

## ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF PEACE: MEMORY AND RHETORIC ON THE UNITED STATES/ CANADIAN BORDER, 1920-1933

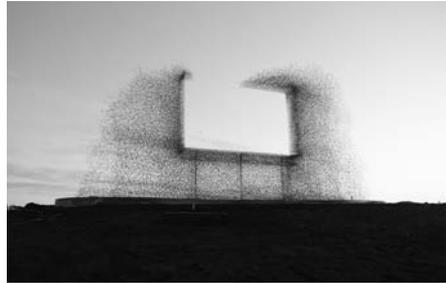
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In the fall of 2010, artists Annie Han and Daniel Mihalyo of the Seattle-based Lead Pencil Studio installed their newest sculpture adjacent to the border crossing station located at Blaine, Washington and Surrey, British Columbia on the U.S./Canadian border. Funded by the U.S. General Services Administration's Art in Architecture program as part of its renovation of the border crossing station, Han and Mihalyo's *Non-Sign II* consists of a large rectangular absence created by an intricate web of stainless steel rods (Figure 1). The sculpture evokes the many billboards that dot the highway near the border, yet this "permanent aperture between nations," as Mihalyo refers to it, frames only empty space. According to Mihalyo, the sculpture plays on the idea of a billboard in order to "reinforce your attention back to the landscape and the atmosphere, the thing that the two nations share in common."<sup>1</sup>

Though it may or may not have been their intention, the artists of *Non-Sign II* placed the work in a location where it is easily juxtaposed with a border monument from a different era—a concrete archway situated on the boundary between the United States and Canada. Designed by prominent road-builder and Pacific Highway Association President Samuel Hill, the Peace Arch was formally dedicated at a grand ceremony held on September 6, 1921, to celebrate over one hundred years of peace between the United States, Great Britain and Canada since the 1814 Treaty of Ghent (Figure 2). While the neighboring structures each embody their own layers of meaning relative to the time of their creation, the Peace Arch, like *Non-Sign II* built ninety years later, uses the border as a site to call attention to the commonalities between the two nations. In roughly the next decade after the dedication of the Peace Arch, several similar sites emerged at different locales across the U.S./Canadian border. Among these were the Peace Bridge in 1927, Perry's Victory and International Peace Memorial in 1931, the Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park in 1932, and the International Peace Garden in 1932. Public and private sponsors, inspired by the centennial of the Treaty of Ghent in 1914, envisioned the border

as a commemorative space, but the arrival of the First World War delayed their plans.<sup>2</sup> In each case, the site or monument itself and the rhetoric that surrounded its dedication made manifest the notion of peaceful relations that had existed for a century between the United States and Great Britain initially, and the United States and Canada after Canadian confederation in 1867.

FIGURE 1. Annie Han and Daniel Mihalyo, *Non-Sign II*, 2010. Image courtesy of the artists.



Today, the study of the U.S./Canadian borderlands is rapidly expanding as scholars look to revise the historiographical traditions of each country that have so often been limited to the boundaries of the nation-state. Scholars from several disciplines, seeing cross-border historical connections and understanding the borderlands as a region in itself, are exploring various qualities of this seemingly unique international border. For example, in a 2006 collection of essays about the Western borderlands edited by Sterling Evans, John Herd Thompson makes a distinction between three borderlands approaches that is useful in understanding the historiography of the U.S./Canadian borderlands as a whole. First, some scholars have envisioned the borderlands approach as an effort in regionalism meant to break down traditional notions of the border as divider. These scholars have identified particular historical moments during which regions like the Rocky Mountain West or the Great Lakes were ecologically, economically, and culturally coherent to the point of making the border virtually insignificant. In contrast, others who take a transnational approach have discussed the meaning of the border for various groups and border-crossers. Though the border has historically been quite permeable, crossing it was often a significant experience for immigrants, indigenous peoples, blacks, Mormons, and many others who used it as a transformative space or as a shield against unfriendly federal policies on one side or the other. And finally, Thompson identifies a third approach that is comparative, in which



FIGURE 2. Peace Arch between Blaine, Washington and Surrey, British Columbia dedicated in 1921. Image Courtesy of University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections, WAS0708.

scholars examine similarities and differences on either side of the border. Among other conclusions, such studies have shown the border to be integral to the process of national identity formation; some scholars have suggested that Canada in particular has at times defined itself in opposition to the United States.<sup>3</sup>

These various approaches to the borderlands and the scholars who have implemented them in unique ways have demonstrated the historical complexities of the U.S./Canadian borderlands. Still, the ways in which the border itself has served as a space for the assertion of a shared U.S./Canadian history and identity have, to this point, gone uninvestigated. The series of monuments constructed on the U.S./Canadian border during the interwar period and the rhetoric that accompanied their unveilings expressed a shared identity based upon the superiority of the Anglo-Saxon race and the natural friendship between the two nations. As symbols, the monuments convey a desire that the border between the United States and Canada be open, permeable, and little more than an imaginary line between brethren. These sites and spaces both reflect and helped to create a “deep, horizontal comradeship” along the lines of Benedict Anderson’s imagined community.<sup>4</sup> However, while Anderson’s imagined community is the nation as delimited by political boundaries, the monuments to peace on the U.S./Canadian border speak to a single, *transnational* imagined community. Newspaper articles covering the monument’s dedications, the speeches and visual symbols that made up the dedication ceremonies, and the monuments themselves, enshrined the border as a symbol of the incomparable relationship these two nations shared. Viewing the U.S./Canadian border through these commemorative spaces adds a new dimension to the meaning

of borders and complicates the notion of communal identities as limited by national boundaries.

