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Abraham Lincoln, the United States, and Mexico: The Implications of Memory in a Continental History

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**Abraham Lincoln, the United States, and Mexico:
The Implications of Memory in a Continental History**

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History

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May 2020

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Over the past nine months, I've had countless people ask me why I chose to write a thesis. My answer to this question was some version of, "Oh, I don't know, I had a topic I wanted to write about, and it seems kind of fun!" The answer I will tell people from here on out is, "I wanted to challenge myself. I wanted to do something beyond another class. I wanted to see what it would be like to go through this entire process, and come out alive on the other side."

That may be a bit dramatic, but with the year we all have had, it seems, now, a perfectly reasonable response. I began this project in September 2019, not knowing if it would move beyond the stage of a one-semester independent study. With the goal of summiting Mount Kilimanjaro over JanPlan, writing a year-long honors thesis seemed like a bit of a stretch.

My JanPlan abroad came and went without incident. What came next was unexpected, and really, unprecedented. On March 12, 2020, I, along with the rest of the Colby community, learned that the remainder of our semester would be completed remotely due to COVID-19. Four days later, I moved back home to Pennsylvania and had to adjust my entire mindset-- academically, socially, physically, and mentally.

I could not have made it, here, on the other side, without the enduring support of my advisor, Danae Jacobson. She helped me figure out the ways I work best, provided fascinating insights, and an inspiring perspective. Not only that, but she has been cheering me on from day one. Even now, from over 500 miles away, she is rooting for me. I am eternally grateful for the kindness and support Danae has offered me throughout this entire process. She has shown me that I am entirely capable, and encouraged the development of my own strength and determination. Without her guidance and love, this thesis would not have been possible.

The initial encouragement of my academic advisor, Arnout van der Meer, is what got this project off the ground. He believed in me, even when I did not believe in myself. His inexplicable ability to do all things asked of him inspires me on a daily basis. I cannot thank him enough for fostering my academic curiosity and simultaneous desire to explore the world.

I also owe the completion of this thesis to the Colby History Department, which introduced me to an incredible group of women: Alyssa Chesney, Lizzy Holland, and Maggie White. Without you all, and our collective love of charcuterie boards, I would not have had such an enjoyable experience doing this project. And to Lizzy, thank you for your endless support and your willingness to laugh and/or cry with me. I already miss Foss lunches, pep talks, and discussions about how much work we still have to do.

To my parents, Mark and Heidi Ginn, I owe you big time. I am certain that wherever life takes me, I will always hear your voices saying, "good thing you're a tough girl." Don't worry, I'll continue to roll my eyes in response, even if you can't see it.

And finally, to all of the people who had to go on this journey with me, even though they didn't ask for it in the slightest: my fellow residents of Dana 145--Caitie O'Sullivan, Ellie Parker, Kate Burke, and Lydia Fanning--as well as Aliza Anderson, Aria Nicoletti, Cara Moynihan, Marta Torelli, Molly Smith, Rosie Kilcoyne, and Talia Seltzer, I am forever grateful to you. You encouraged me, and tolerated me, while I worked through successes and setbacks. This, whether you like it or not, is for you.

KEY FIGURES

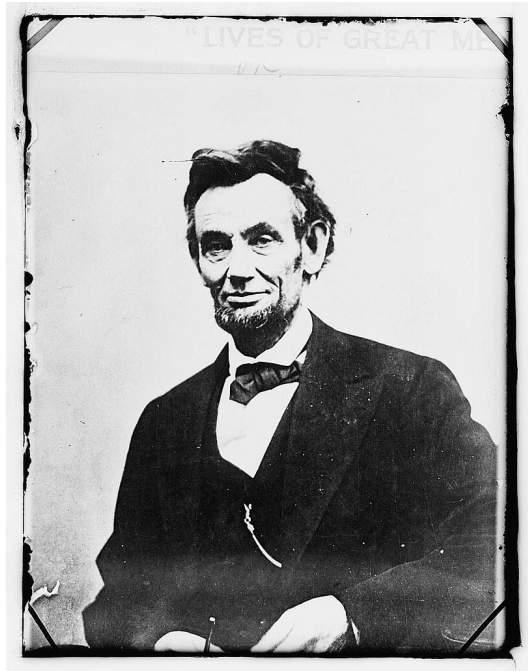


Fig. 1: Abraham Lincoln¹



Fig. 2: Ulysses S. Grant²

¹ Alexander Gardner, *Lincoln*, 1865, photograph, <https://lccn.loc.gov/2016828285>.

² *Ulysses S. Grant*, 1879, chromolithograph print, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2018697319/>.



Fig. 3: Matias Romero³



Fig. 4: Plácido Vega⁴

³ *Matías Romero, Special Mexican Envoy to US, Carte de visite, 1863, photograph, public domain, <https://www.lincolncottage.org/a-most-unlikely-friendship-abraham-lincoln-and-matias-romero/>.*

⁴ *Plácido Vega, 1950, reproduced photograph, <http://www.mEDIATECA.INAH.GOB.MX/repositorio/islandora/object/fotografia%3A446804>.*

INTRODUCTION

Mexico is home to four statues of former United States President Abraham Lincoln. The statues reside in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico City, Tijuana, and Guadalajara (see fig. 5).⁵ Throughout the U.S., these statues of Lincoln that exist just below our southern border are relatively unknown. As a student of U.S. history, I had not learned that former President Lincoln had anything to do with Mexico, beyond his stance on the Mexican-American War in the 1840s and the issuing of his Spot Resolutions. Upon learning about the existence of these four distinct statues, it immediately raised several big questions: Why are these statues in Mexico? What could they possibly be memorializing? Why would people in Mexico want to remember a former President of the United States? These queries helped to guide my initial exploration of the Civil War Era in a global context, and it allowed me to narrow my focus onto the relationship between the United States and Mexico during that period of time.



Fig 5: Locations of Abraham Lincoln Statues in Mexico⁶

⁵ Michael Hogan, *Abraham Lincoln and Mexico* (San Diego, CA: Egret Books, 2016).

⁶ Map created by the author on ArcGIS StoryMaps, 2020.

In just about any United States history course on the American Civil War that is offered at any academic level, it is extremely unlikely that Mexico, as a nation and as a people, would be mentioned. Some historians see no issue with this, and up until Spring of 2018, I, as a student of United States history, did not either. Mexico was seemingly irrelevant during the most divisive era in U.S. history.

During my sophomore year at Colby, I took a course titled *The U.S. in Latin America*, in the 2018 Spring Semester. Throughout this course, Professor Fallaw helped me to understand the ways in which I could connect my historical interests with a subject area that was previously so unfamiliar to me. This course challenged me to examine domestic events in a global context, and to not assume history is the same as fact. Facts imply the concept of a singular truth, while history, to me, is more about perspective and understanding. When writing about history, I analyze documents from and sources about an event, which allows me to tell a history based on my own interpretation of these sources. Professor Fallaw's course introduced me to the relationship between the United States and Mexico during the Civil War Era; it served as one exception to the traditional study of U.S. history, which tends to focus on events in a domestic, rather than global perspective.

Up until this point, everything I had learned about the 1860s in the United States focused on the ending of slavery, the restoration of the Union, and one of our nation's greatest presidents, Abraham Lincoln. I was curious to further investigate the relationship between the United States and Mexico during the Civil War Era, especially in light of the knowledge about the four statues of former President Lincoln that exist in Mexico.

I discovered key players on both sides of the border. President Lincoln (see fig. 1), Secretary of State William Seward, Union General Ulysses S. Grant (see fig. 2), Mexican Liberal President Benito Juárez, Mexican envoy to the United States, Matías Romero (see fig. 3), and Mexican General Plácido Vega (see fig. 4). I was certainly familiar with the U.S. political and military leaders, but in a domestic context. Juárez and Romero were brand new to my understanding of events in this era. I investigated primary sources such as Lincoln's speeches and letters of Matías Romero. Through these, as well as primary sources that identified links between the United States and Mexico, I realized how much evidence existed that could be used to support the connections between the U.S. and Mexico during the Civil War.

Over the Summer of 2019, I considered the possibility of pursuing an honors thesis within the history department. I came back to the work I did during my sophomore year, and I realized that so much of the U.S./Mexico relationship during this time period was still out there for me to explore. During some preliminary work for the project proposal in the Fall of 2019, I revisited some of my old sources, like Kevin Peraino's work, *Lincoln in the World*, and began to investigate new ones, such as the Andre Fleche's, *The Revolution of 1861: The American Civil War in the Age of Nationalist Conflict*.⁷ I researched in U.S. newspapers and archives, which provided evidence that former President Lincoln was memorialized with statues, parks, and street names in Mexico. These collections of documents showed photos of crowds gathered to see the unveiling of statues and had transcripts of the speeches presented at the dedication ceremonies. I was simultaneously enrolled in an anthropology course focusing on memory, so these events instantly caught my attention. This course and further study of the politics of memory provided

⁷ Kevin Peraino, *Lincoln in the World* (New York, NY: Crown Publishers, 2013); Andre Fleche, *The Revolution of 1861: The American Civil War in the Age of Nationalist Conflict* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2014).

immense insight into the realm of memorialization and history. It provoked me to more deeply investigate the context surrounding the creation of the statues, not just in terms of the United States and Mexico, but in relation to the global historical context of the 1960s. The creation and placement of statues, as I had come to understand through the course literature and class discussions, had incredible political and social implications, suggesting to me that these statues would be an invaluable addition to my work.

This project began as a way to call attention to President Lincoln's involvement in Mexico during the American Civil War Era that went beyond his stance on the Mexican-American War. I was stunned at how historians like Michael Hogan proclaimed these accomplishments of Lincoln in Mexico, and yet they were seemingly absent from the typical Lincoln legacy story. I began this work with the ultimate goal of furthering the memory of Abraham Lincoln as an international figure as one that should be firmly entrenched in U.S. historical discourse. He was already well-known for his domestic accomplishments, including the preservation of the Union through the victory in the Civil War and issuing the Emancipation Proclamation to free enslaved peoples. Now, I thought, I could contribute to preexisting scholarship that would add to Lincoln's already impressive resume by including international accomplishments as well.

Throughout this process, I learned that projects like this one grow and evolve based on new findings, shifting positions, and deeper research. After a few months of working on the idea that Lincoln was a deeply influential figure in Mexico, I uncovered sources like a book of translated correspondence to and from Matías Romero, which suggested that Lincoln might not have actually accomplished as much as was being attributed to him. As the Mexican envoy to the

United States, Romero spent the majority of his time located in Washington, D.C. He used his political position to connect with U.S. political and social leaders, in hopes of encouraging the United States to support the Liberal faction in Mexico in their fight against Conservative Mexicans and French interventionists, in order to preserve the democratic form of government. As I spent more time understanding things from Romero's perspective, I came to see that he did not feel Lincoln was very helpful in supporting Mexico's struggles. As I will explain in the work that follows, the nuanced relationships and partnerships that existed between various U.S. and Mexican military, political, and social leaders, played a significant role in the interactions between the two neighboring nations.

Through my archival research at the Bancroft Library at the University of California, Berkeley, I concluded that the political and military interactions between the United States and Mexico were not happening just on the East coast, but this rallying of political and moral support was happening in the West as well. This discovery led to the development of an entirely new aspect of my research. I had been focusing on the Union government in D.C. and the ways in which the federal government interacted with Romero and other Liberal Mexican officials. However, the story on the West coast became directly connected to the politics out East, and drove me to investigate the linkage between the two sides of the United States. I explored how they reconciled the differing viewpoints on supporting Mexico throughout their struggles as a nation, while the U.S. was also dealing with their own domestic issues.

Over the course of the Spring of 2020, I revisited the work I began as far back as 2018. I realized the ways in which my own study of history has grown and changed, just as the subject of this project has transformed over the course of the year. I have come to understand the arc of a

thesis project. It is something to be continually revised. I have been told many times throughout this process that the changes in my project are natural, that it would be more concerning if I only found exactly what I thought I would at the start. This was really encouraging, because it did not show that my initial ideas were “wrong,” just that the scope of my project grew deeper and shifted in focus through continual research and analysis.

As these changes happened, my project’s goals also developed beyond what I initially hoped to argue and support. As I mentioned, I began this work with the intent of showcasing how the lack of a global historical view was problematic for the understanding of President Lincoln’s domestic and international impact. What this project has since become still focuses on the need for history that defines itself in relation to other occurrences around the world, but it now includes an explanation for the extensive memorialization of Abraham Lincoln, which people of both the past and present constructed over the course of time. Additionally, I discuss several key players, General Ulysses S. Grant and Matías Romero, who, I argue, have not received the recognition that they deserve for their significant roles in gathering U.S. support for the Liberals in Mexico.

This thesis explores the relationship between the United States and Mexico through the lens of collective memory of Abraham Lincoln. The theoretical framework that guided my exploration is the study of memory and the ways memory changes over time. I examine the ways in which history is created over and over again through constant reinterpretation and exploitation. I critique previous methods of studying the Civil War Era in a purely domestic context, and I suggest new perspectives on the motivations behind the United States’ intense

memorialization of its sixteenth president. The work that follows is divided into four distinct chapters, each with a specific time period and historical focus.

Chapter One focuses on the historical context surrounding relations between the United States and Mexico. This begins with a discussion of the Mexican-American War and the lead-up to the Civil War in the United States and the French intervention in Mexico. This works to establish a basis for relations between the two nations in the 1860s, when the Union in the U.S. and the Liberals in Mexico recognized the similarities in their fights for the preservation and restoration of democracy. Additionally, I introduce the concept of “continental solidarity” as a guiding principle throughout my work.⁸

In Chapter Two, I focus on the period from 1848 through 1864. I delve deeper into the historical context of Mexico, in order to provide a clear reason for the division of the Liberal and Conservative factions, which then opened an opportunity for France to initiate its intervention. I also introduce Matías Romero and begin to explore his lobbying work in Washington, D.C. as an invaluable asset to the Liberal cause in Mexico. Chapter Three examines events from 1865 to 1887. This section functions to further the understanding of Romero’s significance, as well as introduce other key figures. This includes the discussion of Union General Ulysses S. Grant, his support for the Liberals in Mexico, and the ways in which he used his status to create a system of aid for the Liberals. Chapters Two and Three provide evidence of the many individuals and groups, in both the U.S. and Mexico, that worked to garner aid and support of the Liberals from within the United States.

⁸ Patrick Kelly, "The Lost Continent of Abraham Lincoln," *The Journal of the Civil War Era* 9, no. 2 (June 2019): 223-248, doi:10.1353/cwe.2019.0027.

Chapter Four spans the largest amount of time, taking us from 1865 to primarily the 1960s, but also into the present day. In this chapter, I discuss the creation and perpetuation of memory and memorialization. Through various examples, I illustrate the ways in which Abraham Lincoln is remembered in the United States and in Mexico. I also explore the reasons why he is so valued, particularly through his four statues in Mexico, if he did not actually play as significant a role as it first seemed. I use the evidence provided, particularly through Chapters 2 and 3, to explain what the United States did to aid Mexico, and how much of this support was not encouraged or initiated by Lincoln, in order to highlight the problems and complexities of collective and institutionalized memory. Through these two forms of memory, people attributed an immense amount of success to Abraham Lincoln, some of which is arguably deserved, while some is not. Chapter Four identifies the reasons for the misattributions of success to Lincoln, rather than others, and explains how memorials to him and his accomplishments are used and interpreted in various ways. It takes an in-depth look at the historical context of the Cold War Era and the ways that this political climate influenced the memorialization of Lincoln as it occurred in the second half of the 20th century.

