I ask if she’d email the other site volunteers about participating since, she says, many of them have pictures of their own and would likely be interested in participating. I must do this.

As I said, good interview, and one that opens a lot of directions. The firefighters may be an important part of this study, and I hope to make contact on the next trip. Site volunteers will also be valuable, as will be an interview with Barbara herself. Finally, talking to Father Al about donations to the chapel will connect with these things. I think a significant portion of the case study can involve the things people have made, sent, and sold, as well as where (the site itself, the fire dept., the school, the chapel) they have sent them. Doing so expands the focus to include not only images residents have made, but what they have done with the images sent to them by others.

After this, I went to the Carnegie Library in Pittsburgh to print the remaining photo pages from the Post-Gazette. Surprisingly few – even St. Louis had far more. It would be interesting to compare these with the Pittsburgh Tribune-Review (smaller, newer, younger audience), but that is a different study. The Church Brewery on East Liberty makes an excellent pierogie pizza, even better than the pub in Lower Burrell. I had too much stuff to take back on the plane – microfilm prints, local brochures and phone books, general nonsense – so my parents were nice enough to mail it to me. Which they have not yet done.
Next trip (mid-May):
- Interview with Barbara
- Interview with Johnstown reporter(s) – one in particular, Kirk Swauger, seemed their go-to guy (Patrick Buchnowski also had a few)
- Interview(s) with site volunteers
- Visit to Shanksville Fire Dept.
- Visit/interviews at Shanksville Post Office about cancellation stamps, etc.
- Interview w/ Father Al at Flt. 93 Chapel about donations
- Call Josie Benson (former postmaster, created first informal memorial) for possible interview
- Knock on door of mother whose daughter made “Welcome to Shanksville, home of heroes of Flight 93” signs for her senior project – name is in Somerset Daily American printouts (9/11/02)

FIELD NOTES 05/23/08

Three interviews today, two of them pretty big, and a lot of archival research at the Park Service. Met with Barbara Black at NPS at 10a. We started with a 30-minute interview about the archives and her work with them. One particularly interesting thing that came of this was a particular term, “tributes,” which she uses for the items left at the site. There’s some good talk in the recording about this; evidently the term is linked to a site visit and consultation with Elaine May (I think this is the name), who handled archiving for the Vietnam Memorial site. Barbara points to the Vietnam Memorial as the first where such tributes appeared, and there’s some interesting discussion here. I’ve been thinking a lot about the Vietnam Memorial as the first of a new kind of memorial, so this may be a useful fit.

Barbara showed me around the on-site archives (about 2/3 of the collection is in deep storage elsewhere, but they archive it here and keep notable pieces on-site). After that, I went through the first five boxes (from the beginning of the archive on) of archived flat items, which got me somewhere near the end of 2002. Their indexing system let me identify useful item types (e.g., photographs) and go right to them rather than wading through everything. Some neat photos too – images of victims, left by friends and family, but also pictures of pictures and of memorial services and sometimes just crazy/awesome things (e.g., a Polaroid of a Camaro with a sweet airbrushed American flag).

Barbara said she felt bad that no site volunteers had contacted me about the study and said she knew a couple that she would lean on to help – people who she knew took a lot of site pictures. Meantime, I talked with Karen about my plans to stop by the school to ask about the memorial garden, and she recommended I talk to the art teacher there, who evidently masterminded the garden. She also said to give her husband Terry, the fire chief, a call tomorrow at 1p to see about a look at some of the stuff that had been sent to the fire station – Karen’s a pretty good connector.

I headed out in a hurry to get to school before it closed, and the secretary was able to set me up with the art teacher, Jane Krause. Jane walked me through the garden and talked
about the main sculpture there, a hand-themed sculpture that students came up with (it was then designed by a Pittsburgh artist) to fit the idea of Shanksville being the “helping hand” to all the survivors, emergency personnel, journalists, and other visitors who have been drawn to the site. These seem like some pretty insightful kids. Jane suggested we meet for further discussion tomorrow, so we are.

After the school, I swung by the post office to ask about Flight 93 themed postal cancellation stamps. I talked to the woman there for about 15 minutes before realizing that she was the Josie Benson who people keep telling me I should talk to. We set up an interview for 7p, and it ended up going about an hour and a half (she had a LOT of pictures). Josie turns out to be a huge connector and the engine behind a lot of Shanksville’s 9/11 efforts, though she says she’s “retired” now because it got to be too much. Most of what you see, though, has her hand in it. I didn’t get pictures from her because there were so many; really, just about everything evoked a story, and the pictures were good for focusing the interview rather than as specific things to show (with exceptions, such as one big pic of her front yard at the peak of its memorial glory). I thought it would be best to go through the interview and decide what I really need. Josie was great, and she gave me cookies when I left.

I really need to get in touch with Father Al for a recorded interview. He keeps coming up (it turns out he’s the one who designed the cancellation stamps), and I think including him would make this collection of data feel complete. That’s not to say there isn’t more to be added, but for the dissertation, I think I have a pretty complete story between my interviews, photo elicitations, and archival and document research. I’m going to take a stab at catching Father Al tomorrow after the interview with Joy; the chapel is open from 10-3, and hopefully it’s not too swamped with Memorial Daygoers. Even the interview with Terry Shaw might be peripheral, as it more concerns outside submissions, but it’ll still be useful in how it contributes to what the fire department has done with the donations (e.g., bought a tanker truck). For dissertation purposes, I think I’m just about done with data.

Tomorrow (mid-May):
- Follow-up interview with Jane (Shanksville art teacher)
- Call Terry Shaw at 1p - Visit to Shanksville Fire Dept.?
- Interview w/ Father Al at Flt. 93 Chapel about donations

Left to do
- Interview(s) with site volunteers – Barbara Black is going to push some toward me
- Interview with Johnstown reporter(s) – one in particular, Kirk Swauger, seemed their go-to guy (Patrick Buchnowski also had a few)
- Knock on door of mother whose daughter made “Welcome to Shanksville, home of heroes of Flight 93” signs for her senior project – name is in Somerset Daily American printouts (9/11/02)
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VITA

Bob Britten is a resident of Pennsylvania who has not lived there in some time. He started working as a journalist after graduating with a bachelor’s degree in English, because what else are you going to do? When the job started to grow on him, he returned to school to study journalism at the University of Missouri, where he earned his master’s and, it is earnestly hoped, his doctorate. His area of interest is visual communication and its functions in journalism. Beginning in fall 2008, Bob and his wife, Jessica, will be teaching at West Virginia University in Morgantown.