#### **MONUMENTS TO PEACE ON THE U.S./CANADIAN BORDER**

The concept of the Peace Arch, also called the Peace Portal, originated with road-builder and Pacific Highway Association President Samuel Hill. During a July 4, 1915, centennial celebration of the Treaty of Ghent, Hill voiced the idea that a marble arch be placed on the border between Surrey, British Columbia and Blaine, Washington as a monument to one hundred years of peace between the United States and Great Britain and Canada. Though delayed by the First World War, Hill and the Pacific Highway Association sponsored the construction of the Peace Arch, designed as a classical Doric-order archway of steel and concrete to link the U.S. and Canadian nations. An estimated ten thousand people came to Blaine and Surrey for the dedication, which was held September 6, 1921. The ceremony consisted of a flag-raising of the British Union Jack and the U.S. Stars and Stripes, a performance of the national anthems of Great Britain and the United States, poetry recitations, and speeches by prominent officials of British Columbia and the Pacific coast states, as well as Samuel Hill.<sup>5</sup> The flag-raising, along with other ceremonies at the Peace Arch and elsewhere, indicated the extent to which Canada, well after confederation, still associated its national identity with that of Great Britain through symbols like the Union Jack.

Six years later, a significantly larger crowd estimated at one hundred thousand, witnessed the dedication of the Peace Bridge spanning the Niagara River between Buffalo, New York and Fort Erie, Ontario. A project long thought necessary, the Peace Bridge finally came to fruition through local efforts that led to legislation from Canada and New York and permitted its construction. After deferring the bridge's creation due to lack of funds during the First World War, builders broke ground in August, 1925 and opened the completed bridge for vehicular travel on June 1, 1927. The bridge company, consisting of local residents of both countries, decided to call it "Peace Bridge" and planned a ceremony to commemorate the century of peace since the War of 1812. The August 7, 1927 dedication was a grand affair that featured speeches by Premier Baldwin of Great Britain, the Prince of Wales, Vice President of the United States Charles Dawes, Canadian Prime Minister William Lyon Mackenzie King, and others. In addition to the crowd in attendance, millions more around the world heard

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the events described by National Broadcasting Company announcers over the radio. During the ceremony, the Canadian and British representatives met the American delegation at the middle of the bridge, where Dawes and the Prince of Wales shook hands over a white ribbon that was then cut to represent the linking of the two countries.<sup>6</sup>

Perry's Victory and International Peace Memorial contained the most overt reference to the War of 1812 (Figure 3). A memorial commission of representatives from the Great Lakes states conceived of the monument as a "triple memorial" to celebrate U.S. Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry's victory over the British fleet on Lake Erie, U.S. General Harrison's Northwest campaign, and the consequent years of peace that followed. Built on South Bass Island in Lake Erie, just off the U.S./Canadian border, the 352-foot granite column originally opened in 1915, though it was not formally dedicated until July 31, 1931. Ohio Governor George White and Illinois Governor Louis Lincoln Emmerson led the dedication with speeches and the reading of a message from President Hoover. Dedicators unveiled four bronze tablets in the monument's rotunda, one a recreation of the Rush-Bagot Treaty of 1817 that had laid the groundwork for a demilitarized border.<sup>7</sup>



FIGURE 3. Perry's Victory and International Peace Memorial. Image courtesy of National Parks Service, available at [www.nps.gov/pevi](http://www.nps.gov/pevi), (accessed December 1, 2010).

Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park grew out of the collective idea of the Rotary chapters of Alberta and Montana. The organizations agreed that Canada's Waterton Lakes National Park, founded in 1895, and the United States' Glacier National Park, established in 1910, should be joined due to the similarity of their landscapes and the insignificance of the border within the boundaries of the two parks. The groups saw the fusing of the parks as a symbol of the long friendship between the nations and as an opportunity to promote continued peaceful relations. On June 18, 1932, the United States Congress and the Canadian Parliament responded to the Rotary clubs' efforts by establishing the joint park. Canadian Bill 97 specifically noted the park's establishment "for the purpose of permanently commemorating the long existing relationship of peace and good will between the peoples and governments of the United States of America and the Dominion of Canada."<sup>9</sup>

Like Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park, the International Peace Garden was meant to celebrate and encourage sustained peaceful relations across the border. The idea for the garden arose out of a Canadian proposal and plans outlined by Donald McKenzie, Canadian Minister of Mines and Natural Resources. An international committee carried out the project, building a three thousand acre space that covered parts of North Dakota and Manitoba. The planting of the garden began with the placing of a dedicatory cairn inscribed, "To God in His glory we two nations dedicate and pledge ourselves that, so long as men shall live, we will not take up arms against each other." The ceremony, held on July 14, 1932, featured an international hymn composed for the occasion, the raising of the flags of the United States and Great Britain, and sporting events like an international "tug of peace." The dedication was filmed and broadcast around the world.<sup>10</sup>

These five sites, spanning almost the entire length of the U.S./Canadian border, represent a range of approaches to commemoration. The Peace Arch and Perry's Victory and International Peace Memorial are obviously the two most consciously symbolic of the various monuments. Both are physical structures that clearly follow particular monumental traditions and that are designed specifically on the impulse to celebrate one hundred years of peace between the two peoples, though Perry's Victory and International Peace Memorial, an American project, also specifically recalled an American victory over the British. The Peace Arch, in both its form and celebratory function, is reminiscent of the European triumphal arch tradition. Perry's

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Memorial takes the common form of the victory column, the most famous being Trajan's Column, completed in 113 C.E. in Rome. Unlike an arch or a bridge, which both represent connection, the iconography of the victory column serves a more heroic, celebratory purpose that reflects the intention to memorialize Perry's victory over the British. This also makes the column an interesting choice for representing peace.

The International Peace Garden, though a designed space rather than a physical monument, also grew directly from the commemorative impulse. Conversely, Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park was first and foremost a practical union of two spaces with shared natural wonders and a linked administrative history, and the Peace Bridge was essentially just a private and later a governmental effort to facilitate border traffic. These two sites, originally intended for purely functional purposes, only took on symbolic meaning later through the narratives attached to them.

Each of these sites, therefore, reflected a distinct mode of commemoration. At the same time, all five can be understood as symbolic monuments with much in common. The creators of Waterton-Glacier and the Peace Bridge, by associating their endeavors with the centennial of the Treaty of Ghent, ascribed symbolic meaning to otherwise purely functional projects. By envisioning these sites as commemorative spaces, the creators and the journalists and speakers who articulated their significance transformed the Peace Park and the Peace Bridge into figurative monuments that spoke to transnational peace and friendship and a shared history between the United States and Canada. The dedication ceremonies held at each of the five sites and later ceremonies and representations continually reaffirmed the symbolic qualities of the monuments and imbued each with particular meaning. Thus, a jointly-operated park became an international symbol of peace and a bridge for vehicular travel became a figurative bridge between nations.