These four chapters have constantly been reshaped as new research and ideas shifted my own questions, beliefs, and understandings. This thesis offers a cohesive and comprehensive argument that reflects my significant research within primary and secondary sources in libraries and an archive. However, one of my biggest limitations of this project is my inability to read, speak, or understand the Spanish language. I was able to find a significant number of Spanish sources in translation, but my lack of this skill certainly did limit the scope of my sources directly from Mexico.

This project has brought both joy and anxiety, struggles and successes. It has been one of the most challenging, but ultimately rewarding, processes I have experienced within the realm of academia. Professors, archivists, librarians, and many of my fellow students have pushed me to ensure that this project reaches its full potential in terms of scope, detail, accuracy, and knowledge. Its many goals become clearer with each chapter, culminating in a work that will, hopefully, encourage readers to consider implications of both global history and memory, particularly as it relates to the United States, Mexico, and Abraham Lincoln.

CHAPTER ONE

*North American Conflicts of the 1860s:
The Fight for the Preservation of Democracy*

Historians trace the origins of “American Exceptionalism” back to remarks made before the United States of America was even an independent nation. The idea articulated by John Winthrop in 1630 that, “We shall be a city upon a hill. The eyes of all people are upon us,” marks the first distinction of the land that would become the United States, which later garnered international attention.⁹ While the definition of “American Exceptionalism” shifts throughout history based on the context of the time, it represents the core American social and political values of democracy and liberty, which many other nations admire. These ideas provide citizens with a voice in how they are governed and a strong sense of autonomy in their everyday lives. In the context of this time, though, democracy focused on the rights and freedoms as they pertained to white, male citizens of the United States. Some believers in this idea of exceptionalism use the term to claim the superiority of the United States. Exaggerations like this have a negative impact on the study and writing of history, as the belief in superiority interferes with understanding events in an unbiased and transnational way. Some scholars, but primarily popular histories, take an “exceptionalist” approach when writing about the United States and its past. This version of history paints the United States as the central actor in all events, as one that is far superior to other nations, and one that can do no wrong. Those who choose to view events through the lens of American Exceptionalism, as popular history and discourse tends to, avoids acknowledging the relevance and significance of the presence of other nations.

While the United States Civil War is one of the most well-studied and researched events in the nation’s history, it is very rarely done so in a global context. In the past decades scholars have begun to consider the Civil War as an international event that had broader global roots, as

⁹ Donald Pease, "American Exceptionalism," *Oxford Bibliographies*, last modified June 27, 2018, <https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199827251/obo-9780199827251-0176.xml#obo-9780199827251-0176-div2-0001>.

well as a far reaching impact following the conclusion of the conflict. Despite these shifts, the Civil War is still perceived, in common discourse, to be a purely domestic event, and one that further perpetuates US superiority through the concept of American Exceptionalism. The field of Atlantic History, which became prominent in the 1980s, shifted the historical lens with which scholars examine past events. Through this method of analysis, historians focus on the continents of the Atlantic Ocean, North and South America, Europe, and Africa, and the extent to which their connections and interactions altered the relationships of these places throughout history. This concept works against the existence of national boundaries, and focuses instead on regional relations.¹⁰ Scholars have also gravitated toward transnational and global interpretations of history. In this context, historians work to view events through the lens of international connection and plurality, as opposed to writing a purely individualized history. These relatively new fields of study encourage scholars to revisit histories and consider sequences of events within a new context- one that represents a broader worldview. With the introduction of a global historical lens, the narrative of one specific event could no longer be defined on its own; occurrences and ideas are now defined in relation to others, by including comparative aspects and presenting previously unconsidered historical links.

When we situate the United States Civil War Era within a broader continental context, we can see that the events in the United States and Mexico were the culmination of intense ideological disagreement, which resulted in war on both sides of the Rio Grande river. I argue that using the North American continent as a framework allows us to draw connections between the United States and Mexico that are not traditionally considered. The linkage between these

¹⁰ Pease, "American Exceptionalism."

two conflicts emphasizes the moral and diplomatic impacts of two neighboring nations that fought simultaneously to preserve the socio-political system of democracy, which protected the powers of white men.¹¹ Additionally, we will ultimately be able to see the ways in which the concept of continental solidarity unified the Union in the United States with the Liberals in Mexico.

Among one of the primary examples of a domestic issue with broader continental roots is the origin of the conflict between the North and South in the United States. These issues arose in the 1840s with Texas' statehood status, as the admission of Texas to the Union would shift the representative balance between free and slave states, in favor of those that allowed slavery. Citizens of Texas believed that they declared their independence from the nation of Mexico in 1836, but Mexico had not recognized this statement. When Texas sought to join the United States, Mexico stated that if the U.S. annexed Texas, it would be considered as an act of war against Mexico.¹² In addition to the many Mexicans infuriated by the situation, many U.S. citizens who supported the anti-slavery and anti-expansionist movements were angered by the possibility of Texas joining the Union, especially if it did so as a slave state. Texas would upset the balance of free and slave states in terms of Congressional representation, which would give slaveholding states an advantage in government, likely permitting further protections for the institution of slavery. When the U.S., led by President James Polk, annexed Texas, they declared the US/Mexico border to be at the Rio Grande, rather than the Rio Nueces, which all existing

¹¹ In the 19th century in the United States, democracy meant rights and freedoms for white men. Women and people of color were intentionally excluded from this narrative, as the aspects of government that made it a democracy (voting, citizenship) were not open to them. The use of the terms democracy and republican government in this thesis, in the context of the 1860s, refers to the power and position of the white men in the United States. When these terms are used in reference to Mexico, they represent the freedoms and liberties that were available to select individuals as written in their national Constitution, which will be explained later in this work.

¹² Hogan, *Abraham Lincoln*, 28.

maps showed the boundary to be.¹³ Here, we begin to see how the U.S. Civil War is actually deeply rooted in a continental territorial conflict between the United States and Mexico.

The clash that followed, the Mexican-American War, was instigated by Polk, as a result of his shared belief, among many U.S. Americans, in Manifest Destiny. This concept centers around the idea that the United States was “destined” to continue to expand its territory, regardless of previous claims to the land, because of the stability, leadership, and morality that US influence would bring to those they conquered. The belief in Manifest Destiny also invoked the idea of the “civilizing mission,” in which whites from the United States were the superior race, and they were tasked with the duty of bettering other societies, which many in the U.S. viewed as lesser, due to differences in skin color, cultural practices, and lifestyle. This concept was not the only motive behind Manifest Destiny, as ideas surrounding the development of the U.S. West also had a great influence on westward expansion and exploitation.

Polk and his supporters attempted to justify his actions in Texas by claiming that Texans wanted to be aligned with the United States, and that Mexico was responsible for instigating the war between the two nations. Abraham Lincoln, an Illinois senator at the time, saw these actions as an intentional provocation of Mexico with the intent of furthering the expansion of slavery.¹⁴ When Lincoln, a member of the minority of lawmakers who spoke out against President Polk’s declaration of war on Mexico on moral grounds, announced his Spot Resolutions, he became well-known as an anti-expansionist and as a supporter of Mexico’s rights.¹⁵ While Lincoln’s Spot Resolutions, aimed at proving Polk lied about who initiated conflict and where it occurred, failed

¹³ Hogan, *Abraham Lincoln*, 28.

¹⁴ Hogan, *Abraham Lincoln*, 51.

¹⁵ Hogan, *Abraham Lincoln*, 73.

at the time, it proved important and influential for Lincoln's career just a few years down the road.

The Spot Resolutions announced by Lincoln emphasized his commitment to morality above political recognition. His career suffered from his vocal dissent against President Polk, and he was not reelected to another term in Congress following these events. However, he confirmed, in a letter to his Illinois law partner, William Herndon, that he chose to take a stand based on what he believed was right, as opposed to what would allow him to win reelection.¹⁶ As historians know, with the benefit of hindsight, Lincoln's stand may have lost him the Congressional seat, but it certainly did not take his entire political career, like many of his advisors at the time thought it had.

Reinvigorated by the passage of Stephen Douglas' Kansas-Nebraska Act in 1854, Lincoln returned to fighting on the political stage for moral reasons. Infuriated by this Act and its facilitation of expanding slavery's boundaries, Lincoln moved from a member of the declining Whig party to become a member of the Republican party in 1856, so that he would have to best chance to fight for what he believed in.¹⁷ This clash of ideology between newly Republican Abraham Lincoln and Democrat Stephen Douglas was just the beginning for these two, as they became the presidential nominees for their respective political parties in preparation for the Election of 1860. The Lincoln-Douglas debates, which began in 1858, provided a backdrop for the sharp contrast in beliefs between the two men.¹⁸ Throughout the course of the debates, Lincoln and Douglas discussed a variety of topics, including their positions on slavery and

¹⁶ Hogan, *Abraham Lincoln*, 86.

¹⁷ Robert May, *Slavery, Race, and Conquest in the Tropics* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 108-109.

¹⁸ May, *Slavery, Race*, 147.

territorial expansion. Lincoln stated that he only wanted “honest acquisition,” which suggested that he was unlikely to target neighboring North American nations.¹⁹ Douglas, a clear supporter of Manifest Destiny, explained his position of expansion would allow him to annex territory, because that was simply what the United States was destined to do with its immense power and superiority. On multiple occasions, Douglas explicitly referred to other nations as weaker, as a result of the racial composition and mixing that occurred in countries like Mexico.²⁰ Due to Lincoln’s immense support from the U.S. North, Lincoln ultimately won the 1860 presidential race, over Douglas and the other nominees.

When the Southern states chose to secede from the Union following the election of President Abraham Lincoln in 1860, we can analyze this action from a continental point of view, rather than a purely domestic one.²¹ At the time, many in the U.S. saw conflict as an inevitable result of these high tensions between the North and South. Lincoln attempted to reduce the strain between the two sides through his inaugural address, by assuring citizens that he would not bother slavery where it already existed, but he would certainly fight to keep it from expanding. Lincoln also called for unity among the states, with the hope that violence could be avoided.²² But, seven southern states seceded following Lincoln’s election to the White House.²³ In the eyes of Unionists in the U.S., the Confederate States of America showed clear disrespect for democracy by attempting to organize into a separate nation in order to preserve the institution of slavery, following the election of a president who did not fully represent their views. While this

¹⁹ May, *Slavery, Race*, 147.

²⁰ May, *Slavery, Race*, 147.

²¹ Hogan, *Abraham Lincoln*, 111.

²² Abraham Lincoln, "First Inaugural Address of Abraham Lincoln," speech presented in Washington, D.C., March 4, 1861, https://avalon.law.yale.edu/19th_century/lincoln1.asp.

²³ Hogan, *Abraham Lincoln*.

event in U.S. history is typically examined based on its impact on the division of the United States into North and South, it is crucial to acknowledge how the secession of southern states actually had broader continental implications, and contributed to the French decision to intervene in Mexico. With the U.S. occupied by their own domestic conflict, the French had an opportunity to insert themselves into Mexico, with little worry about an act of continental solidarity from the United States.

As in the United States, Mexico's multifaceted conflict stemmed from a variety of political, economic, and social factors, with the primary similarity between the two nations being the assault on democracy. Following Mexico's freedom from Spain in 1821, the newly sovereign nation experienced instability in social, political, and economic realms. Under Spanish control, Mexico predominantly focused on mining, but that system of productivity was physically destroyed during the fight for Mexican independence.²⁴ This collapse paved the way for the domination of the agricultural sector, however, Mexico lacked sufficient markets for their goods.²⁵ Farmers had to battle bad seasons with high prices and good seasons with low prices. The impact of these fluctuations hurt farmers and their families, whose farms already yielded a relatively low amount of crops, as compared to other successful agricultural societies.²⁶

The amount of land a family owned significantly impacted social status in Mexico, and it was incredibly difficult to purchase land, resulting in a lack of social mobility. Land available for purchase was extremely limited due to the dominance of the Church and of the hacienda style of land ownership. This format caused conflict over land because it allotted a smaller number of

²⁴ Richard Sinkin, *The Mexican Reform, 1855-1876: A Study in Liberal Nation-Building* (Austin, TX: Institute of Latin American Studies, 1979), 14.

²⁵ Sinkin, *The Mexican*, 14.

²⁶ Sinkin, *The Mexican*, 14.

people large amounts of land, rather than giving more people less land.²⁷ Declining land values compounded by the poor economic situation of many Mexicans led to bankruptcy and the inability to sustain land ownership or to purchase new land.²⁸ The Catholic Church was one group in Mexico that owned a great deal of property. While much of the land was in suburban and urban areas, they still profited greatly from others' usage of these possessions. Since land ownership influenced status, the possession of such a significant amount of land and other holdings provided the Catholic Church with an unparalleled amount of social and political power.

This grip on state power exempted the Church from overarching governmental authority. The Church and the military in Mexico worked together to suppress lower social classes in order to retain power.²⁹ The official removal of Spanish authority, which represented the highest level in the power structure, led to a shift in the organization of social groups. While many people of Spanish descent stayed in Mexico, their place as formal leaders no longer existed. This hierarchy established under Spanish rule was an explicitly racial structure, giving preference to those of Spanish origin. The white Spanish men occupied the highest positions, but were replaced by other whites who had migrated, or had ancestors who migrated from the Old World, known as creoles. This proportionally small group of people attempted to claim power in Mexico because of the belief that their heritage made them in some way superior to the mestizos. The mestizo population functioned as the intermediary between the creoles and the Indians, seen as the lowest ranking group in Mexico.³⁰ Due to these social inequalities, a discriminatory racial and

²⁷ Sinkin, *The Mexican*, 17.

²⁸ Sinkin, *The Mexican*, 16.

²⁹ Sinkin, *The Mexican*.

³⁰ Sinkin, *The Mexican*, 18-19.

ideological hierarchy developed under the Spanish, but continued on following Mexico's independence. Given the existence of this system, which furthered racial divides in Mexico, creating national unity was a challenge.

These problems, compounded by the massive territorial loss in the Mexican-American War, contributed to the Reform Movement, or *La Reforma*, which began in 1858 and lasted until 1860. The Reform pitted the Liberals, who tended to be from the younger generation, against the Conservatives, who tended to be older, and usually members of the Catholic Church. Through this movement, the Liberals, composed of many indigenous Mexicans, aimed to establish a place for themselves and other marginalized racial groups in society. These groups had been dismissed by the Conservatives and relegated to lower social standing because of the belief in a racial hierarchy that placed those of European descent at the top. This categorization based on race is deeply rooted in the culture established during the era of Spanish control of this territory. In 1857, a Constitutional Congress, made up of mostly liberal leaders, came together to compose a document with the goals of national unity, freedom, and the law.³¹ The Congress worked to establish a nation centered around equality, which would not permit anyone, especially members of the extremely powerful Catholic Church and military, to be above the law.³² Liberal leader Benito Juárez became the President of Mexico in 1858, due to regulations established by the Constitution of 1857, which confirmed the sequence of power following the end of a presidency. This title allowed him the power to fight against the Conservatives from a legitimate position.³³

While Juárez worked to get his new nation under control, he chose to suspend payments on foreign loans, which triggered a response from Britain, France, and Spain. Those three nations

³¹ Sinkin, *The Mexican*, 55.

³² Sinkin, *The Mexican*, 67-68.

³³ Sinkin, *The Mexican*.

decided to form a coalition that would enter Mexico by force to demand their loan payments. France, led by Napoleon III, had ulterior motives for this physical presence on the North American continent.³⁴ Recognizing that the United States was in the midst of its own domestic crisis, Napoleon saw the perfect opportunity to broaden French political influence by forcibly establishing a monarchy in Mexico. This entire scheme, known to Napoleon as his Grand Design for the Americas, led to further conflict between Mexico's Liberal and Conservative factions, with France throwing its support behind the Conservatives.³⁵ Already struggling for money and manpower, President Juárez had to fight to maintain Mexico's sovereignty, against not only domestic combatants, but French soldiers brought in from across the Atlantic.

