



*Western Edition*  
 "Memorializing the West: Prologue"  
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BILL DEVERELL (HOST): Across the American West, there are plaques, statues and sites that single out important spaces to remember. But what's worth remembering? And how should we remember?

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DEVERELL: Hi, I'm Bill Deverell, professor of history at the University of Southern California and director of the Huntington-USC Institute on California and the West. Join us for *Western Edition*, Season Three: "Memorializing the West". Ranging widely across the region, this season encounters some surprises about what's remembered on western landscapes and in western cities.

JASON HANSON: We all woke up to the news just like everyone else, that the monument had been toppled. And I think for some people, it was confusing at first because it was a monument to a Union soldier. This wasn't one of those Confederate monuments.

DEVERELL: "Memorializing the West" has six episodes. We will move from a proposed site of indigenous incarceration on Catalina Island to the site of a Civil War-era duel in Daly City, CA; a site of Mormon settlement in Jackson, Wyoming and on to an important LGBT archive in Los Angeles; and to the sites of massacres and civil rights activism in Denver and San Antonio. We're interested in asking, why is this or that monument there? What are we commemorating?

What's the deeper historical context? For instance, why would federal officials think that imprisoning Native Americans on an island made for good Indian policy in the 1860s?

WILLIAM BAUER: I think it's part and parcel of the general policies of the 19th century of confining Indigenous peoples, finding ways to surveil them and attempt to transform their lives. And I would think that a place like Catalina Island would seem to them to be the ideal place to do that practice.

DEVERELL: Who put that plaque there? Who decided that a statue needed to be fixed on a plinth in that space or on that street corner? Do community members, people who walk by or those who make an effort to come, find these places and the words written about them meaningful? And what of western spaces of community gathering? Who could go, and where, and what did those restricted spaces come to mean for the people who used them or for their descendants wondering about family histories?

DELANEY BYROM: Originally, it was the location for the Majestic Theatre. Then it got its own location and became the State Theatre, which was open from 1929 to about 1960. I did learn from my grandma who actually went there. Then, she told me that it was segregated and that although she's Mexican-American should go in the front; African Americans had to go through the back and they would have to sit on the very top.

PAMELA WALKER: There is a democratization of what this allows for people who call San Antonio home, call these communities theirs, but don't see themselves represented in the landscape; that they have the power and the opportunity to say, "There is a story here. My grandmother owned this business, or my grandmother and grandfather owned this dry cleaner."

DEVERELL: And what of those sites that we now think are insisting that we remember the wrong things or moments? Not that forgetting is a good thing, but remembering differently?

DAVID BLIGHT: I would really want to help people understand just why these would be fighting words- worse than- these are killing words. Being associated with a famous black abolitionist was enough to get a challenge to a duel.

DEVERELL: Public space and history feel like they go together now more than at any other time we can remember. People once made decisions in their present about the past. Those people are now in the past. Is our history the same as theirs? How should we think of them and the choices they made?

DARRAH PEREZ: One of the big things that I do in my line of work here in my community is I shed light on some of the lost spirits that need that guidance. Without shining light and having forgiveness, because forgiveness is one big thing to help us get to, as natives call it, the happy hunting grounds. And to get to that other side, our heaven, you have to have that forgiveness.

SARAH KEYES: Well, we're standing in front of a rock on top of a rock. But the important thing about this monument is the plaque that's facing us. It was erected in September 1948 to commemorate what the Daughters of the Utah Pioneers saw as the founding, the beginning of this place. And this beginning of this place is Jackson Hole.

DEVERELL: Listen for *Western Edition*, Season Three: "Memorializing the West" launching May 2nd, 2023. Find us on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, Stitcher, or wherever you find podcasts.

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