Several of the sites also have strikingly similar visual and spatial effects. The Peace Arch, while serving a commemorative function common to triumphal arches, does not, like many others, serve as an actual passageway for travel. Without this functional purpose, the arch becomes a purely symbolic portal connecting nations. Instead of bridging a roadway, the arch simply creates an empty space, much like *Non-Sign II*. This opening becomes a shared,

perhaps even apolitical, space of peace between Canada and the United States. Though it is more apparent on a map than on the ground, the Peace Garden and Peace Park likewise frame shared, bounded spaces between nations that paradoxically mark the border with their very placement but also emphasize its ideological absence. Between the spatial interplay of the sites with the border and the narratives attached to them through the rhetoric and symbolism of their dedications, these disparate monuments became visual representations of the two peoples' natural affinity and the apparent insignificance of the political boundary between the U.S. and Canada.

**ANGLO-SAXONISM, PROGRESS, AND THE BORDER AS A MODEL:  
THE RHETORIC OF COMMEMORATION**

The rhetoric that surrounded each of these commemorative moments espoused the idea that due to their common racial make-up, Canada and the United States were natural friends and allies. This sentiment is illustrated in the Peace Arch itself through the words engraved on its concrete exterior. The southern, or U.S. side, reads the words "Children Of A Common Mother," while the northern, or Canadian side, reads "Brethren Dwelling Together In Unity." Visually, the symmetrical design of the archway echoes the inscriptions, portraying two peoples united by a shared British ancestry. Indeed, many of the speakers at the dedication ceremony emphasized the common language and Anglo-Saxon racial heritage as reasons for the peace between the two neighbors. Speakers like Oswald West, former governor of Oregon, and R. Rowe Holland, Vancouver barrister and president of the International Peace Memorial Association, suggested that the arch symbolized the Anglo-Saxon bond between the United States and Canada and their common mission to defend peace and liberty. Samuel Hill claimed that the portal marked "the recognition of the oneness of the English-speaking race, and its friendship, not alone for the white race, but its earnest desire to be at peace with all the world."<sup>11</sup> These remarks served to reinforce the Peace Arch's visual symbolism of unity, connection, and strength, though they also erased the presence of non-Anglo-Saxon cultures in both the United States and in Canada.

The newspaper articles about the Peace Bridge and the speeches given at its dedication revealed similar sentiments. In the August 8, 1927 issue of the *New York Times*, writers emphasized the linguistic ties between the two

nations and noted that the ceremony was broadcast over radio to English-speaking peoples across the globe. According to Vice President Charles Dawes, the link between the two nations was not just linguistic but also ideological, as they shared “the same ideals of citizenship” and “a common principle in government of individual liberty under law.” U.S. Secretary of State Frank Kellogg spoke of the bond as one not hampered by racial tension, implying a contrast with various other international relationships. The *Times* writer reporting on the ceremony framed the meeting of the Canadian statesmen and their American counterparts in familial terms, the Canadians being the “younger brothers.” The descriptions and symbols of both the Peace Arch and Peace Bridge events reflected the view that a shared language, cultural values, and ancestral heritage made the United States and Canada ideal partners in peace.

This notion that the Americans and the British (or those in their dominion) were natural allies and partners in foreign policy due to a common racial heritage was certainly not new. Thomas Gossett traces bits of this history back to as early as 1839, when Thomas Carlyle suggested that the United States and Great Britain should schedule annual meetings of “All-Saxondom.” In his pivotal 1981 book *Race and Manifest Destiny: The Origins of American Racial Anglo-Saxonism*, Reginald Horsman traces the development of Anglo-Saxonism and its relationship to American imperialism.<sup>13</sup> European notions of Anglo-Saxon superiority, emerging alongside the scientific differentiation of race and a Romantic interest in the uniqueness of peoples, cultures, and nations, blossomed in the United States in the mid-nineteenth century. These ideas, often integral to U.S. foreign and domestic policy, also took hold of the public imagination in both England and the United States. In a poem titled “A Word to the Yankees” from 1850, the English writer Martin Tupper addressed the United States by saying, “There’s nothing foreign in your face/Nor strange upon your tongue;/You come not from another race/From baser lineage sprung.” As Tupper’s lines imply, the tradition of Anglo-Saxon friendship was tinged with a sense of superiority over those of any other origin. The poem also suggests both a racial and linguistic link, reflecting a new conception of Anglo-Saxonism that, as both Horsman and Anna Maria Martellone argue, crystallized in the 1890s. Whereas before the umbrella of Anglo-Saxonism included all those of Nordic stock, by the 1890s the definition had been narrowed to a racial and linguistic Anglo-Saxonism limited to the English, the Americans, and other English-speaking peoples

around the world. In the context of a growing influx of immigrants from Latin and Slavic countries on United States soil and, later, the emergence of Germany as a potential common enemy for Britain and the United States, both countries increasingly adhered to this racialized notion of a natural bond between the two countries, and by extension, the U.S. and Canada. In the public mind, Anglo-Saxonism embodied a shared ideology that was superior to and could be instructive for the rest of the world.<sup>14</sup>

In addition, after World War I and the Treaty of Versailles, American voters elected a “return to normalcy” with Warren Harding and his isolationist, “America First” platform. The United States’ noninterventionist policy that dominated in the Republican years from 1921 to 1933 was in itself wrapped up in American exceptionalism and Anglo-Saxon racial supremacy. American isolationist doctrine centered on the belief that the United States had little to gain from contact with foreign powers usually deemed inferior. Out of this grew restrictionist immigration quotas that implicitly suggested that non-whites were either harmful to or incompatible with the core values of American society.<sup>15</sup> It was in this milieu that the commemorations of peace along the U.S./Canadian border took form. The combination of a wartime alliance with the British, a refined definition of Anglo-Saxonism, and a post-World War I isolationist political context saturated with notions of racial order made the U.S./Canadian border of the interwar period a zone ripe for the celebration of the peaceful relations between international neighbors.