The U.S. Civil War and instability in Mexico gave Napoleon an opportunity for intervention, which, I argue, binds these two major events to each other in a continental context. My project directly engages with the field of the globalized Civil War Era by articulating the ways in which the successes and failures of one event had major consequences for the other, and vice versa. The work that follows analyzes other works of global Civil War history and identifies successes of scholars, but also highlights gaps they created. I aim to establish a fuller picture of the United States Civil War Era as one with deeply rooted transnational implications, with a particular focus on the actions and events of France in Mexico.

When scholars first examined the continental connection between the Civil War and the intervention of the French in Mexico, it likely occurred due to the rising Civil Rights Movement in the United States, which caused scholars to reexamine history. These works create a basis for

³⁴ A.R. Tyrner-Tyrnauer, *Lincoln and the Emperors* (New York, NY: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1962), 45.

³⁵ Tyrner-Tyrnauer, *Lincoln and the Emperors*, 51-52.

my analysis of the Civil War in a global context, by providing initial links to the four major continents on the Atlantic Ocean- Europe, North and South America, and Africa.

In 1962, W.L. Morton, a Canadian historian, was one of the earliest to write about the connection of these two major events as an ideological struggle that would define the future of the North American continent.³⁶ In that same year, A.R. Tyrner-Tyrnauer published *Lincoln and the Emperors*, a book that focused mainly on the connections between Europe's failed rebellions prior to the Civil War and how these attempts at ideological change influenced the interactions of European nations in North America during the 1860s. Additionally, he suggested that the Civil War was the Union against not just the Confederacy, but also against Europe. He made this argument by explaining that both the Confederacy and the French were ideologically aligned in their fight against republican government in the Union. With his implicit linkage of the Civil War and the French intervention in Mexico, Tyrner-Tyrnauer suggests that the ideological struggles of these two events in North America are connected to the failed ideological changes attempted by European nations. The connection of these ideological problems across the Atlantic Ocean are linked through the Civil War in the United States, which is crucial to further understanding the ways in which the Civil War impacted the events of the 1860s in Mexico. While Tyrner-Tyrnauer asserts that Lincoln's policy focused on 'one war at a time', he concludes the book with a line about continental unity. The use of this term, without any qualifications or explanation, contradicts the singular way in which he describes Lincoln's foreign policy. I argue that the scholarly concept of continental unity, as it pertains to displays of

³⁶ Patrick Kelly, "The North American Crisis of the 1860s," *Journal of the Civil War Era* 2, no. 3 (September 2012): 338, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/26070248>. ; W. L. Morton, "British North America and a Continent in Dissolution, 1861-71," *History* 47, no. 160 (1962): 140, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24404810>.

unity among North American nations, developed over the past several decades, provides an enhanced understanding of the U.S. Civil War as a global conflict.

Tyrner-Tyrnauer introduced a global view of the United States Civil War by linking Europe and North America and by explaining that North American countries were fighting for similar political and social goals in approximately the same timeframe. However, he failed to articulate how Lincoln's policies reflected this sense of unity among North American nations. I use a transnational lens to examine President Lincoln's decisions, in order to emphasize that his policies were much more nuanced than the domestic focus that Tyrner-Tyrnauer's examination suggests. Lincoln's policy may have only permitted one military conflict at a time, but it implicitly permitted the use of diplomatic maneuvers to influence the situation of the French in Mexico. The term continental unity marks a starting point for the analysis of the transformation of the US Civil War from a purely domestic conflict, to one that is rooted in global interactions, and had significant implications for other nations around the world.

By 1979, Richard Sinkin suggested an ideology-based framework which stemmed from the concept of continental unity suggested by Tyrner-Tyrnauer. As the field of history began its shift toward Atlantic history, scholars examined events through a transnational lens. Sinkin furthered the analysis begun by other scholars in the 1960s through the establishment of an Old versus New World ideological framework. For the purposes of my project, I read Sinkin's work as continental by interchanging the terms; North America to reference the New World, and Europe to discuss the Old World. His work brings nationalism into the conversation when framing the two distinct ideologies separated by the Atlantic. The concept of nationalism works to establish a sense of community and pride in countries in both the Old World and the New

World, and it further encourages these nations to establish a firm ideology on which their nation is based.

North America and Europe developed distinctly different beliefs in regard to political and social structure, setting up a global community easily corrupted by conflict over differing points of view. Sinkin explains, “France and her allies...stood for monarchy, aristocracy, corporate society, and colonialism- in short, the past” and “...the entire new world...stood for democracy, progress, reform, and change- in short, the future.”³⁷ However, I call attention to the fact that Sinkin does not fully address the issue of the Confederacy, later named the Confederate States of America (CSA), which is geographically located in the New World, and does not strictly adhere to the framework of other North American nations. The ideological beliefs of the Confederacy and its leaders complicated Sinkin’s Old versus New World distinction, especially through their support of the institution of slavery. The Confederacy ideologically aligned themselves with the French in most aspects, aside from the institution of slavery.

Slavery was rejected by the Union and Europe, but many European nations accepted the succession of the southern states to spite the United States. The growing power and influence of the U.S. threatened to upset the global balance of power, in which European nations had consistently been at the top. The Confederacy did not aim to establish a monarchy, which existed in many European nations, but the CSA aligned themselves with the thinking of European nations as opposed to the Union. I assert that the shared goal of reducing the power and influence of the United States, now represented by the Union, brought the Confederacy and Europe together. By choosing to secede from the Union following the election of Lincoln, Confederate

³⁷ Sinkin, *The Mexican*, 160.

states and lawmakers made it clear that they had little regard for the United States' democratic process to determine leadership and laws.

Other scholars focused their work on the origins of these ideological differences and how majority opinions developed and emerged in different nations over time. Alfred and Kathryn Hanna argue that Abraham Lincoln became known in Latin America due to his stance on the Mexican-American War during his term in Congress in the 1840s. Michael Hogan's recent work supports their claims by establishing the context of the Mexican-American War as the foundation of Mexico's view of Abraham Lincoln and his moral and political values. The context of this contested, continental conflict formed the basis of US/Mexico relations during the Civil War, due to Abraham Lincoln's influence in both conflicts.³⁸ Hogan alludes to the idea that Lincoln's early display of respect for Latin America, through his attempt to defend Mexican sovereignty during the Mexican-American War, gave the Liberals hope that he would be able and willing to, again, fight for the rights and freedoms of Mexico when France decided to establish a monarchy there. I argue that Lincoln's Spot Resolutions established his reputation, from the perspective of Mexico, as a man of good moral character and one who would fight for republican government on the North American continent. These high expectations Mexico placed on Lincoln resulted in disappointment for Mexican political leaders, because Lincoln did not throw his full support behind the Liberal cause, as many in Mexico had hoped.

While Alfred and Kathryn Hanna, along with Michael Hogan, used the Mexican-American War as a starting point, others emphasize the importance of the Lincoln-Douglas debates as the time in which Lincoln's relationship with Latin America was

³⁸ Hogan, *Abraham Lincoln*.

established. These debates are significant because they required the two candidates to firmly establish their positions on a multitude of issues, especially the expansion of U.S. territory and of slavery. Robert May points to the debates as the origin of Lincoln's rising international status as a friend to Latin America. During the debates, Lincoln defined his position as one of anti-expansionism, which directly contrasted with the expansionist desires of his opponent, Stephen Douglas.³⁹ With the significant territorial loss fresh in the minds of Mexicans following the Mexican-American War, I point out that Mexicans were certainly more partial to Lincoln because they hoped he would continue to support them in their quest for sovereignty and freedom.

In the midst of these debates, Lincoln's name became synonymous with values of republican government. As evidenced by increased contact between Lincoln and Matías Romero, the Mexican envoy to the United States, the two nations were in constant communication regarding their respective situations.⁴⁰ By asking for Lincoln's support, it became clear that the Liberals admired Lincoln's values and the global power and influence he held as President of the United States. Mexican Liberals recognized the alliance between their goals for their country and the vision Lincoln had for the future of the United States. From the debate stage and into the White House, Lincoln represented a "beacon of liberty" for the Mexican Liberals to aspire to.⁴¹ May's work succeeds in identifying these connections, but does not label the links as ones that are continental. This lack of explicit delineation of continental solidarity allows my argument of unity between the U.S. and Mexico to fill in this gap. With the clear marking of continental

³⁹ May, *Slavery, Race*, 56.

⁴⁰ May, *Slavery, Race*, 235.

⁴¹ May, *Slavery, Race*, 238.

connections between these two North American nations, we begin to see how the events in both the U.S. and Mexico during this time are linked through ideology.

When analyzing Lincoln's interactions with Latin America as U.S. President, particularly in Mexico, it's important to consider the context of both the Mexican-American War and the Lincoln-Douglas debates. The implications of Lincoln's position in these two realms become significant during the French intervention in Mexico, because the Liberal Mexicans turn to Lincoln in the hopes that he will once again speak out in favor of their sovereignty. Following the establishment of this precedent, I assert that the Liberals expected Lincoln to act on their behalf during the French intervention. However, as the president of a nation attempting to fight its own domestic rebellion in the 1860s, when Mexico was simultaneously hoping for support, tense domestic circumstances did not permit Lincoln to take the same public stance as he did during his time in Congress. Lincoln was deeply concerned about the global implications if he were to intervene on behalf of Mexico: namely a transcontinental, anti-Unionist alliance between the Confederacy and France.⁴² As Hogan acknowledges, Lincoln and the Union had to be very strategic about its aid to the Liberal government in Mexico, because Lincoln and his advisors, particularly Secretary of State William Seward, did not want to anger the French. If the French felt that the Union was actively working against their attempted infiltration of Mexico, it was very likely that Napoleon III would offer either support to the Confederacy, or even worse, recognition of the Confederacy as an independent nation.⁴³ While the Lincoln administration did support the Liberals, they did so much more quietly and slowly than Mexico would have liked. I conclude that the choices made by Lincoln, Seward, and others, reflect a strategic, if restrained,

⁴² May, *Slavery, Race*, 241.

⁴³ Alfred Jackson Hanna and Kathryn Abbey Hanna, *Napoleon III and Mexico; American Triumph over Monarchy* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1971), 73.

diplomacy aimed at preserving both the Union, and ultimately restoring the United States, and republican government in Mexico.

One of the most recent articles detailing the ideology of various nations at this time explicitly states the impact of continental solidarity on the French intervention in Mexico and the United States Civil War. Patrick Kelly writes that the occurrence of these two events were entirely dependent on each other, and “inseparably connected.”⁴⁴ Kelly explains that the French may not have entered Mexico during the 1860s, if Napoleon III felt that the US was capable of stopping the intervention. Since the United States was preoccupied with the Civil War, it seemed as though France had the perfect window to enter the new world by force, without fear of repercussions or the enforcement of the Monroe Doctrine, a document that declared continental independence from outside influences.⁴⁵ The Monroe Doctrine stated that the United States would not tolerate any European attempts to influence or establish control over areas in the Americas.⁴⁶ In the eyes of the United States, the French contested this declaration, and proceeded to intervene on “their” continent. While the French did not technically violate a law, the United States felt deeply disrespected by the actions of France. However, Lincoln required his administration to focus on only “one war at a time,” so he did not immediately or directly address France’s clear contempt of U.S. statements. This lack of action by Lincoln and the United States made it relatively easy for France to establish roots in Mexico.

These two inextricably linked events had broader global implications for republican forms of government around the world. The outcomes of the Civil War and the French

⁴⁴ Kelly, "The North," 337.

⁴⁵ Kelly, "The Lost."

⁴⁶James Monroe, "Monroe Doctrine," address presented at Seventh Annual Message to Congress, Washington, D.C., December 2, 1823, https://avalon.law.yale.edu/19th_century/monroe.asp.

intervention would indicate republicanism's ability to either survive or fail, in this time of conflict. The results of these two key events would ultimately determine the future of republican government in other nations around the world. This is a tremendous amount of power for the United States and Mexico to possess, particularly because of the key difference between the two nations- the existence of slavery. The United States was not considered to be the ideal world democracy at the time because slavery still lived and thrived there, creating a distinct divide between the two North American countries. Nations around the globe, particularly governments in Latin America and the movement of the younger generation in France, admired the United States' goals of spreading republicanism, but saw slavery as problematic.⁴⁷ Even people within the U.S. saw slavery as an institution that was antithetical to the value system the United States aimed to project. Charles Sumner, a Massachusetts senator, wrote, "Looking at our cause from this distance I see its grandeur more than ever..Slavery seems more hateful; for I see now better than ever before how it degrades us in the family of nations and prevents our example from acting as it should...Liberty everywhere suffers through us."⁴⁸ Lincoln's anti-slavery stance, which eventually became clear through the Emancipation Proclamation, became significant for furthering the relationship between the Union and Mexican Liberals, as well as the broader global community. Kelly suggests that linking of the U.S. Civil War, the struggle of Mexico's Liberals against the French, and the abolitionist stance on slavery in the Union allowed for the concept of continental solidarity to develop among the United States, the Liberals, and other pro-republican governments around the world.

⁴⁷ Richard Carwardine and Jay Sexton, eds., *The Global Lincoln* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2011), 14.

⁴⁸ Andre Fleche, *The Revolution*, 35-36; Charles Sumner to Salmon P. Chase, September 18, 1857, in Palmer, *The Selected Letters of Charles Sumner*, 1:481; R.R. Palmer, *The Age of Democratic Revolution: A Political History of Europe and America, 1860-1800* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1964).

I utilize the authors previously discussed in order to provide a basis for the emergence and development of the concept of continental solidarity, as the Civil War evolved into an event studied on a global scale. As the term developed, so too, did many of the author's ideas regarding the origins of national ideology. From as far back as the Mexican-American War, scholars have traced the emergence of a linkage between Abraham Lincoln as a representative of republican ideals, and the political, social, and economic goals of the Mexican Liberals. The connections among North American nations highlight the significance of continental solidarity, as it allowed for the outcome of events in Mexico and the United States to shape the future and formation of other democratic governments, particularly those in Latin America, on a global scale.

The institution of slavery in the United States prevented the nation from being seen as a model democracy by all, so it is striking that President Lincoln, rather than Mexican Liberal leader Benito Juárez, a representative of a nation that had already outlawed slavery, became the clearest, most well-known, global representative of democratic values. Following his assassination by John Wilkes Booth on April 14, 1865, Lincoln became memorialized in the hearts and minds of citizens of the United States, but also in countless nations around the world. Mexico entered a state of mourning out of respect for Lincoln. This respectful and sorrowful response to Lincoln's death was just the beginning of the memorialization of Lincoln throughout Mexico. As of today, there are four statues of former President Lincoln that stand above four separate cities in Mexico.

The literature previously discussed explains why Lincoln became a symbol for democracy around the world, but none of the authors addressed the reasons why Lincoln became this figure, as opposed to Juárez, or any of the other political leaders, Mexican or American, who

more directly supported the Liberal cause. These scholars indicated that from the Mexican-American War up until his death, Lincoln represented the fight for freedom, particularly in reference to slavery in the U.S. and national sovereignty in Mexico, and the triumph of democracy and its associated values in both of these nations. After his murder, he became a martyr for these same values. His body and image came to symbolize a struggle against oppression and a fight against anti-democratic values. If these two nations, the U.S. Union and Mexican Liberals, were supposedly ideologically unified, what gave one nation's leader more superiority over the other? More Mexicans would likely be able to identify President Lincoln as a historical figure, than United States citizens would recognize President Juárez, but why is that so? Chronology of events as well as historical power are the major features that separate these two ideologically aligned groups, as Lincoln's domestic battle ended earlier than Juárez's, with the Civil War coming to a close in 1865.