Further propagating the idea of Anglo-Saxon superiority, various speakers and writers put forth the idea that the peaceful border between the peoples of the United States and Canada could serve as a model for the rest of the world. In a letter written to Samuel Hill and read at the Peace Arch dedication ceremony, President Harding praised the creators of the portal for providing the world with a “symbolic shrine to international peace.”<sup>16</sup> Harding wrote that the century and more of peace between the United States and the British Empire and the friendship between the two peoples separated by the world’s longest unfortified border signified “that the world grows wiser and better.” According to Harding, all of humankind could look to the U.S./Canadian border as a model for peace and as a sign of global progress. Harding’s sentiments suggested that the peaceful bond shared by the United States and Canada was a unique one with instructive value for the rest of the world.

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In a lengthy article publicizing the creation of the International Peace Garden on June 26, 1932, *The Los Angeles Times* echoed and expanded on this idea.<sup>17</sup> The article cited a plea from *La Bulgaria*, a newspaper published in Sofia, in which the Bulgarian writer extolled the extraordinary accomplishment of one hundred years of peace between the United States and Canada and asked why the two countries did not “hold conferences throughout the world, explaining the case and teaching to other peoples the art of living without killing one another.” The *Times* writer explained to readers the history of the Balkan states and its people, who had for centuries witnessed almost constant warfare and invasion. Considering this history, the *Times* writer said, it was no surprise that the Balkan peoples sought instruction in the ways of peace. The article proceeded to lay out what was necessary for the Balkan states and other areas of the world to achieve such a peace. The security of the U.S./Canadian border, the writer argued, was based on “mutual good will.” The writer also advised that others study the federal system and the American Constitution, which had prevented the appearance of “barbed-wire entanglements” like those in the Balkans separating state from state.

Using a supposed cry for assistance from a Bulgarian newspaper reporter that had heard about the International Peace Garden, the *Los Angeles Times* article created an arena in which to express the opinion that the peaceful border between the United States and Canada should be held up as an educational example to the rest of the world. The article cast the Balkan peoples as weak and oppressed and in need of guidance from more powerful nations. In contrast to the Balkan situation, the writer put forth both the American federation of states and the relationship between the United States and Canada as appropriate examples. In doing so, the article, along with those covering other commemorative events, proclaimed American exceptionalism and, in a broader sense, the superiority of an Anglo-Saxon race that could teach the rest of the world how to live in a peaceful fashion.

Many of the commemorative events on the border emphasized that the rest of the world could learn from the U.S. policies concerning disarmament. Disarmament became a significant issue in the interwar isolationist environment as the United States and other nations looked to counter an arms race that many had seen as a cause of the First World War. At the time of the Peace Arch dedication in 1921, postwar sentiments advocating

disarmament policies pervaded commemorative discourse at the border. Six years later at the Peace Bridge, disarmament again became a central theme when U.S. Vice President Dawes used his speech to criticize the delegations to the Geneva Naval Conference which had been held earlier that year. Dawes attributed the failure of the delegations to agree on naval disarmament to each nation's preoccupation with its own needs. British Premier Baldwin later played down Dawes' comments, emphasizing the resilience of the partnership between the United States and Great Britain even through moments of difference. *The Observer* of London also framed the discussion of the Peace Bridge in the context of the Geneva Conference. Calling the bridge "a happily-chosen and a timely symbol," the writer argued that such cooperation between nations would be required to bridge the "Geneva gap."<sup>18</sup> In these instances, commemorative spaces served as venues to reference the international political situation and reinforce the notion that disarmament was the best policy in achieving a worldwide peace comparable to that evident on the U.S./Canadian border.

References to foreign policy and disarmament were even more direct at the dedication of the Perry Memorial, where the stated theme was explicitly about arbitration and disarmament. A message from President Hoover read at the ceremony directly linked the dedication of the Perry Memorial to the Rush-Bagot Treaty as a first step in disarmament, echoing the symbolic placement of a replica of the treaty at the site. "It is particularly appropriate that a tablet reproducing the Rush-Bagot agreement should be unveiled at the dedication," wrote Hoover, as "it comes at a time when the nations of the world are seeking solution of their common problems through cooperation and disarmament."<sup>19</sup> Hoover and others cast the Rush-Bagot treaty as the earliest example of disarmament and envisioned the century of peace along the U.S./Canadian border as demonstrative of the United States' unique ability to make peace with its foreign neighbors.

As part of the self-congratulatory rhetoric so pervasive in these dedications, speakers and the press created a narrative of the two countries' progress toward their present state of peace. Speaking at the Peace Bridge, U.S. Secretary of State Kellogg argued that there was no equal in world history to the development that had occurred in the previous sixty years and that Canada had exemplified that progress. Harding had written in his message for the Peace Arch that the U.S./Canadian border was evidence of the

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movement toward a “wiser and better” world. At the Peace Bridge ceremony in particular, this narrative took symbolic form. Many newspaper reports on the project noted the fact that, in order to construct the bridge terminals, builders had to destroy Fort Erie on the Canadian side and Fort Porter on the American side, both significant defensive posts in the War of 1812. Speeches given during the ceremony alluded to the fact that where hostile forts had once stood now rested a symbol of friendship. Such statements further transformed the functional bridge into a visual sign of the progress the two countries had made.

Once again portraying U.S./Canadian relations as a model for the world, writers and speakers voiced the hope that the story of progress represented at this border would continue around the globe. Harding’s message at the Peace Arch dedication looked forward to a potential millennium of peace. Extending the Peace Bridge’s visual symbolism, Premier Baldwin compared the statesman to the bridge builder and the nation to the bridge, saying that it was now the obligation of all statesmen to “build an enduring structure worthy of its foundations.”<sup>20</sup> Each of these statements reflected the notion that these monuments to peace were testimony to the moral advancement of the United States and Canada which, it was hoped, would be perpetuated around the world.