Following his death, Lincoln's body and image came to hold a great deal of symbolism for people across North America, but also around the world. "Lincoln's name became synonymous with social progress all over the world," due to his morality and the victory of the Union in the Civil War.⁴⁹ The name in itself became abstracted from the actual person it was attached to, and nations around the world used it to refer to the trials and triumphs of Lincoln in the realms of democracy and societal progress, while he was still alive. Invoking the name 'Lincoln' indicates, in both the past and present, a broader system of meaning than just the physical, statuary representation of his body.

⁴⁹ Tyrner-Tyrnauer, *Lincoln and the Emperors*, 142.

While his name represented the life, work, and legacy of one man, his physical body came to stand as a material depiction of the values of democratic systems. Countless images of Abraham Lincoln exist in the everyday lives of people in the United States- the penny and the five dollar bill being the most common. The Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C., which was completed in 1922, is visited by millions of locals and tourists alike, and has been the site of countless protests and controversies in U.S. society. A prime example of this is the 1963 March on Washington, during which Martin Luther King, Jr. delivered his famed “I Have a Dream” speech while standing in front of the Lincoln Memorial.⁵⁰ Through these various forms of memorialization of Lincoln, he is often recalled in the minds of U.S. Americans, as well as others across the continent, and around the world. As an often recognized and recalled historical figure, people are constantly reminded of him and the values associated with his being through these various physical representations of his body.

Paul Connerton explains that memory of a past is preserved by representing a person/event/idea in both words and images.⁵¹ His work also focuses on the body as a “bearer of social and political meanings” and its ability to symbolize both concrete and abstract things.⁵² These concepts have a direct relationship to my work on the memorialization of Lincoln because the statues of him in Mexico use a physical representation of his body to symbolize past events he was involved in and the ideals which he held. His body is used all around the globe to represent liberty, democracy, and freedom, but Mexico is particularly intriguing due to the politics of the relationship between the United States and its southern neighbor.

⁵⁰ Stanford University, "March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom," The Martin Luther King, Jr. Research and Education Institute, accessed April 19, 2020, <https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/encyclopedia/march-washington-jobs-and-freedom>.

⁵¹ Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 72.

⁵² Connerton, *How Societies*, 104.

It is certainly unusual that Lincoln's body functions as a site of memory in four cities in the nation of Mexico, especially considering the ways in which the United States has treated Mexico in the past, and the way the current President of the United States has continuously attacked Mexico as a nation and as a people. These four statues are physical representations of the values that Mexico admired about Abraham Lincoln, and his body stands in these four cities to serve as a reminder of the sacrifices made to preserve and protect these values. James Edward Young explains that monuments serve to remind visitors and observers of "who died so a country might live."⁵³ Statues, especially those depicting human bodies, offer a particular form of memory by embodying heroism and a way to remember and acknowledge a loss.⁵⁴ These statues of Lincoln do just that; they work to display the values many in Mexico admired, and potentially still admire, about the former US President, and they memorialize his death as a tragic event.

The compilation of works discussed above establish the historical context of Abraham Lincoln in the Civil War and the French intervention in Mexico. I trace the development of the concept of continental solidarity within the context of the two major North American conflicts that occur in the 1860s, and outline the connections between the two events. This serves as the foundation for further understanding the realities of Lincoln's actions and illuminating the work of other, less traditionally remembered figures. A continental interpretation of Lincoln's choices, alongside a Mexican perspective on the conflict, and the many other key players in this era of history in the following two chapters will allow me to then explore the ways in which Lincoln is memorialized in Mexico following his death. These chapters will also suggest other supporters of the Liberals in Mexico, who had a more direct influence on the U.S. role in the Mexican conflict.

⁵³ James Young, *The Texture of Memory* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993), 2.

⁵⁴ Young, *The Texture*, 3.

These individuals are crucial to understanding what aid and support the United States was ultimately able to provide, and how it was able to do so. Several of these individuals accomplish things that end up being attributed to Lincoln's success and future reputation, even though much of the U.S. involvement in Mexico occurred after Lincoln's assassination. It would not be possible to explain memorialization without first understanding the context in which Lincoln lived and worked in relation to Mexico.

CHAPTER TWO

*Matías Romero, the Monroe Doctrine,
and the United States Government
1848-1864*

“Lincoln appeared to listen to all I said with pleasure. When I concluded, he explicitly, almost vehemently, insisted that he was very interested in the peace and prosperity of Mexico... While he is in power, he added, Mexico should be assured he will do her entire justice on all questions that are pending or that will occur between the two republics... Quite certainly, during his term of office he will be guided by the good sentiments he expressed to me because he is a simple, honourable man, and his words carried the stamp of sincerity...”
- Matías Romero, January 1861⁵⁵

“I had a long conversation with General [John C.] Fremont, candidate of the abolitionist faction for president of the United States in the coming election... I was pleased to find him very favorably disposed toward our cause. Bitterly censuring the administration’s policy in the Mexican question, he is disposed to adopt a bold attitude if he should be elected... he knew with complete certainty and could emphatically assure me that Lincoln would not be reelected.”
- Matías Romero, April, 1864⁵⁶

As understood from the above quotes, President Lincoln fell out of favor with Matías Romero, Mexican envoy to the United States, throughout the course of the early 1860s. Lincoln did not provide the political or financial support that Romero had hoped for, which led the Mexican diplomat to search elsewhere for political allies in the United States. In the work that follows, I aim to explain the context of Mexico’s conflicts while identifying key individuals who, at various moments and with interesting methods, worked to both help and hinder the fight for U.S. support of Mexico during their difficult time. While the previous chapter illuminated that many in Mexico revere Lincoln due to his perceived influence in Mexico’s domestic and international conflicts in the 1860s, this chapter serves to complicate that idea.

The purpose of this chapter is to highlight Mexico’s perspective of the United States’ role in their affairs, as well as the ways in which the United States government did, or did not, aid the Liberals in Mexico. I identify Matías Romero as the primary driving force behind the ways in which the United States and Mexico interact during this era of complicated domestic and foreign

⁵⁵ Matías Romero, *Mexican Lobby: Matías Romero in Washington, 1861-1867*, trans. Thomas David Schoonover and Ebba Wesener Schoonover (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1986), 2-3.

⁵⁶ Romero, *Mexican Lobby*, 39.

relations. Romero's social and political tactics function as a display of his own agency and his willingness to exert power and influence within the U.S. political community. He did not merely respond to the decisions of the United States government, he took clear, direct action, in order to help him accomplish his goal of finding support for the Mexican Liberals within the United States. Romero thought continentally- he aimed to help both U.S. and Mexican politicians understand that what happened with democracy in one nation in North America would have a direct impact on the other.

I will introduce figures in the U.S. government who worked with Mexican representative Matías Romero throughout the 1860s in various capacities. Some men fought for him, while others actively worked against his efforts to garner aid from the Union government. I identify viewpoints that point to President Lincoln and Secretary of State Seward as men who were not as supportive of the Mexican Liberals and their cause, in contrast to what historians have previously understood. I argue that Romero's role as a lobbyist was crucial to gathering support for the Liberals, and his work encouraged several other U.S. politicians to take a stand on behalf of the Liberal cause.

In order to understand later events, it is important to start with where Mexico stood ideologically, following the defeat in the Mexican-American War. In 1848, the United States claimed victory in the conflict with Mexico, which included the acquisition of a significant amount of territory following the conclusion of the war. The signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in February of that year officially ended the war between the two nations and established a new boundary between them as, "...the northern half of Mexico became the

southwestern third of the United States” (see fig. 6).⁵⁷ Many in Mexico felt that this defeat and significant territorial loss happened “because it [Mexico] was ‘not a nation’: it lacked the ‘common interests’ and the ‘affections of the heart’ that would have united its inhabitants in its defense.”⁵⁸ This view led many in Mexico to question the current system of governance, wondering why they did not have a sense of national unity or connection to each other and their country.

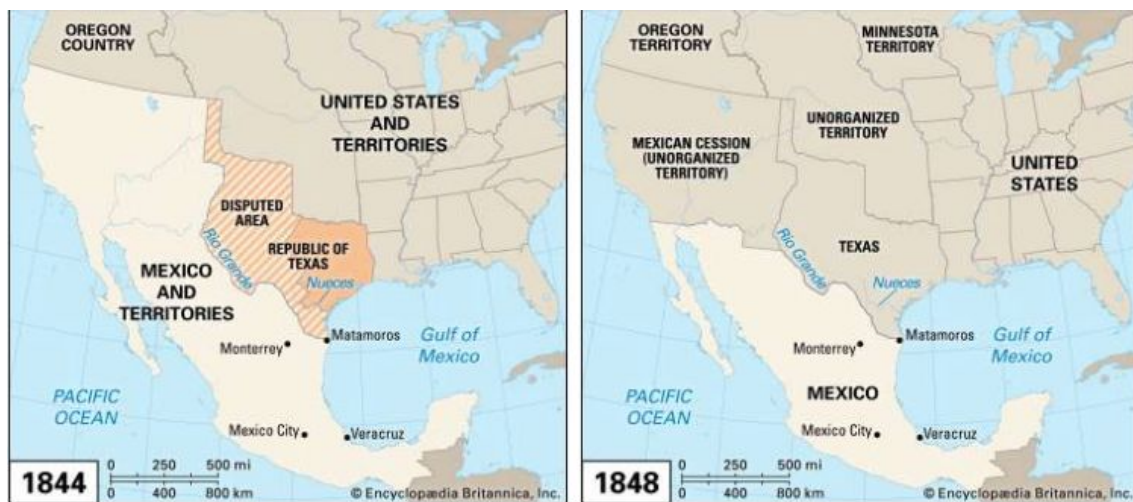


Fig. 6: U.S./Mexico Territory Shift Following The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848⁵⁹

Beginning in 1852, the Conservatives in Mexico positioned Antonio López de Santa Anna as a new dictator, through the work of the Plan del Hospicio. The revolt initiated by the Conservatives against the weak liberal government that was previously in place, paved the way for the “election” of Santa Anna on March 17, 1853 to the office of president.⁶⁰ The belief

⁵⁷ Rachel St. John, *Line in the Sand: A History of the Western U.S.-Mexico Border* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013), 22.

⁵⁸ Erika Pani, "Law, Allegiance, and Sovereignty in Civil War Mexico, 1857–1867," *Journal of the Civil War Era* 7, no. 4 (2017): 572, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26381477>.

⁵⁹ Encyclopædia Britannica and Kenny Chmielewski, "Changes to the United States-Mexico Border," map, Encyclopædia Britannica, 2020, <https://www.britannica.com/story/how-the-border-between-the-united-states-and-mexico-was-established>.

⁶⁰ J. Lloyd Mecham, *Church and State in Latin America*, (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press), 358.

behind a stricter form of government was that the enforcement of laws and a new national order would result in governmental effectiveness and prosperity, as well as providing a sense of national unity- all of which Mexico had previously lacked.⁶¹ However, the collapse of Santa Anna's reign just two years later thrust the Liberals onto the national political stage. The Gadsden Treaty, created in 1853, but signed by Santa Anna in 1854, sold a portion of Mexico's land to the United States for \$10 million. This decision ended up costing Santa Anna his presidency (See fig. 7). The agreement established the western territorial boundary between the two nations, and while it was a small amount of territory lost in comparison to 1848, "the Mexican people believed that the sale of national territory was an insult to national honor and a devastating blow to the nation."⁶² This increased negative sentiment toward Santa Anna and provided an opportunity for the Liberals to overthrow him in 1855, in what became known as the Ayutla Revolt.



Fig. 7: U.S. and Mexico Boundary Following the Gadsden Purchase, 1853⁶³

⁶¹ Pani, "Law, Allegiance," 572.

⁶² St. John, *Line in the Sand*, 35-36.

⁶³ National Constitution Center Staff, "The Gadsden Purchase and a Failed Attempt at a Southern Railroad," map, National Constitution Center, December 30, 2019, <https://constitutioncenter.org/blog/the-gadsden-purchase-and-a-failed-attempt-at-a-southern-railroad>.

Newly in charge, the Liberals drafted a constitution for the nation of Mexico. Prior to the writing of this constitution, the vast majority of Mexican laws centered around the relationship between the central and regional governments. The Liberals hoped to shift the focus toward the reestablishment of democracy by fostering a stronger relationship between the government and the people it is supposed to work for. The concept of a liberal government in Mexico focused on providing the central government with opportunities to actually support its people, as opposed to the previous government, which did not have a strong focus on the needs of Mexico's citizens.⁶⁴ With goals of transforming society, stimulating the economy, and reducing the influence of the Catholic church, the Liberals had plenty of supporters, but also faced intense opposition.

The Liberals succeeded in many aspects of their new plan for Mexico. They established universal male suffrage ("having an 'honest way of living' was set up as the only restriction to being allowed to vote"⁶⁵) as well as other rights specified in the constitution: "liberty, freedom of education, industry, labor, speech, movement; protection from illegal search; the rights to petition, to associate, to bear arms, to property, [and] to due process."⁶⁶ Additionally, the Liberal government created the federal judiciary, the body that became the sole interpreter of the constitutionality of Mexico's laws. This change provided additional power to the federal government, while simultaneously restraining the authority of state and local governments. Prior to this shift in duties, both the state legislature and the federal congress had the ability to determine the constitutionality of laws. While the Liberals focused on providing more freedoms to its citizens, it also actively tried to limit the powers and rights of the Catholic church. The new government decided to redistribute the church's assets, particularly its land. The Church

⁶⁴ St. John, *Line in the Sand*, 46.

⁶⁵ Pani, "Law, Allegiance," 573.

⁶⁶ Pani, "Law, Allegiance," 573.

possessed a massive amount of the nation's land, so the idea was to provide this land to citizens and decrease the role of the Church in governmental affairs. If the Church maintained ownership of land that was then leased or sold to citizens, the Church could hold more power and influence within the nation than the Liberals wanted. The new restrictions placed on the Church successfully reduced its power, but also negatively impacted Mexico, because it limited the amount of educational and charitable institutions that the church previously supported. Additionally, the Liberal government worked to use their power to exclude church members from being elected to the National Assembly.⁶⁷ These new regulations served to further separate the Church from the state, reducing the Church's overall power within the nation of Mexico.

This tension between the church and the state further increased when the Liberals also required its government workers to take the constitutional oath, including God as their witness, to the Constitution of 1857. The Constitution was signed into law by Mexico's then-President, Ignacio Comonfort.⁶⁸ The Church excommunicated government officials who took the oath, causing further conflict because of the significant role the church still played in peoples' lives. The church controlled the registration of births, marriages, and deaths, and those who were excommunicated could not take communion, be buried properly and in consecrated ground, or get married through the church.⁶⁹ Many employees stepped down from their positions in order to avoid choosing the state over the church. The choice to value religious devotion above government employment highlights the deeply rooted religious connections many in Mexico felt. These tensions between the church and state never truly subsided, and were a major contributing factor to further conflict between the Conservatives and the Liberals later on. However, this

⁶⁷ Pani, "Law, Allegiance," 573.

⁶⁸ Mecham, *Church and State in Latin America*, 365.

⁶⁹ Pani, "Law, Allegiance," 576.

devotion to religion did not necessarily mean that Mexicans chose to side with the Conservatives as opposed to the Liberals. Plenty of Mexicans believed that they could practice religion and also accept the state's attempts at a reformed government that would better service the nation as a whole.

Throughout 1856 and 1857, Mexico's then-President, Ignacio Comonfort, was confronted with an array of conspiracies and rebellions from the Conservative opposition, which stemmed from the tension caused by the disagreement about the role of the church in government. In December of 1857, however, Comonfort was removed from power by Mexican army General Félix Zuloaga. Zuloaga led this "military-clerical alliance," which took over by abolishing the constitution entirely, with the ultimate goal of returning the church's previous power and control of the national government.⁷⁰ With the forced end of Comonfort's presidency, Benito Juárez, then-President of the Supreme Court, became interim-president of the former Mexican government, and took up the defense of the constitution.⁷¹ He moved his government headquarters to the city of Veracruz.

This ideological split of Mexico's citizens began what is now known as the War of the Reform. Conservatives included the members of the Catholic clergy and people living in more urban areas, who tended to be of a higher social class. The professional army of Mexico also stood behind the Conservative government in Mexico City. They claimed they were going to war to defend their religion. The Liberals said that the church was actually the reason for the war, and that the church's abuse of power drove the social, political, and economic inequality that Liberals were fighting to change. The Liberals claimed that they were the group that was actually

⁷⁰ Mecham, *Church and State in Latin America*, 365-366.

⁷¹ Mecham, *Church and State in Latin America*, 366.

supporting the true message of Christ by encouraging humility, charity, and love.⁷² Liberals tended to consist of more rural people, those of a lower class status with more dependence on a centralized government, some regional elites, and the newly formed national guard.

Juárez's move to Veracruz proved to be a key factor in leading to the victory of the Liberals, because his government and army controlled Mexico's biggest source of income- the Veracruz Custom House.⁷³ The Conservatives, regardless of how successful they were in other aspects, could not defeat the Liberals without the funds provided by the custom house. In an act of desperation in 1860, the Conservatives turned to the French for assistance.⁷⁴

With Napoleon's eyes already focused on finding a place for France to reinsert itself in the New World, this provided the perfect opportunity. He could accept this invitation into Mexico, rather than have to force his way in. With the insertion of a new, foreign foe, Juárez had to adjust his plan to reclaim national authority and simultaneously defeat the Conservative and French forces. He continued to fight the Conservatives, who combined with French, and he remained in his leadership position through an emergency power granted to him by Congress, before it officially dissolved. While the United States was an enemy in 1848, the Liberals leveraged their new government location, just along the border with the U.S., and turned to their northern neighbor in hopes of receiving protection.

The Liberal ideology was strikingly similar to that of the democratic ways of the Union. These two factions represented ideals such as, freedom, liberty, and equality. With direct attacks on both the Union and the Liberal ways of governing, it became clear that, "...Napoleon's interference in Mexico, like secession itself, represented nothing less than an aristocratic plot

⁷² Pani, "Law, Allegiance," 581

⁷³ Pani, "Law, Allegiance," 577-578.

⁷⁴ Pani, "Law, Allegiance," 578.

aimed at subverting popular government.”⁷⁵ The Union and the Liberals were working to defend these two forms of democratic governance, just on different sides of the U.S./Mexico boundary line. The concept of continental solidarity echoes here, for scholars in the present, providing connections between the U.S. and Mexican groups that aimed to protect and promote democracy in North America. In the U.S. Civil War, the Union fought to end slavery and preserve the integrity of democracy, by proving that the Confederacy did not have the right to secede from the Union. South of the border, Mexican Liberals fought the French and the Conservatives with the goal of ending the installed monarchy and restoring democratic government to Mexico. If the Union defeated the Confederacy and the Liberals defeated both the French and the Conservatives, these two victories would demonstrate to the world that “liberal democracy was here to stay,” on the North American continent.⁷⁶ However, beginning in 1861, the United States was fully engaged in their own domestic conflict, which created a challenging dynamic for providing aid to Mexico, even though the two North American nations were fighting for ideologically similar causes.

By 1863, almost two years into the U.S. Civil War, the French, with the help of the Conservative forces already stationed there, were able to occupy Mexico City. The control of this city allowed for the establishment of a government headed by the French and supported by Mexico’s Conservatives. Napoleon’s Grand Design planned for the insertion of a monarchy in Mexico, as a way to combat the democratic ways of the United States. When France’s puppet emperor, Maximilian, first arrived in Mexico, he attempted to distance himself from the French military occupation and present himself as a reasonable and understanding monarch. He

⁷⁵ Fleche, *The Revolution*, 155.

⁷⁶ Fleche, *The Revolution*, 156.

appeared on a platform of peace and reconciliation between the two factions of Mexican society. In an effort to encourage Liberals to support him, he offered to pardon Liberals who put down their weapons, as well as those who were already imprisoned by the Conservatives. However, this generosity was very short-lived.⁷⁷ Maximilian later changed his policy to state that any captured Liberals would be executed.⁷⁸ He needed to act harshly in order to maintain support of anti-Liberals, both Mexican and French. Maximilian could not afford to entirely distance himself from France, as Napoleon was the key figure backing this Mexican monarchy.

This historical context highlights the deep commitment both sides in the Mexican conflict felt to their respective ideological values, and their unwillingness to give up. The article often cited in this part of the chapter provides incredible insight into this Mexican conflict, and focuses on the ideological divisions created by the Catholic church in Mexico. The author, Erika Pani, addresses the French intervening on behalf of the Conservatives, which is a very clear military operation. However, Pani does not provide much context for the United States' aid on behalf of Liberals. This could be because it was less overt than the French intervention, or it could be that she deemed it to be less significant. I argue that people from both the United States and Mexico work together to lobby various politicians and social groups within the United States to gain support for the Liberal cause.

The main driver of these lobbying efforts was Matías Romero, former chargé and minister to the United States from Mexico.⁷⁹ He served as the link between the Mexican and U.S. governments, as well as the other key individuals that are discussed in the following pages of this chapter. Romero spent a great deal of time in Washington, D.C., where he had access to Union

⁷⁷ Pani, "Law, Allegiance," 583.

⁷⁸ Hanna and Hanna, *Napoleon III and Mexico*, 261.

⁷⁹ Romero, *Mexican Lobby*, X.

lawmakers and politicians, many of which could influence the government's actions toward Mexico. He lobbied through use of the press, media, and high ranking politicians and members of society to garner attention to his cause. Additionally, Romero invited an astounding number of politicians to dinners at his D.C. home, in hopes of impressing them and encouraging them to support sending aid to the Liberals in Mexico. Over the course of his time in Washington, he built a vast political network that allowed him to socialize with various wealthy and powerful groups, which he hoped would garner political and financial support for his cause.⁸⁰ Looking through Romero's papers, I found dinner invitations for a vast number of Washington politicians including, Schuyler Colfax, representative from Indiana and Speaker of the House during the 38th Congress, as well as correspondence between Romero and both Secretary of War Edwin Stanton and Secretary of State William Seward.⁸¹ These notes discussed the United States' position on foreign policy as it related to Mexico. Romero wanted to access U.S. funds, as well as arms and munitions, that could be used by the Liberals in Mexico. Both Stanton and Seward were uneasy about providing such direct aid to Mexico, out of fear of retaliation by the French forces. The French, now in Mexico City, were in closer proximity to the Confederacy than they had previously been, prior to their entry onto the North American continent.

In January 1861, before Lincoln's first presidential inauguration, Romero traveled out to Springfield, Illinois to speak with the incoming president.⁸² In correspondence translated from Spanish by Thomas Schoonover, Romero recorded that Lincoln, "was evidently not very well

⁸⁰ Romero, *Mexican Lobby*, 1.

⁸¹ Schuyler Colfax to Matías Romero, January 24, 1864, BANC MSS M-A 15, Reel 2, Matías Romero correspondence, 1850-1899, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, Berkeley, CA; Edwin Stanton to Matías Romero, November 14, 1864, BANC MSS M-A 15, Reel 2, Matías Romero correspondence, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, Berkeley, CA; "38th Congress (1863–1865)," *History, Art, and Archives, The U.S. House of Representatives*, <https://history.house.gov/Congressional-Overview/Profiles/38th/>.

⁸² Romero, *Mexican Lobby*, 2.

informed on Mexican affairs,” but, he “...listened to all that I said with pleasure,” and he “...insisted that he was very interested in the peace and prosperity of Mexico.”⁸³ At this point in time, Romero felt confident that the new U.S. President would do right by Mexico and its people, who had goals similar to those of the Union government in the United States.⁸⁴ Additionally, Mexico was the only foreign nation to congratulate Lincoln on his election victory. While the interaction was certainly a strategic move by Romero, it was a major statement that Mexico, in the midst of its own conflict, took the time to affirm to Lincoln that they supported his presidency as his neighbor to the south. Romero hoped that this contact would put him in good favor with the new U.S. President, which would allow for further communication in the very near future. This is even more significant because less than 15 years prior, the United States won an unjust war with Mexico and proceeded to take half of the nation’s territory. Mexico recognized the political necessity of moving on from those past feelings in order to congratulate Lincoln, because they saw Lincoln as a figure who was sympathetic enough to potentially help their cause.

Another figure that Romero worked to develop a relationship with was Postmaster General Montgomery Blair. Romero noted that Blair would be an incredible resource for him to connect with on the issue of Mexico, seeing as Blair was an influential member of the presidential cabinet. In an early December meeting with Blair in 1861, Romero noted that Blair believed that in the context of a European intervention in Mexico, the United States could “oppose them [the European powers] in conformity with international law.”⁸⁵ In records from May 9, 1862, Romero noted that “as soon as the Southern insurrection is defeated, Blair believes,

⁸³ Romero, *Mexican Lobby*, 2-3.

⁸⁴ Romero, *Mexican Lobby*, 2-3.

⁸⁵ Romero, *Mexican Lobby*, 10-11.

the United States will send an army to Mexico to throw the French out.”⁸⁶ While this prediction turned out to be somewhat true, three years went by before the non-government sanctioned aid that came from within the United States reached the Mexican Liberals.

Romero’s relationship with Montgomery Blair stemmed directly from his desire to use U.S. government officials, who were sympathetic to the Mexican cause, to his advantage. In 1862, Romero wrote of his relationship with Blair that:

I have managed to cultivate his friendship and have attempted to influence the president through him...I have attempted to cultivate in other influential people the same [friendly] spirit [toward Mexico] which Blair has exhibited, but... my labors in this direction have also not been as fruitful as I expected. This, nevertheless, will not prompt me to reduce my labors.⁸⁷

Over time, Blair’s influence on President Lincoln’s decisions decreased significantly. Blair was respected, but could only go so far in his ability to sway the opinion of the President. The limitations on what Blair was capable of required Romero to cast a broader net in his strategic networking efforts. While he could rely on Postmaster General Blair for support, Romero had to ensure he had connections in multiple facets of the Union government if he wanted support for the Liberal faction in Mexico.

Romero also focused his lobbying efforts on Charles Sumner, a senator from Massachusetts and head of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. In correspondence between Sumner and Romero, the senator confirmed that, “we have the greatest sympathy for Mexico and we sincerely desire to help her, but you [Romero] know our difficult, critical position.”⁸⁸ Sumner

⁸⁶ Romero, *Mexican Lobby*, 24.

⁸⁷ Matías Romero ed., *Correspondencia de la legación mexicana en Washington durante la intervención extranjera*, 1860-1868, 10 vols, (México: Imprenta del Gobierno, 1870-92), 2:294, quoted in Matías Romero, *Mexican Lobby: Matías Romero in Washington, 1861-1867*, trans. Thomas Schoonover (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1986), xiii-xiv.

⁸⁸ Romero, *Mexican Lobby*, 15.

goes on to say that the United States has “too many foreign complications to look for new ones. If we can remove France...from Mexico by pacific means and without offending either of those two powers, we will do so with great pleasure.”⁸⁹ While he did not explicitly state this, Sumner likely meant that the Union could not afford to anger France and push them into the arms of the Confederacy. If this happened, the French could provide support to the Confederate army, while also having increased access into Mexican territory, putting both the Union and the Liberal Mexican government at risk for collapse.

In February of 1862, however, Senator Sumner, as the Chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, proposed to Congress a set of resolutions regarding Mexican affairs.⁹⁰ These resolutions, as reported by Romero via Sumner, confirmed that:

Our minister in Mexico [Thomas Corwin] is authorized to demand sufficient guarantees, excluding the acquisition of territory, since the United States declared that it does not propose to acquire any territorial advantage by means of this transaction, nor to prejudice or diminish the sovereign rights of Mexico... the United States would assume for a fixed period of time the payment of the interest on Mexico’s foreign debt and of those claims against her whose immediate satisfaction is demanded.⁹¹

Romero heard from another Senator on February 19, 1862 that the resolutions in regard to Mexico had been passed with some slight adjustments. When Romero next spoke to Sumner, it appeared that things were progressing in a positive direction, but the United States ultimately never committed to loaning money to Mexico. While the exchange of money never occurred, I argue that this experience shows that Romero’s method of lobbying and networking with government officials actually proved to be beneficial to creating awareness for his cause, though

⁸⁹ Romero, *Mexican Lobby*, 15.

⁹⁰ Romero, *Mexican Lobby*, 21-22.

⁹¹ Romero, *Mexican Lobby*, 22.

it was not always effective in garnering direct financial or military aid. Romero's lobbying successfully increased recognition of Mexican Liberals' goals within the United States Congress.

Romero's work as a lobbyist further enhanced the sympathy the Union government felt toward Mexico. In May 1862, Thomas Corwin, Abraham Lincoln's Minister to Mexico, proposed a treaty between Mexico and the Union government. The government decided that they had to reject the treaty to prevent France from perceiving it as a direct attack from the United States, but instead of plainly rejecting the treaty, the Senate chose to leave it pending out of respect for Mexico and the Liberal cause. The willingness of the Union government to act in a way that would show their sympathy for Mexico shows how much the government valued Mexico and the cause they were fighting for. On July 3, 1862, Romero recorded that, "out of consideration for Mexico...for which the committee has the greatest sympathy in its present condition...the treaty was not rejected."⁹² Despite the treaty's lack of success and the absence of material support for the Liberals, the decision to leave it pending was actually a significant action. While the United States could not provide direct aid at the time, Mexico, as noted by Romero, could at least feel a sense of support and solidarity from their northern neighbor.

By mid-1863, the tide of the Civil War shifted to favor the Union, but Romero decided to resign his position in Washington as the chargé and return to Mexico. Shortly after his resignation, he was promoted to the Minister to the United States, which encouraged him to return to DC.⁹³ Upon his return, Romero worked closely with California Congressman James McDougall, who was willing to aid in the fight against the French in Mexico. McDougall had a personal stake in helping Romero's cause. He was worried that Maximilian, the French-imposed

⁹² Romero, *Mexican Lobby*, 26.

⁹³ Romero, *Mexican Lobby*, 28.

emperor of Mexico, wanted to conquer territory along the Pacific, which would pose a threat to the state of California.

James McDougall was the first member of Congress to publicly encourage the support of the Liberal Mexican cause.⁹⁴ I assert that, while McDougall certainly had his own stake in his support of the Liberals and Romero, he was willing to use his position in Congress to further Romero's mission of obtaining Union government-sanctioned support. Additionally, I argue that McDougall's criticism of President Lincoln encouraged the development of a relationship between Romero and himself, as Romero began to grow tired of Lincoln's lack of direct support. Romero wrote of McDougall that he, "...has manifested the most interest in Mexican affairs," which fostered the development of common diplomatic and political goals for these two men.⁹⁵ Together, Romero and McDougall drafted a set of resolutions with the aim of getting the United States to reverse their current stance toward interference in Mexico.