The monuments to peace erected on the U.S./Canadian border not only celebrated the moral and political progress of the two nations, but also their advancement into modernity through technological and scientific achievement. In September of 1921, alongside the dedication of the Peace Arch, visitors celebrated a modern triumph of road-building and formally dedicated the Pacific Highway running from Vancouver to Tijuana. The Pacific Highway Association and Samuel Hill had sponsored the construction of the arch and linked the two projects. Upon the Peace Arch’s completion, newspapers described for readers the impressive steel and cement construction and speakers noted the physical linking of the two nations. Descriptions of the arch accentuated its physical presence and its modern construction. They cast the arch itself and its dedication as a literal bridging of the forty-ninth parallel with a steel arch and a modern highway. Six years later, the crowd in Buffalo witnessed the dedication of yet another “band of steel.” In a February 13, 1927, article entitled “Niagara Spanned By Peace Bridge,” Kathleen Woodward of the *New York Times* called it as

noteworthy for its engineering as for its powerful symbolism. Reflecting on her experience of the view from the Peace Bridge, Woodward wrote:

One had the sense of triumph over the sound and fury below—the desperate, headlong current, together with the knowledge that, even the crest of its fury over the falls was harnessed by the white man to turn the wheels of factories, to convey light, heat and power to cities miles from its shores. It would be difficult to tell whether the awe engendered in the bosom of the Indian by the natural spectacle of the river and the falls is greater than the awe inspired by the knowledge of the human agency that now assumes to control its power and volume, and does actually wrest from it, in abundance, the comforts of modern life.

In the story Woodward told, the white race and its modern capabilities had conquered the wilderness, here symbolized by the Indian. Woodward conceptualized the bridge as a symbol of the success of Anglo-Saxon agency in exploiting the natural world for its own uses.

Yet the bridge itself was not the only modern feat celebrated by followers of the dedication. In its coverage of the Peace Bridge dedication ceremony, the National Broadcasting Company aired a live feed of the dignitaries' speeches, including that of the Prince of Wales, to an audience across the country and around the globe. An August 8, 1927 *New York Times* article lauded the fact that millions of people in England, Honolulu, Cape Town, and Australia had listened to the radio broadcast. Though the ceremony had been held in Buffalo, the writer noted, "by the marvel of twentieth century science" people miles away had heard the event's proceedings "as distinctly as if they had been standing on the bridge itself."<sup>21</sup> Radio broadcasting and the bridge's design and construction made the Peace Bridge dedication ceremony a celebration of not just a century of peace but also of the pinnacle of modernity reached by the American nation. Newspapers proclaimed that the United States' successes, both in exhibiting modern technology and providing a model of peaceful foreign relations, reinforced the country's and, by extension, the Anglo-Saxon race's superior place in the world order.

The commemorative discourse along the border also reinforced both a sense of Anglo-Saxon racial superiority and the natural connection between the

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United States and Canada through references to each nation's historical past. Not by coincidence, the date of the Peace Arch dedication fell on September 6, the same day that the *Mayflower* had departed from Plymouth, England in 1620. A major feature of the ceremonial performance consisted of the placing of a small piece of wood, supposedly from the *Mayflower*, within the American "leg" of the arch. As a parallel, a piece of wood taken from the *Beaver*, a famous ship of the Hudson's Bay Trading Company, was placed in the Canadian side. In a poem written for the arch's dedication, British Columbia resident Justin Wilson spoke of the American past. Wilson wrote, "Risking the peril of a savage foe,/ Men on the *Mayflower* sailed from Plymouth town/ To make a race that should the world subdue/Yet using not harsh terms nor angry frown,/ To win men's hearts, the conquest held in view."<sup>22</sup> The rhetoric and symbolism of the Peace Arch dedication referenced a glorious American nation-building story, and in doing so underscored the exceptionalist sentiment expressed through the language surrounding each of these commemorative episodes.

The celebrations also linked the American national narrative with that of Canada, reinforcing the idea that there existed a shared history and an inherent connection between the two countries. University of Washington professor Edmund S. Meany wrote the official dedicatory poem read at the Peace Arch ceremony, a four-stanza ode to the peace and friendship represented by the great arch. Meany wrote, "They faced the hill and plain,/ No fear of savage shock/ Nor thrust of hostile hand/ Could swerve their onward way... While Britannia's sons were marching/From sea to beck'ning sea."<sup>23</sup> Speaking from the stage at the Peace Bridge, U.S. Secretary of State Frank Kellogg referred to himself as one who had known the "unsettled wilderness reaching from Ontario to the Pacific" and who, upon revisiting it, marveled at the modern transformation.<sup>24</sup> Kellogg's speech highlighted the common trajectory into modernity that had created two countries with such similar ideals. In both locations, writers and speakers alluded to a nation-building myth of westward-moving whites who settled the land from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Their words not only celebrated the greatness of the American past, but they also linked that past with a parallel story on the other side of the border that made the United States and Canada natural allies.

Of course, the glorifying discourse of these commemorative moments

was limited to Anglo-Saxons, and Anglo-Saxons in the modern sense—white, English-speaking people. Many of the speeches and press reports surrounding the events mentioned those who had “opposed” the two nations’ westward movement. Wilson’s and Meany’s poems referred to a “savage foe” not feared by the advancing whites, and Woodward’s thoughts from the Peace Bridge in her *New York Times* article contrasted the Indians’ awe over the sublime beauty of the river with the white man’s incredible mastery of its power. In the parallel nation-building stories depicted at the Peace Portal and Peace Bridge, indigenous peoples were cast as an obstacle, a noble but inferior race, or more often, as in the case of Kellogg’s “unsettled wilderness,” they were simply forgotten entirely. Native peoples had little to do with the popular conception of the unity of the Anglo-Saxon-dominated Canadian and American societies. In a distinct but related fashion, references to the common language on either side of the border excluded French-Canadians. Samuel Hill briefly noted in his speech that the French and the English lived together peacefully in Canada and, during the Peace Arch ceremony, a French flag was raised to represent that large portion of Canada’s population.<sup>25</sup> Otherwise, in each of these commemorative moments, French-speakers residing in Canada received little attention. In the discursive spaces of these dedications, the labels of Anglo-Saxon, English-speaker, and white were used interchangeably, signifying the narrow, racialized manner in which many imagined the transborder community.

#### THE BORDER IN THE PUBLIC IMAGINATION

In the various commemorative moments that emerged along the U.S./Canadian border between 1920 and 1933, the popular conception of the border was of an imaginary line separating natural brethren. Writers and speakers reflecting on these commemorations of peace looked toward a future where the border remained peaceful and open. Many saw the creation of these monuments as participating in this movement toward sustained peace. On the inside of the Peace Arch, two inscriptions looked at the past and the future of the border. The first reads, “Open For One Hundred Years” and the other, “May These Doors Never Be Closed.” Such sentiments hopefully eyed a continued peaceful transborder relationship.

In many ways, the monuments themselves served as visual embodiments of the perception that the borderline separating the United States and Canada was unimportant and easily bridged. The Peace Arch and Peace Bridge each

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physically spanned the border, literally and figuratively connecting the two sides. In the cases of the International Peace Garden and Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park, governments in both countries recognized spaces whose boundaries were delineated by existing parks and ecological regions rather than national borders. Staff members of both parks had long held a close working relationship across the border, cooperating on conservation and maintenance efforts. Other than a six meter wide swath directly on the line, the international boundary was hardly apparent in the Rocky Mountain wilderness.<sup>26</sup> The border had proven invisible and inconsequential, and thus joining the parks was a natural decision. In each case, the construction of a borderland monument, whether by public or private means, suggested a popular perception that the political line dividing the United States from Canada lacked any real significance.

Beyond the rhetoric of peace and the symbolism of connection was also the practical desire for a border marked by growing infrastructure for communication, travel, and commerce. In an article of October 10, 1926, titled "Peace Bridge Will Link Nations" in the *New York Times*, chief engineer Edward Lupfer noted that the area extending from the Niagara River frontier to Quebec and the Gulf of St. Lawrence was a popular recreational destination for Americans. Buffalo, he said, would now serve as the gateway for Americans just beginning to realize Canada's recreational and historic value. Lupfer estimated that five million people would use the bridge in the first year. In the imagination of the American public, the northern border was a permeable space of interaction rather than a barrier that could prevent commercial exchange or keep out eager tourists.

Of course, this perception of a permeable border centered on the popular sentiment of amity and goodwill toward a neighbor portrayed as a family member and natural friend primarily due to the similarity of its racial make-up to that of the dominant sector of the American populace. As one would expect, the United States' southern border took on a very different meaning during the interwar period. Under the 1921 Quota Act, immigrants from the Western Hemisphere remained free from national quotas. Yet with later legislation, intense debates surfaced over Mexican immigration while the Canadian exemption went unchallenged. The Immigration Restriction League echoed a segment of the American population's beliefs when it claimed that "with Canada, the case is different," because "immigrants from

Canada are of racial origins similar to our own." Conversely, they argued that for Latin American countries "whose population is not predominantly of the white race," quotas were necessary.<sup>27</sup> Like the rhetoric surrounding commemorative moments of peace between the United States and Canada, immigration debates in the 1920s underscored the sense of Anglo-Saxon superiority that shaped the distinct representations and perceptions of the United States southern and northern borders.

With such contrasting public visions of the United States' two land-borders, commemorative monuments like those that blossomed on the U.S./Canadian border never materialized along the Mexican frontier. The peace park concept serves as a microcosm of the different roles that each border played in the American imagination. Particularly after the creation of Waterton-Glacier, it seemed natural to some that a similar park should exist on the United States' other border. In fact, since the 1930s, several public and private efforts on both sides of the border have advocated the creation of a similar transborder protected park in such areas as Big Bend National Park on the Texas/Mexico line. Nevertheless, such a park has to this day never come to fruition due to, in some scholars' estimation, "different governmental priorities, political contretemps, and cultural missteps."<sup>24</sup> In one instance in 1934, representatives of the United States government approached newly elected Mexican President Lázaro Cárdenas with the idea of creating an international park that would have embodied both Roosevelt's Good Neighbor Policy and Cárdenas' natural resource conservation agenda. At the time, however, the idea was not received favorably by a Cárdenas regime focused on domestic affairs. Even if the plan had been carried out, it is unlikely that the resulting park, or any later U.S./Mexican borderlands park, would have been framed in the rhetoric of peaceful relations and an instinctive international partnership. The foundation of the imagined transnational community between the United States and Canada was a racially-charged ideology of Anglo-Saxon superiority that made any such community impossible on the United States' southern border.

Over the course of nearly another century, this shared identity and bond of friendship of Americans and Canadians has been continually reinscribed on these five sites and on the border as a whole. The meanings of these monuments have continually served as a foundation for further considerations of nationalism, government policy, and transborder relations.

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In 1952 American singer Paul Robeson performed a protest concert to an audience of forty thousand on the Peace Arch grounds. Denied a passport by the U.S. State Department based on his views on civil rights, Robeson capitalized on the layered meaning of the Peace Arch to emphasize his fight for peace and civil rights. To celebrate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Peace Arch in 1995, Christina Alexander founded the nonprofit United States/Canada Peace Anniversary Association as an additional monument to peaceful relations between the two countries. Part of the Association's stated mission is "the promotion of visual and performing arts, bringing together peoples sharing ideals of world harmony exemplified by the seamless border between the U.S. and Canada."<sup>29</sup> This goal has led to the sponsorship of an annual sculpture exhibition that attempts to bring artists from both countries together.

The Peace Bridge became the subject of commemorative stamps issued in 1977 on the fiftieth anniversary of the bridge's dedication. A rare joint-issue stamp, the Canadian version illustrates one pier with the flags of the United States and Canada flying above, while the American stamp combines an illustration of the bridge with an image of a dove. Following the rhetoric of the speakers at the 1927 dedication, such images continued the symbolic role of the Peace Bridge. The International Peace Garden, on the other hand, has become the home to other physical monuments and memorials. The 1983 installation of the Peace Tower, a four-columned, 120-foot tall structure that straddles the boundary line was designed to represent "people coming from the four corners of the world to form two similar, but distinct nations with a common base of democracy."<sup>30</sup> In 2002, the Garden received ten girders from the World Trade Center wreckage and created a 9/11 Memorial on the grounds. Visitors to the site are now confronted with various layers of meaning built on the foundational ideals put forth at the garden's creation. Finally, at Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park, Rotary chapters are engaged in efforts to stop the clearing of the six meter swath along the border for both ecological and symbolic reasons. Within the park, the boundary remains insignificant in the public mind.