On January 19, 1863, McDougall presented the resolutions to the United States Senate. These resolutions would require the United States to declare their disapproval of the French in Mexico and demand the evacuation of French forces due to violations of international law, specifically the Monroe Doctrine. McDougall's argument in favor of these actions by the United States focused on the connections between the Union and Liberal causes. He said that the intervention was, "an act not merely unfriendly to this Republic, but to free institutions everywhere."⁹⁶ This quote shows that McDougall saw ideological similarities between the democratic government of the Union and the democracy that the Mexican Liberals were fighting

⁹⁴ Marvin Goldwert, "Matías Romero and Congressional Opposition to Seward's Policy toward the French Intervention in Mexico," *The Americas* 22, no. 1 (July 1965): 23, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/979422.pdf>.

⁹⁵ Romero, *Mexican Lobby*, 28.

⁹⁶ Goldwert, "Matías Romero," 24.

to protect and restore. In his defense of the resolutions on February 3, 1863, he argued that the U.S. Civil War did not provide an excuse for the United States to turn its back on a fellow republican government that was in need of aid. Romero, although not in attendance, wholeheartedly agreed with McDougall. Since the beginning of his lobbying efforts, Romero suggested that U.S. support of the Mexican Liberals would display continental solidarity against the assaults on democracy that simultaneously occurred in both the United States and Mexico.

As Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Charles Sumner was responsible for determining the course of action following these proposed resolutions. Sumner, as previously noted, was quite sympathetic to the cause of Mexican Liberals, but he was also cautious around the implications of U.S. actions that could push France closer to the Confederacy. In the words of Romero, "...Sumner...who had entreated him [McDougall] not to present anything or say anything that would be offensive to France, the only nation in Europe which is friendly to the United States. The public men of this nation are blind in this respect. The emperor [Napoleon] has deceived them like children."⁹⁷ Romero and McDougall clearly disagreed with Sumner's perspective on this issue, and believed that France successfully manipulated U.S. politicians into non-action.

As anticipated, Sumner was not willing to change his perspective on U.S. intervention on behalf of the Mexican Liberals. In response to McDougall's explanation in favor of the resolutions, Sumner asked his fellow Senators, "Can any Senator doubt that all who sympathize with the Rebellion will rejoice to see this Senate discussing the question of peace and war with a great European power? Can any one doubt that the Rebels over the way will rejoice and clap

⁹⁷ Romero, *Mexican Lobby*, 29.

their hands, when they hear the tidings?"⁹⁸ Sumner was not willing to do anything that could jeopardize the Union's chances of eventually winning the Civil War.

Romero knew all along that the efforts put forth by McDougall were futile, but that he continued to support him and other politicians who spoke out in favor of the Liberal cause, because it would prove to France that the United States did, in fact, have an interest in seeing the Liberals succeed in Mexico. Romero recorded that he, "do[es] not have the remotest hope that McDougall's resolutions will be approved by the Senate, but the mere fact of their presentation and the subsequent discussion, I believe, will produce results favorable for us."⁹⁹ Additionally, others who agreed with McDougall's presentation in the Senate reached out to Romero, stating their willingness to aid him in whatever ways they were able to do so. By creating awareness of his cause in many different circles, Romero attracted the help of Representative John Kasson of Iowa and Representative Henry W. Davis of Maryland, who also served as Chairman of the House Committee on Foreign Relations.¹⁰⁰

The efforts in favor of supporting the Liberals in Mexico, which were conducted by U.S. politicians, rallied enough attention that Secretary of State Seward actually began to worry. He was concerned that if there was a majority of Radical Republicans who all shared these views, they could jeopardize his very tentative policy toward interference in Mexico.¹⁰¹ Henry Davis in particular generated additional anxiety for Seward, because he was willing to fight against Lincoln and his supporters for the passage of what became known as the Davis Resolution.

⁹⁸ Goldwert, "Matías Romero," 25.

⁹⁹ Romero, *Mexican Lobby*, 29.

¹⁰⁰ Goldwert, "Matías Romero," 27.

¹⁰¹ Goldwert, "Matías Romero," 28.

Introduced on April 4, 1864, it proclaimed:

that the Congress of the United States were unwilling by silence to leave the nations of the world under the impression that they are indifferent spectators of the deplorable events now transpiring in the Republic of Mexico; and that they therefore think fit to declare that it does not accord with the policy of the United States to acknowledge any monarchical government erected on the ruins of any republican government under the auspices of any European power.¹⁰²

This resolution was very clear about its goals and it blatantly disagreed with the policies so far supported by Lincoln and his advisers. Davis wanted the United States “‘to cultivate the friendship’ of Mexico and Latin America and to aid them in maintaining republican government against the ‘fangs’ of European monarchies.”¹⁰³ This resolution, against the will of Secretary of State Seward and President Lincoln, passed unanimously.¹⁰⁴

Finally, Romero achieved some sort of victory. As of July 13, 1864, he could report to his superiors in the Mexican Liberal government that support for their cause had defied party lines- due to the unanimity of the vote. While the Senate, led by Charles Sumner, rejected the Resolution, this moment marked a major turning point for the “Mexican question” in the United States. It signifies the occasion on which the question became one of an issue between the Executive branch and the Legislative branch.¹⁰⁵ There was significant disagreement between the President and his cabinet members and the representatives of the people of the United States. I understand this to indicate a slight divergence in the ideals of the federal government and the opinions of U.S. Americans, as expressed through Congress. The federal government was focused on domestic issues, while Congress saw the bigger picture- how the Civil War interfered

¹⁰² Henry Winter Davis, *Speeches and Addresses Delivered in the Congress of the United States and on Several Public Occasions by Henry Winter Davis of Maryland* (New York, NY: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1867), 395, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/loc.ark:/13960/t2m61wt6s>; Goldwert, "Matías Romero," 29.

¹⁰³ Goldwert, "Matías Romero," 29.

¹⁰⁴ Goldwert, "Matías Romero," 30.

¹⁰⁵ Goldwert, "Matías Romero," 30.

with the United States' ability to assert its power and protect other nations, as it had promised to do through the Monroe Doctrine. The fear generated by the possibility of a non-democratic nation being created in North America by a European power drove the desire of U.S. citizens and the House of Representatives to support aid for the Liberals in Mexico.¹⁰⁶ These new sources of support within the United States encouraged Romero to continue fighting for his cause.

With the election of 1864 just around the corner, Romero acknowledged the immense support he received from the Radical Republican groups. As a result, he threw his support behind their presidential candidate, John C. Frémont.¹⁰⁷ On April 9, 1864, Romero recorded that he met with Frémont. He noted, "I was pleased to find him favorably disposed toward our cause. Bitterly censuring the administration's policy in the Mexican question, he is disposed to adopt a bold attitude if he should be elected."¹⁰⁸ He concluded the note explaining that he believed Frémont would go even further than General McClellan, the Democratic candidate, in his support for the Monroe Doctrine. The support of the Doctrine implied a willingness to help Mexico fight the French intervention. The Lincoln administration essentially ignored the promises made by the Monroe Doctrine since the French arrival in Mexico. Romero selected not to support the reelection of Lincoln because if that were to happen, "Seward would continue as secretary of state for another four years. Under Seward this government's policy in regard to Mexico would not change in a single iota from what it has been recently. Thus, we want the election of any other candidate."¹⁰⁹ Romero explicitly stated his desire for the end of the Lincoln

¹⁰⁶ Goldwert, "Matías Romero," 31.

¹⁰⁷ Romero, *Mexican Lobby*, 31.

¹⁰⁸ Romero, *Mexican Lobby*, 39.

¹⁰⁹ Matías Romero, *A Mexican View of America in the 1860s: A Foreign Diplomat Describes the Civil War and Reconstruction*, trans. Thomas David Schoonover and Ebba Wesener Schoonover (Rutherford: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1991), 159.

administration in favor of a president who would take direct action to support the Liberals in Mexico.

Unfortunately for Romero, his Congressional supporters, and the Liberal cause, Lincoln won reelection in November 1864. This indicated that Romero would still be facing similar challenges because of the politics encouraged by Lincoln, Seward, and Sumner. The arc of support for Romero and the Liberal Mexican cause began with Lincoln in Springfield in 1861, expressing his support for Mexico, and became a cause that was supported by the Radical Republicans, through the election of 1864. While the reelection of Lincoln was slightly discouraging for Romero, he and his allies in the United States continued to fight for the Union to support the Liberal cause.

It is remarkable to see how the people who Romero originally thought he could count on, Lincoln and Sumner in particular, turned out to actually work against active intervention on behalf of the Mexican Liberals. I also find it intriguing that Lincoln is the one memorialized as a hero in Mexico later on. Romero, the key Mexican figure in the United States during the Civil War, actively campaigned against him in the election of 1864.

As these multiple examples show, the relationship between Mexican and U.S. government officials was much more complex than it appeared on the surface. While some of Romero's contacts were helpful initially, they put their perceived needs of the U.S. ahead of the needs of Mexico. Others fell out of favor with the President, putting their opinions lower on Lincoln's priority list. While this is understandable to an extent, it further complicates the concept of continental solidarity. As we will come to understand, there was, in fact, a great deal of support for the Liberals in Mexico across the country. Although, much of the aid that made its

way south of the Rio Grande was not explicitly sanctioned by the government of the United States.

CHAPTER THREE

Pro-Intervention Sentiment Across the United States 1865 - 1887

“The cordiality with which Gen. Grant received me, and the great sympathy he showed for my country during the few days I had the pleasure to spend at his camp, made a lasting impression upon me, and were the beginning of a sincere and disinterested friendship, which was converted after his death into great admiration for his character.”¹¹⁰

This quote comes from a much longer speech given by Matías Romero on April 25, 1887. The event held on this day commemorated the 65th birthday of General Ulysses S. Grant, who passed away two years prior. In this excerpt, Romero described his initial impressions of the former Union General and United States President, and how these moments in 1864 served as the basis for a sincere, enduring friendship between the two men. This section of the speech also alludes to Grant’s stance on the “Mexican question,” and his potential willingness to use his political influence to aid Romero’s cause.

As demonstrated in the previous chapter, Abraham Lincoln did not actively contribute aid to Mexico and the Liberal army in the ways that select scholarship surrounding Lincoln seems to recall. These ideas, noted by scholars but relatively ignored in popular accounts, leave several questions to be answered in regard to the US involvement and relationship with Mexico in the mid-1860s. If Lincoln was not the primary driver of the existing pro-Mexican sentiment in the States, who advocated for Matías Romero’s cause instead? What methods did Romero’s supporters use to demonstrate support for Liberals in Mexico? And finally, why and how is Lincoln the one that is remembered and memorialized as the greatest friend of Mexico? The first two questions will be addressed in the chapter that follows in an attempt to provide sufficient evidence for the third question, which is the subject of the fourth chapter of this work.

¹¹⁰ Matías Romero, "Speech of Señor Don Matías Romero," speech presented at the 65th anniversary of the birth of General Ulysses S. Grant, Metropolitan Methodist Episcopal Church, Washington, D.C., April 25, 1887, <https://archive.org/details/speechofseordo00rome/mode/2up>.

Following the assassination of President Lincoln in April 1865, Andrew Johnson took over the presidency at an incredibly tense time in the United States and in Mexico. The Confederacy had recently surrendered, so the new phase of life in the U.S. centered around reconstruction and reunification of the nation. Many in Mexico saw the end of the U.S. Civil War as an opportunity for the newly restored democracy of the United States to lend a hand to the struggling Liberals in Mexico. Romero in particular, hoped that the Johnson administration, free of the constraints of the Civil War, would approach the French intervention in Mexico with more active support than the Lincoln administration did.¹¹¹ However, it soon became clear to Romero that William Seward, who retained his position as Secretary of State, would do everything in his power to persuade President Johnson to continue a passive foreign policy in terms of the French in Mexico. Unable to get rid of Seward and with little influence over President Johnson, Romero turned to friends elsewhere in the political sphere to garner support, both in terms of morale and material, for the Liberal's fight for freedom and democracy.

Several individuals and groups, of both U.S. and Mexican origins, actively worked to assist Romero in his attempts to secure aid for the Liberals following the conclusion of the U.S. Civil War. Many of these efforts came from the West coast of the United States, despite the federal government being located on the East coast. Both Mexican and U.S. citizens on the West coast wanted to help Juárez's army, so they used their close proximity to Mexico, as well as the area's recent history as former Mexican territory, to their advantage.

One of the ways those on the West coast sought to aid the Mexican liberals was through attempting to smuggle arms across the border. Among the key figures involved in this narrative

¹¹¹ Goldwert, "Matías Romero," 58.

on the California front were: General Plácido Vega, sent as a secret agent from Mexico to obtain arms and manpower for the Liberal army, and General Irvin McDowell, the Union commander of the Department of the Pacific.¹¹² McDowell's position put him in charge of monitoring the military related actions along the West coast, so he was aware of General Vega's general motives in California. These men, as well as others, often corresponded with each other as well as with politicians back on the East coast. A manuscript kept at the University of California Berkeley's Bancroft Library, provides a comprehensive compilation of this correspondence relating to the attempted illicit trade of arms from California to Mexico over the course of the 1860s.

A note sent by President Abraham Lincoln on November 21, 1862, explained that "no arms, ammunition, or munitions... be exported from the United States until further order."¹¹³ This memo marked the beginning of the discussion of arms transfers from the United States to other nations, with specific attention to the 'Mexican question.' While this was a general order issued by Lincoln refusing to allow the movement of arms to anywhere outside of the United States, it emphasizes that he was not willing to make any exceptions for the Mexican cause. Lincoln's stance on this particular issue is incredibly significant because of the way it hindered the support of the Mexican Liberals in the future.

For example, General Irvin McDowell used this Executive Order in 1864 to deny the export of arms to Mexican General Plácido Vega.¹¹⁴ Vega pleaded his case to McDowell by highlighting the similarities in ideology between the United States' Union army and the Mexican

¹¹² Robery Ryall Miller, "Californians Against the Emperor," 1958, BANC F1233 M6557 no.1, Bancroft Library, University of California Berkeley, Berkeley, CA, 193-197.

¹¹³ Charles James, *Correspondence & c. Relating to the Attempted Export of Arms from San Francisco 1864 Export of Arms*, MSS C-B 533, Charles James papers : mss., 1863-1872., Bancroft Library, University of California Berkeley, Berkeley, CA, 1.

¹¹⁴ James, *Correspondence & c. Relating*, 23-52.

Liberals. In a letter from November 2, 1864, Vega wrote to McDowell that if he chose not to remove the embargo on arms and munitions to Mexico, “the blow will be more deeply felt that it comes from a Government, which professes the same principles and is defending the same cause as ourselves.”¹¹⁵ Vega, based in San Francisco for his work, corresponded with McDowell, who as commander of the Department of the Pacific, was also based in California.¹¹⁶ General Vega attempted to secure support by encouraging General McDowell to appreciate and understand the concept of continental solidarity by naming key terms that are representative of what the United States prides itself on. He signed his first letter, which was quoted above, with, “Independence, Liberty, and Reform!”¹¹⁷ These words were used strategically to resonate with the United States’ own struggles, both in its fight for freedom against Britain, and in its desire to protect and preserve democracy during the Civil War.

While Romero’s work on the East coast primarily focused on his lobbying efforts, Vega’s strategy on the west coast had to be different, as the entire federal government was not there for him to work with. Vega still lobbied prominent families, particularly those of Mexican descent for financial support. He also worked with many people, oftentimes Civil War veterans, who had an interest in aiding the Liberals in Mexico. When General Vega was unsuccessful in gaining support through General McDowell, President Johnson, and William Seward, he turned to these other West coast options that were much more willing to aid him and his fight for freedom from French control.