Beyond these particular sites, the border has continually proven a space of commemoration and creative contemplation. In 1976 the Canadian National Film Board produced a book of photographs to highlight the natural beauty and communities along the span of the border. Titled *Between Friends/*

*Entre Amis*, the Film Board presented the book as a gift to representatives of the United States government on the occasion of the U.S. bicentennial. In the foreword to the book, Prime Minister of Canada Pierre Elliott Trudeau asserted that despite occasional differences, the two nations “have a vitally important lesson to teach other members of the community of nations.”<sup>31</sup> More recently, artists have used the border in innovative ways to highlight a variety of issues. In 1992 artist Gregor Turk walked the portion of the border marked by the forty-ninth parallel as he filmed a video and took photographs. Since then, Turk has produced a variety of artwork looking to “question the artificial and seemingly arbitrary aspects of this particular border, the metaphorical qualities of borders in general, and the reliance placed on maps to convey, constrain, and/or alter our sense of place.”<sup>32</sup> And in 2010, Mihalyo and Han commented on commercialism, the environment, and transnational borders with their installation *Non-Sign II*. Though they reflect other issues as well, many of the contemporary works suggest the permeability and the imagined insignificance of the U.S./Canadian boundary. The commemorative monuments that emerged previously during the interwar period grew out of an environment in which government policy and public opinion imagined a natural unity of the American and Canadian national communities. While later considerations on the meaning of the border have avoided the racialized undercurrents common to earlier monumental spaces, their continued presence suggests the unique place America’s northern border still holds in the public imagination.

In the post-World War I context, Americans and Canadians witnessed the creation of a series of symbolic monuments to commemorate a century of peaceful relations along the U.S./Canadian border. Analyzing the language and symbols used to describe these events, one finds several common threads. Newspapers, dedication speakers, and commemorative ceremonies cast these monuments as visual symbols of two peoples bonded by a common language and racial heritage and linked by parallel histories. The advancement of both countries into modernity and their friendly relationship along the border were held up as markers of racial superiority and instructive examples for the world to follow. These notions of a shared transnational identity made the U.S./Canadian border unique in the public imagination. To borrow a distinction made by Dominique Bregent-Heald, monuments and the public discourse of commemoration represented and fashioned the border between the United States and Canada as a *borderland*,

an apolitical space marked by “inter-American cooperation”, rather than a boundary that might require forceful policing.<sup>33</sup> With such a ‘natural’ friend on the other side, Americans envisioned this borderland as an open zone of peaceful contact, exchange, and pan-American unity, and as something worthy of tribute.

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NOTES:

<sup>1</sup> Daniel Mihalyo quoted in Marsha Lederman, “A spot of art while we check your passport?” *The Globe and Mail*, October 29, 2010, available at <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/british-columbia/a-spot-of-art-while-we-check-your-passport/article1778078/>, (accessed November 1, 2010).

<sup>2</sup> The Treaty of Ghent, signed in December of 1814 between the United States and the United Kingdom, officially ended the War of 1812, though news of the treaty did not reach the United States until after the Battle of New Orleans. Various scholars have identified the years between the two world wars as a significant moment for commemorative activity and considerations of national identity. In regards to the U.S. and Canada, see Beth Ladow, *The Medicine Line: Life and Death on a North American Borderland* (New York: Routledge, 2002) and Shannon Ricketts, “Cultural Selection and National Identity: Establishing Historic Sites in a National Framework, 1920-1939,” *The Public Historian* 18, no. 3 (Summer 1996): 23-41.

<sup>3</sup> For a more extended discussion of the historiography of the western U.S./Canadian borderlands, see the foreword and introduction to Part 1 in Sterling Evans, ed., *The Borderlands of the American and Canadian Wests* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006). For regional approaches to the U.S./Canadian borderlands, see John Bukowczyk et al., *Permeable Border: The Great Lakes Basin as Transnational Region, 1650-1990* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2005); Ladow, *The Medicine Line*; Sheila McManus, *The Line Which Separates: Race, Gender, and the Making of the Alberta-Montana Borderlands* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005). Studies that focus on the border’s significance and occasional usefulness to various groups include David G. McCrady, *Living With Strangers: The Nineteenth-Century Sioux and the Canadian-American Borderlands* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006); Harvey Amani Whitfield, *Blacks on the Border: The Black Refugees in British North America, 1815-1860* (Burlington: University of Vermont Press, 2006). For discussions of Canadian identity in relation to the United States, see Robert Earle and John Wirth, *Identities in North America:*

*The Search for Community* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995); Allan Smith, ed., *Canada, An American Nation?: Essays on Continentalism, Identity, and the Canadian Frame of Mind* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994); Randy William Widdis, *With Scarcely a Ripple: Anglo-Canadian Migration into the United States and Western Canada, 1880-1920* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1998).

<sup>4</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 1983), 6-7. Benedict Anderson defines the nation as "an imagined political community" that is *imagined* as "inherently limited." "It is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members... yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion" and it is imagined as limited "because even the largest of them... has finite, if elastic, boundaries, beyond which lie other nations."

<sup>5</sup> *The Washington Post*, "Monument to Long Peace Between Canada and U.S.," September 6, 1921; *The Hartford Courant*, "U.S.-Canada Peace Portal Dedicated," September 7, 1921; Richard E. Clark, *Sam Hill's Peace Arch: Remembrance of Dreams Past* (Bloomington: AuthorHouse, 2006), 62-63.

<sup>6</sup> Edward P. Lupfer, "Peace Bridge Will Link Nations: Great Span Over Niagara River Is Now Approaching Completion," *The New York Times*, October 10, 1926; Kathleen Woodward, "Niagara Spanned By Peace Bridge: New Steel Link Between Canada and United States Notable as a Memorial and an Engineering Triumph," *The New York Times*, February 13, 1927; *The New York Times*, "Open Peace Bridge Over the Niagara: Throngs Pass Over Span Linking Buffalo to Fort Erie, Ontario—To Be Dedicated This Fall," June 2, 1927; *The New York Times*, "Prince of Wales to Speak Over Radio: Address From Peace Bridge at Border Will Be Widely Broadcast," August 4, 1927.

<sup>7</sup> Negotiated by U.S. Secretary of State Richard Rush and British Minister to Washington Sir Charles Bagot, the Rush-Bagot Treaty provided for disarmament of the Great Lakes and Lake Champlain. *The New York Times*, "To Dedicate Perry Shaft: American and Canadian Groups Will Attend Ceremony Today," July 31, 1931; *The New York Times*, "Dedicate Memorial to Perry's Victory: Americans and Canadians Unite in Ceremony at 352-Foot Shaft in Lake Erie," August 1, 1931.

<sup>8</sup> *The New York Times*, "Rotarians To Dedicate Peace Park on Border: Ceremony For the Canadian-American Project Will Be Held in Montana June 18," June 11, 1932.

<sup>9</sup> For more information on the history of Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park and its component national parks see Randy Tanner, et al., "The Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park: Conservation amid Border Security," in *Peace Parks: Conservation and Conflict Resolution*, ed. Saleem H. Ali (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2007) and Catriona Mortimer-Sandilands, "The Geology Recognizes No Boundaries': Shifting Borders in Waterton Lakes National Park," in *The Borderlands of the American and Canadian Wests*, ed. Sterling Evans (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006); *The New York Times*, "Rotarians To Dedicate Peace Park on Border: Ceremony For the Canadian-American Project Will Be Held in Montana June 18," June 11, 1932; Tanner et al., "The Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park," 185; Sandilands, "The Geology Recognizes No Boundaries," 318.

<sup>10</sup> *The Los Angeles Times*, "Canada Proposes Park as Peace Monument," April 20, 1932; *The New York Times*, "Garden to Be Sown As Symbol of Peace: Canadians and Americans Will Renew Pledges of Amity at Ceremony Tomorrow," July 13, 1932.

<sup>11</sup> Clark, *Sam Hill's Peace Arch*, 69; Samuel Hill quoted in *Hartford Courant*, "U.S.-Canada Peace Portal Dedicated," September 7, 1921.

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- <sup>12</sup> *The New York Times*, "Dawes Criticizes Failure of Geneva Naval Parley in Peace Bridge Speech: Address Causes Stir," August 8, 1927.
- <sup>13</sup> Reginald Horsman, *Race and Manifest Destiny: The Origins of American Racial Anglo-Saxonism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981).
- <sup>14</sup> Anna Maria Martellone, "In the Name of Anglo-Saxondom, For Empire and For Democracy: The Anglo-American Discourse, 1880-1920," in *Reflections on American Exceptionalism*, ed. David K. Adams and Cornelis A. van Minnen (Staffordshire: Keele University Press, 1994), 83-92.
- <sup>15</sup> Daniel J. Tichenor, *Dividing Lines: The Politics of Immigration Control in America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 143; Daniela Rossini, "Isolationism and Internationalism in Perspective: Myths and Reality in American Foreign Policy," in *From Theodore Roosevelt to FDR: Internationalism and Isolationism in American Foreign Policy*, ed. Daniela Rossini (Staffordshire: Keele University Press, 1995), 13; Martellone, "In the Name of Anglo-Saxondom," 92.
- <sup>16</sup> *Washington Post*, "President Praises Portal of Peace," September 4, 1921.
- <sup>17</sup> *Los Angeles Times*, "Where Peace Endures," June 26, 1932.
- <sup>18</sup> *New York Times*, "Dawes," August 8, 1927; *The Observer (London)*, "On the Bridge: A Symbol and A Contrast," August 7, 1927.
- <sup>19</sup> *New York Times*, "Dedicate Memorial to Perry's Victory," August 1, 1931.
- <sup>20</sup> *New York Times*, "Dedicate Memorial," August 1, 1931; *New York Times*, "Dawes," August 8, 1927.
- <sup>21</sup> *New York Times*, "Peace Bridge Radio Reaches Millions," August 8, 1927.
- <sup>22</sup> Clark, *Sam Hill's Peace Arch*, 63, 393; *Washington Post*, "Monument to Long Peace," September 6, 1921;
- <sup>23</sup> Clark, *Sam Hill's Peace Arch*, 388-390.
- <sup>24</sup> *New York Times*, "Dawes," August 8, 1927.
- <sup>25</sup> Clark, *Sam Hill's Peace Arch*, 69; *Washington Post*, "Monument to Long Peace," September 6, 1921.
- <sup>26</sup> Tanner et al., "The Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park," 185; Evans, *The Borderlands*, 309.
- <sup>27</sup> Tichenor, *Dividing Lines*, 170.
- <sup>28</sup> Belinda Sifford and Charles Chester, "Bridging Conservation across *La Frontera*: An Unfinished Agenda for Peace Parks along the US-Mexico Divide," in *Peace Parks: Conservation and Conflict Resolution*, ed. Saleem H. Ali (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2007), 206-207.
- <sup>29</sup> "Peace Arch Park," website of United States Canada Peace Anniversary Association, available at <http://www.peacearchpark.org/projects.htm>. (accessed November 1, 2010).
- <sup>30</sup> "Untitled" Peace Tower, 1983, International Peace Garden, available at <http://www.peacegarden.com/allpdf/peace%20tower%20info.pdf> (accessed November 1, 2010); Evans, *The Borderlands*, 309.
- <sup>31</sup> National Film Board of Canada, *Between Friends/Entre Amis* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1976).
- <sup>32</sup> Gregor Turk, "The 49th Parallel Project," available at <http://www.gregorturk.com/49thparallelproject.htm>, (accessed September 28, 2010).
- <sup>33</sup> Dominique Bregent-Heald, "The Tourism of Titillation: Film and Cross-Border Tourism in Niagara Falls and Tijuana," *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association*, no. 17 (2006): 200.