Vega was able to secure a great deal of support from many Californians, particularly those with Mexican heritage, as California’s territory belonged to Mexico from 1821 until the

¹¹⁵ James, *Correspondence & c. Relating*, 39.

¹¹⁶ Miller, "Californians Against," 193.

¹¹⁷ James, *Correspondence & c. Relating*, 39.

Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848.¹¹⁸ Following this transfer of territory, “approximately 80,000 Mexicans living in the uppermost reaches of northern Mexico,” now lived in land controlled by the United States.¹¹⁹ This shift in political control, in conjunction with issues of land and property rights, created tension between the U.S. Americans moving west and the indigenous and Mexican groups already living on the land that became part of California. However, during the 1860s, many Mexicans now living under U.S. control wanted to aid their former country in the fight against the French intervention.

The newly established border between Mexico and the United States looked, and felt, very different than it does today. In the 19th century, the border was primarily a boundary line to mark territory belonging to Mexico and the United States. Its creation did not immediately impose new sentiments of the people living there; these people did not instantly become Americanized, nor did their perspectives become American either.¹²⁰ The people living in former Mexican territory, as Kelly Lytle Hernandez explained, “had only nominally and occasionally recognized Mexican rule. Many routinely rebelled, categorically rejecting the claim that the Spanish Empire followed by the Republic of Mexico ruled land and life in the region.”¹²¹ Hernandez went on to say that, “...even the Mexican rancheros from Los Angeles occasionally rejected Mexican rule, twice ousting territorial governors appointed by the Mexican federal government. The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo and its proclamation of U.S. rule, therefore,

¹¹⁸ Miller, "Californians Against," 194; This territory, prior to Mexican independence in 1821, belonged to Spain.

¹¹⁹ Andrew Grant Wood, "Mexicans in the United States:," in *Latin American Migrations to the U.S. Heartland: Changing Social Landscapes in Middle America*, by Andrew Grant Wood and Linda Allegro (n.p.: University of Illinois Press, 2013), 30-31, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5406/j.ctt2ttb7h.6>.

¹²⁰ Rachel St. John, *Line in the Sand: A History of the Western U.S.-Mexico Border* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013), 50.

¹²¹ Kelly Lytle Hernandez, "An Eliminator Option," in *City of Inmates : Conquest, Rebellion, and the Rise of Human Caging in Los Angeles, 1771-1965* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2017), 34, <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/colby/detail.action?docID=4821053>.

meant little in the contested lands between Texas and the Pacific Ocean.”¹²² Through her work, we can see that the indigenous groups and those of Mexican and Spanish descent living in what became California complicated the notion of the boundary line’s ability to declare the United States and Mexico as two entirely separate nations.

Vega and other Liberals operating within the United States encouraged the creation of “solidarity groups known as ‘Juárez Clubs,’ ‘Mexican Clubs,’ and ‘Monroe Doctrine Societies’ to raise money, recruit soldiers, and generate propaganda against the Conservatives and their French allies.”¹²³ These groups helped to create a sense of community for Mexicans who were essentially forced to become citizens of the United States if they wanted to remain on their land. The coalitions operated in multiple states that formed out of previous Mexican territory, and California had at least fifteen known groups of this sort.¹²⁴ Vega and other Liberal leaders easily communicated with these organizations and efficiently spread messages detailing the needs of the Liberal army. With such a strong show of support within communities of Mexican and Spanish descent, we can see that the recent border designation did not separate these people from their heritage, rather their ongoing connection with their country encouraged them to support the Liberals as a display of solidarity with their former nation. The support and organization of Mexican and Spanish groups within California, and other states in the West, contributed significantly, in terms of manpower, financial, and material support for the Liberal army, and serves as an example of the importance of continental solidarity.

¹²² Hernandez, "An Eliminary," 34.

¹²³ David FitzGerald, "150 Years of Transborder Politics:," in *A Century of Transnationalism: Immigrants and Their Homeland Connections*, by Nancy L. Green and Roger Waldinger (n.p.: University of Illinois Press, 2016), 108, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5406/j.ctt1hd18q3.8>.

¹²⁴ FitzGerald, "150 Years," 109.

In order to most effectively communicate with so many dispersed people, Vega utilized the best media source of the time: newspapers. Vega published various ads and articles in these papers in order to easily convey information regarding openings in the Mexican army and address questions regarding the benefits that would be awarded to those who signed up. Vega published in as many California newspapers as possible, in both Spanish and English. He even set up and sustained the publication of one Spanish paper, *El Nuevo Mundo*, in order to be able to publish official statements from President Juárez and his army, in addition to general news.¹²⁵ The offerings from Juárez's government as a reward for service included military pay, grants of land that would be confiscated from the Conservatives assuming a Liberal victory, as well as the opportunity of full citizenship to all foreign volunteers.¹²⁶ In order to avoid political repercussions for his actions, Vega never directly advertised that he was looking for soldiers to fight in Mexico. He wrote of inquiries for "armed colonists."¹²⁷ These "colonists," though, knew that their real mission was to enter Mexico and fight under the direction of Juárez and the Liberal army.

Men without Mexican heritage also wanted Vega to help them get to the front lines in Mexico. These men came to him for various reasons. Some were interested in helping to restore republican government in Mexico, many were looking for new economic opportunities outside of the United States, while others were passionate about enforcing the Monroe Doctrine and not allowing the French to take advantage of the United States' previous domestic conflict.¹²⁸

¹²⁵ Miller, "Californians Against," 199.

¹²⁶ Miller, "Californians Against," 202.

¹²⁷ Miller, "Californians Against," 194.

¹²⁸ Miller, "Californians Against," 195.

The American Legion of Honor, a group of soldiers who recently finished serving in the U.S. Civil War, formed to fight on behalf of the Liberal army in Mexico.¹²⁹ This group initially came to be through the efforts of General Vega and his fellow Mexican secret agent, General Gaspar Sánchez Ochoa. The appointed leaders of this group of men were Colonel George Green and Captain Harvey Lake.¹³⁰ The two men had to keep their mission of collecting arms and men a secret, in order to enter Mexico without being detected by U.S. or French officials. One of the men in the Legion recorded that they “had to embark on the sly under pretence of being miners bound for Arizona, to avoid the interference of enemies of the Mexican republic.”¹³¹ As this quote shows, the politics of the United States getting involved in Mexico, was not just known on the national or state political levels, everyday citizens of the United States were aware of it, too. Many of these citizens, a majority of which just finished fighting in the U.S. Civil War, elected to go fight on the behalf of the Liberals. This highlights the aid of the Liberals on the basis of a communal ideology and these concepts emphasize broader support for Mexico than is typically noted in popular notions of U.S./Mexico relations during this period. This suggests that the United States offered implicit support in order to avoid disobeying national policy, as the national government did not want to publicly support the Liberals, fearing political repercussions from France.

Despite the potential political and social complications, such legal trouble in the U.S. or leaving families behind, the men in the Legion may have faced, they were willing to risk their

¹²⁹ Other groups around the United States formed to help rally around the cause. These groups focused on pursuing the enforcement of the Monroe Doctrine as it related to the French in Mexico. These groups and their work are outlined in Miller’s work, *The American Legion of Honor in Mexico*. This section, however, focuses solely on the Legion of Honor and its work in Mexico.

¹³⁰ Sacramento Daily Union, “Maximilian and the American Legion,” *Sacramento Daily Union* (Sacramento, CA), November 4, 1871, <https://cdnc.ucr.edu/?a=d&d=SDU18711104.2.19&e=-----en--20--1--txt-txIN-----1>.

¹³¹ Miller, “The American,” 233.

lives out of economic desperation and for the preservation of Mexico as a republic. According to multiple reports from the Battle of Zacatecas, which occurred in January 1867, the presence of the American Legion of Honor actually saved the life of Liberal President Juárez, and came to the much needed aid of General Aranda's army in this particular battle.¹³² Additionally, this group was present when the Liberal army entered Mexico City in the summer of 1867, and its officers witnessed the surrender and execution of Emperor Maximilian."¹³³ This group of men certainly made important contributions to the Liberal cause, though they only fought for about six months of this multi-year conflict. Despite the small amount of time this group spent in Mexico, I argue that while they were not a deciding factor in the Liberal victory, their presence in Mexico represents a feeling of continental solidarity for the Liberals.

I introduce and explain the work of the American Legion of Honor in this chapter because I think its existence, as a group of American men of various backgrounds, demonstrates broader support for the Mexican Liberal cause. One soldier certainly over exaggerated by stating, "but for the American forces forming the Legion of Honor the Republic never would have succeeded."¹³⁴ While some of the men, like this particular soldier, saw themselves as much more influential in the French intervention than they truly were, I argue that their contribution was one of morale, rather than one of military power. This group of men was organized through the work of several Mexicans in the United States. In itself, the formation of the group was an incredible feat. There was enough support from citizens of the U.S., both with and without Mexican

¹³² Sacramento Daily Union, "Maximilian and the American."

¹³³ Miller, "The American," 229.

¹³⁴ Deposition of Harvey Lake, *Charles E. Benjamin v. Mexico*, National Archives, Washington, Record Group 76, doc. 906, quoted in Robert Ryal Miller, "The American Legion of Honor in Mexico," 1961, BANC F1233 M6557 no.2, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, Berkeley, CA.

heritage, to form this elite group of soldiers. As the Legion originated in San Francisco, many of the men came from California, due to logistical ease. However, men came from all across the nation to fight on behalf of Mexico. The beliefs held by these men and their willingness to risk their lives again, for a country that many did not see as their own, so soon after returning safely from the Civil War, shows both a desire for additional work and the prospect of new opportunity, but also a commitment to the cause of continental solidarity. I assert that this group put their lives on the line to defend the personal liberties and democratic sovereignty of the nation of Mexico and its people, just as they had recently done in the United States.¹³⁵

The concept of continental solidarity, while a term not yet being used at this point, drove the desires of those men focused on protecting and preserving a republican government in Mexico. Robert Ryal Miller concluded that the land and citizenship promises, as well as the military pay scale played a key role in encouraging the participation of men from the U.S. The other major contributing factor was the, “propaganda stressing the French violation of the Monroe Doctrine,” that helped to gather U.S. recruits.¹³⁶ While the Monroe Doctrine could not technically be “violated,” as it was not an international law, the effectiveness of propaganda made it appear as though the French had done something legally offensive. The acts of everyday people in the United States highlight the fact that the work of Mexican officials in the U.S. were not just aimed at those in positions of power and authority, but also those who would be able to contribute manpower to the Mexican cause.

¹³⁵ Robert Ryal Miller noted in “The American Legion of Honor in Mexico” that the most useful information regarding The American Legion of Honor can be found in testimony of former soldiers during the United States-Mexican Claims Commission of 1868. Many of these former soldiers filed claims stating that they did not receive the compensation they were promised for their role in the fight against the French and the Conservatives. These documents are located in the National Archives.

¹³⁶ Miller, “The American,” 231.

Despite an incredible amount of support, there were others who were committed to facilitating Vega's failure with his mission in California. General McDowell denied yet another request for arms, this time in 1865, because he was still operating under the Executive Order issued by Lincoln over three years prior. However, Romero noted that when he spoke with President Johnson about the issue, Johnson believed that he had sent an official release of the weapons.¹³⁷ While it is true that Johnson ended the order on May 3, 1865, it was not effectively communicated to law enforcement, creating additional obstacles for Vega's mission.¹³⁸

Other political figures like the Chief of Police of San Francisco, Edmund Burke, secretly worked with the French Consul in San Francisco, Charles de Cazotte, to both share information and work against Vega and other supporters of the Mexican cause against the French.¹³⁹ Burke was on the French government's payroll, which is why he so willingly fed information to de Cazotte, who, as a member of the French diplomacy, wanted to prevent Juárez's army from receiving any foreign aid that could potentially have detrimental effects on the intervention.¹⁴⁰ Despite the relative secrecy of the work of these men, Vega was aware that they were the reason behind so many of the legal difficulties he faced while trying to send supplies and men to Mexico. Vega referenced his understanding of the actions of the French Consul in another letter to Romero, writing, "one sees that the hand and gold of France and her petty officers are the cause of all these troubles."¹⁴¹ Men in political power on both coasts of the United States attempted to use their positions of well-respected authority in order to manipulate the work of men like Romero and Vega, who were using legal avenues to aid their home country, in hopes of

¹³⁷ Romero, *Mexican Lobby*, 69.

¹³⁸ Miller, "Californians Against," 206.

¹³⁹ Miller, "Californians Against," 207.

¹⁴⁰ Miller, "Californians Against," 206-207.

¹⁴¹ Miller, "Californians Against," 207.

allowing France to continue pursuing its political goals in Mexico. While these politics certainly made Romero and Vega's work more challenging, it did not deter them from their mission of finding ways to use U.S. supplies and men to aid Juárez's army.

Through a multitude of efforts, Vega successfully put men on the ground in Mexico, and he also acquired 8,000 rifles and 24,000 muskets that he sent on to various factions of the Liberal army, which provided these units with opportunities for success against the French army.¹⁴² His work on behalf of the Juárez government and the Liberals cannot be overstated. Vega worked tirelessly, maneuvering around the many obstacles that both U.S. and French politicians put in his way. His drive, as well as his successful communication with many Californians, paved the way for Vega's eventual success in being able to aid the Liberals through U.S. men and materials, despite the lack of official support from the United States government.

Vega's work is significant not only for the physical contribution to the Liberal effort, but also to the morale of the Liberal army. He overcame many challenges in order to bring U.S. soldiers and supplies into Mexico. Having these things come from the United States was a major boost to the morale of the Liberals. This group, following the conclusion of the U.S. Civil War, had the backing of the United States, one of the most powerful and influential nations in the Western Hemisphere at this point in time. Regardless of the fact that the support did not come directly from the federal government, Vega's work in California showed the Liberals that people in the United States believed in their cause, as they fought to defend a foreign democracy and protect the integrity of the Monroe Doctrine.¹⁴³ It is logical to conclude that, "the moral advantage the Juárez government possessed because it had the diplomatic recognition of the

¹⁴² Miller, "Californians Against," 211.

¹⁴³ Miller, "The American," 231.

United States was decidedly reinforced by the presence of hundreds of Californians in the Juárez battalions.”¹⁴⁴ While the White House did not send these men or materials, it was permitted under U.S. law for military supplies to come through on behalf of the Liberals. While Juárez’s government was the only one officially recognized by the United States since Lincoln’s presidency, this cemented the belief that the U.S. was not going to come to the aid of France in their war of conquest in Mexico.¹⁴⁵

While General Vega and his supporters worked tirelessly on the West coast to combat corruption and other challenges, they had others championing their work back East. Matías Romero continued to communicate with people all across the United States and in Mexico to work to coordinate support for the Liberal army. Matías Romero linked General Vega on the West coast with General Grant on the East coast. They were two of the key individuals who worked to garner support and supplies from the United States in order to help Mexico combat the French intervention. This mission and the support for the preservation of republican government in Mexico was far more widespread than many historians have previously acknowledged, highlighting the importance of understanding the ways in which the East and West coast aid missions were connected. I assert that Romero served as a link across the United States because of his position in D.C. He communicated with not only the U.S. government, but also with Juárez, in order to determine the aid that would be most useful for the Liberal cause. These governmental connections made Romero the ideal man to communicate with, because he held an

¹⁴⁴ Miller, "Californians Against," 212.

¹⁴⁵ The government of the United States did not recognize Maximilian’s monarchy as the official ruler of Mexico. The United States chose to allow representatives from Juárez’s government to be present in Washington, D.C. This provided Matías Romero with the space to network within Washington. The United States’ implicit support of the Liberal faction prevented the French and the Conservatives from being able to lobby for their cause within the United States.

understanding of the positions of both Liberal Mexico and the United States. Following the establishment of the work done on the West coast, I return to the East coast, as it was the home base of Romero during this time.

Matías Romero and Union General Ulysses S. Grant were introduced in the fall of 1864, as mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. The two men held similar values, particularly in terms of their vision for continental solidarity among the United States and Mexico. In fact, “the day after taking Lee’s surrender at Appomattox, Grant declared to his staff, ‘Now for Mexico!’”¹⁴⁶ The timing of this statement makes it clear that Grant saw the French intervention in Mexico to be intertwined with the U.S. Civil War, ideologically, militarily, and politically. Grant’s position of sympathy and willingness to help Mexico made him a great ally for Romero in the U.S. government. As the General credited with saving the Union, Grant held a great deal of political clout, so he was able to converse with President Johnson and his cabinet members. While Grant was unable to change William Seward’s position on the “Mexican question,” he still vocalized his opposition to the lack of support that the United States showed Mexico during their time of struggle.

The origins of General Grant’s sympathetic sentiments toward Mexico stemmed from his beliefs that developed during the Mexican-American War. Grant wrote of the annexation of Texas by the United States: “For myself, I was bitterly opposed to the measure and to this day regard the war, which resulted, as one of the most unjust ever waged by a stronger against a

¹⁴⁶ Carl C. Hodge and Cathal J. Nolan, eds., *U.S. Presidents and Foreign Policy: From 1789 to the Present* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2006), 139.

weaker nation.”¹⁴⁷ Grant believed that the United States had no justification for the war that ensued, similar to the viewpoint expressed by Lincoln in his Spot Resolutions.¹⁴⁸ I argue that what differentiates Lincoln and Grant later on is that Grant actively worked to right the wrongs executed by the U.S. government in the 1840s against Mexico. Lincoln’s support of Mexico was passive, and in Romero’s viewpoint, essentially non-existent. Grant, on the other hand, used his success from the Civil War to pivot directly to Mexico, allowing him to continue pursuing his goals of defending republican governments across the North American continent and establishing U.S. supremacy in the New World.

According to Romero, General Grant met with President Johnson on June 3, 1865 during which they discussed the “Mexican question.” Grant later explained in his memoir that he saw the actions of the French in Mexico “as a direct act of war against the United States,” and Romero confirmed that Grant expressed this viewpoint to President Johnson by stating, “he did not consider the Civil War completely terminated while the French remained in Mexico.”¹⁴⁹ This statement reveals that Grant viewed the two conflicts to be more than simultaneous, they were inextricably linked in his mind.

Romero and Grant knew of this linkage better than almost any other man in the United States government at the time. Their first hand experiences with foreign diplomacy and domestic military strategy respectively put them in positions to analyze the state of the situation in Mexico

¹⁴⁷ "Army Life—Causes of the Mexican War—Camp Salubrity." In *The Personal Memoirs of Ulysses S. Grant: The Complete Annotated Edition*, edited by Marszalek John F., Nolen David S., and Gallo Louie P., 27-37. Cambridge, Massachusetts; London, England: Harvard University Press, 2017. Accessed April 3, 2020. www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctvgd319.10.

¹⁴⁸ Lincoln and the Spot Resolutions discussed in more depth in Chapter 1.

¹⁴⁹ "Conclusion." In *The Personal Memoirs of Ulysses S. Grant: The Complete Annotated Edition*, edited by Marszalek John F., Nolen David S., and Gallo Louie P., 756-64. Cambridge, Massachusetts; London, England: Harvard University Press, 2017. Accessed April 2, 2020. www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctvgd319.78; Romero, *Mexican Lobby*, 65.

following the surrender of the Confederate army. Grant was a U.S. soldier during the Mexican-American War. He believed that the United States' goals of further territory acquisition were related to the expansion of slavery and an desire to increase power and authority. However, Grant did not agree with the ways in which the United States drew Mexico into a war in which the U.S. knew they could win. He wrote that, "nations, like individuals, are punished for their transgressions. We got our punishment in the most sanguinary and expensive war of modern times."¹⁵⁰ Referring to the Civil War as the punishment, Grant asserted that due to this connection, "the Southern rebellion was largely the outgrowth of the Mexican War."¹⁵¹ If the Civil War stemmed from the Mexican-American War, then it followed that Grant saw the U.S. weakening of Mexico as paving the way for France and Maximilian to exploit its state of instability. This created a direct link between the actions of the United States and France, leading to Grant's conclusion that the French intervention was merely an extension of the U.S. Civil War. The two fights to preserve democracy that occurred simultaneously on the North American continent could not exist in their present states (in June 1865) without the other because the U.S. Civil War and the French intervention in Mexico were deeply interconnected, both ideologically and historically.

Despite both President Johnson and William Seward working against Romero and Grant's plans to intervene in the Mexican conflict, neither gave up hope. They continually met, drafted resolutions, and shared their cause with anyone they knew who might be able to help. Due to Grant's unwavering dedication and willingness to aid Mexico, Romero remarked that:

¹⁵⁰ Ulysses S. Grant, "Army Life—Causes of the Mexican War—Camp Salubrity," in *The Personal Memoirs of Ulysses S. Grant: The Complete Annotated Edition*, ed. John F. Marszalek, David S. Nolen, and Louie P. Gallo (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017), 34, <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvgd319.10>.

¹⁵¹ Grant, "Army Life—Causes," 35.

I am very pleased with the extent to which my frequent, long, and cordial conversations with Grant have profited our cause. His [continental] Americanism, good judgement, good intentions, and love of justice have made him realize immediately the importance of the Mexican question and its latent consequences, of benefit to both Mexico and the United States...We can, I believe, already count upon him as one of our country's best friends.¹⁵²

This expression of gratitude and appreciation for Grant's friendship, but also dedication to the causes of continental solidarity and republican government in Mexico, as opposed to the French-created monarchy, highlights Romero's deep connection to Grant. After less than a year of knowing each other, the two men joined forces to fight for a cause they both truly believed in. During Grant's final days, he had a discussion with several Mexican journalists in which he explained the reasoning behind his curious support for Mexico:

My great interest in Mexico has dated back to the war between the United States and that country. My interest was increased when four European monarchies attempted to set up their institutions on this continent, selecting Mexico, a territory adjoining us. It was an outrage on human rights for a foreign nation to attempt to transfer her institutions and her rulers to the territory of a civilized people without their consent.¹⁵³

Through this powerful statement, we see that Grant valued the concept of continental solidarity, as well as standing up for the basic human rights of Mexican citizens, who he believed, deserved national sovereignty and not an imposed monarchy. Romero's praise of Grant and his work on the "Mexican question" is much more profound than his recorded appreciation for many other U.S. politicians, Lincoln included. Romero felt heard and valued by Grant, and believed that the General was truly on his side.

The conclusion of Romero's speech during Grant's 65th birthday memorial, quoted at the beginning of this chapter, further cemented the idea that he believed Grant was a figure that should be offered to the people of the United States as a representative of democratic values.

¹⁵² Romero, *Mexican Lobby*, 65-66.

¹⁵³ Romero, "Speech of Señor," speech, 15-16.

Romero said of Grant that, “this great man...with the gifts of... a most remarkable good sense and a pure character, can be certainly taken as a model of the future generations of this country, and... his birthday in future ages [will be] as sacred for his fellow citizens as Washington’s birthday is at present.”¹⁵⁴ This conclusion is intriguing because both the United States and Mexico choose to honor Abraham Lincoln, rather than Grant.

Romero saw in Grant what many from the United States attribute to Lincoln and his legacy. Due to the United States government’s construction of official memory, many of Lincoln’s admirers saw him as not only the “Savior of the Union,” but also as an internationally recognized champion of liberty and freedom. What many people do not acknowledge in popular discourse surrounding Abraham Lincoln is that the U.S. government intentionally constructed this perception of him. As described by sociologist Barry Schwartz, the use of the ideal characteristics of the sixteenth President, “by lifting the morally significant elements of Lincoln’s life above the mundane,” shows how Lincoln’s status easily became elevated after his murder.¹⁵⁵ I do not intend to deny Lincoln of credit for the work he was responsible for, but rather to call attention to the men and women left out by the intentional centering of Lincoln. The United States government selected to use Lincoln as a symbol and a martyr. The government used him to encompass a variety of political accomplishments during the post-Civil War Era because the dramatic circumstances surrounding his death and the Union victory in the Civil War led to instant international recognition of the name “Lincoln.”

Today, the United States celebrates Presidents’ Day to honor all presidents, but with a particular historical connection to both Washington and Lincoln. Many people in the United

¹⁵⁴ Romero, “Speech of Señor,” speech, 16.

¹⁵⁵ Barry Schwartz, *Abraham Lincoln and the Forge of National Memory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 6.

States can identify monuments of and memorials to both Washington and Lincoln, but likely not to Grant. The former general and eighteenth President of the United States clearly had an immense impact on Romero, many individuals, and the preservation of the nation, but he did not have enough political influence or power to be remembered to the same extent as the first and sixteenth presidents. Romero's mention of Grant's birthday becoming one that is celebrated on a national level is an idea that never came to be. Grant's name never reached the level of symbolism as that of Lincoln, leaving him left out of the major national celebrations in honor of memories officially established by the United States government.

The success of the Union, quickly followed by the dramatic assassination of Lincoln created space for the national authority, the U.S. government, to organize the celebration of Abraham Lincoln's life. The intense national, and even international, mourning that occurred following his death facilitated the government's process of creating an institutionalized memory. His funeral train made its way from D.C. all the way to Springfield, Illinois for his burial. The stops along the way allowed U.S. Americans to pay their respects to their fallen president.¹⁵⁶ This opportunity allowed for the United States to claim recognition, using Lincoln's name to do so, on an international scale.

While Romero is clearly an essential historical player in connections between the U.S. Civil War and the French intervention in Mexico, his role is subverted, within popular knowledge, to the reputation of Lincoln. I argue that this stems from U.S. views of superiority, or "American Exceptionalism," in comparison to Mexico, originating all the way back to the Mexican-American War of the 1840s.¹⁵⁷ During the Civil War Era, many in the United States

¹⁵⁶ F. Lauriston Bullard, *Lincoln in Marble and Bronze* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1952), 76.

¹⁵⁷ American Exceptionalism is discussed and defined in Chapter 1.

saw Mexico through a lens of racism and discrimination. This resulted in the belief that Mexicans were not as capable of defending themselves as the United States was. Due to this skewed perception of Mexico and its people, some of the members of U.S. society who knew of Romero, discounted his position and capability. His views on both Grant and Lincoln are rarely discussed when it comes to the roles of these two men in the “Mexican question” because his stance, a clear distaste for Lincoln, directly opposes the official memory that is constructed by the United States government in an attempt to gain international sympathy and support.¹⁵⁸

The commitments of Romero and Vega, as well as others from both the United States and Mexico, got the United States engaged in the Liberal cause. This showed that there was a huge network of supporters throughout the continent.¹⁵⁹ However, former President Lincoln does not appear in the majority of these narratives. Active U.S. engagement in the Mexican conflict did not really begin until the conclusion of the Civil War on U.S. soil, and after Lincoln had been assassinated. The rediscovery of the role of these other key players helps us to consider the complexities of understanding the past. The four statues of President Lincoln in Mexico do not represent the entire story of the United States’ relationship with Mexico during the 1860s, which is why awareness and understanding of the roles of men like Grant, Romero, and Vega are crucial to a more complete version of this history.

I argue that the work of these men was subverted and ultimately abstracted to fall under the grand category of Abraham Lincoln and his accomplishments. His name and figure become synonymous with ideas of both national and individual liberties and freedoms, as well as national

¹⁵⁸ I will further explain the construction of “official memory” as a term and as it relates in Chapter 4.

¹⁵⁹ The states involved include: Louisiana, Texas, Ohio, New York, California, Nevada, as well as additional cities in the midwest region. A complete list of organizations and locations in the United States can be found on page 231 of *The American Legion of Honor in Mexico*.

democracy, due to the significant domestic event that he led the United States through, and the intense circumstances surrounding his death. As I will explain in the next chapter, in the years that followed Lincoln's death, he became a symbol for these terms, and ultimately came to represent entire groups of men and women who worked tirelessly for their own distinct causes. This heroic view of Lincoln is not accidental. It is one that has been, and continues to be, constructed by the United States government and further preserved through the work of historians and general citizens of the past and present. The word "Lincoln" no longer references just the man himself, our sixteenth president, it represents the ideal values of the United States, which have been extrapolated to cover the work of men and women following Lincoln's death. Working within the context of Lincoln's former nation, we see the contributions of individuals such as Romero, Vega, and Grant.

While Lincoln is almost entirely excluded from the narratives described in this chapter, the values he has come to stand for have taken over. As a result, Lincoln's association with historical successes and democratic ideals led to his establishment as a symbol for these ideas. Mexico's admiration of Lincoln is evident through the statues of him, while the United States has an established narrative of Lincoln that focuses on him as a hero of our nation. As the next chapter explains, Lincoln's name and figure become part of an institutionalized memorialization effort by the United States government, as they work to control the formation of a historical narrative. His memorialization must also be understood within the context of both time and space- where sites of memory exist, when they were constructed, and why Lincoln became an international symbol of democracy who needed to be memorialized.

CHAPTER FOUR

*The Creation of Memory in the United States and Mexico
1865 - The Present*

“Every man is said to have his peculiar ambition. Whether it be true or not, I can say for one that I have no other so great as that of being truly esteemed by my fellow men, by rendering myself worthy of their esteem. How far I shall succeed in gratifying this ambition is yet to be developed.”¹⁶⁰ - Abraham Lincoln, March 9, 1832

Abraham Lincoln spoke to a crowd in Sangamon County, Illinois just a month after his 23rd birthday. While not aware of what the future would hold for him, he expressed his desire to accomplish things in his life that would command the respect of others. Essentially, he spoke about the desire to succeed in ways that would allow him to be greatly remembered. This brief excerpt from this address includes references to his present feelings, and his aspirations for the future. With the immense benefit of hindsight, we can see that his goal of being remembered has gone beyond what any person in that era would have been able to imagine. Through this final chapter, I will identify the ways in which Lincoln is memorialized in the United States and abroad, with a particular focus on Mexico. Then, I will analyze the driving forces behind these memorialization techniques and identify the complications that arise from this creation of a collective and institutionalized memory.

In everyday life, we make references to the movement of time, to the past, the present, and the future. We say that time passes or that there is not enough of it. We say that the past is in the past, and we should just move on from it. We remind each other to live in the present, and not worry about what happened yesterday, or what will happen tomorrow. Or, we say to never forget the past in order to avoid repeating previous mistakes. These pieces of advice are well-intentioned, but ignore the implications of the actual past, present, and future, and the work they do on each other. The present is constructed in relation to both the past and the future, so

¹⁶⁰ Abraham Lincoln (address, Sangamon County, IL, March 9, 1832), quoted in Lincoln Sesquicentennial Commission, comp., *Abraham Lincoln Sesquicentennial, 1959-1960: Final Report* (Washington, D.C., 1960), XIII, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/uiuo.ark:/13960/t2j67gs80>.

they are all deeply interconnected, and cannot be looked at in pure isolation. These three delineations, or markers, of time (past, present, future) are constructed as a way for people to organize, identify, and understand events. They are not “things” but rather human creations as a way to establish a sense of order in the world. The past serves as a foundation for the present because what occurred, then influenced the course of action that got us to the now. The present, in turn, is the precursor to the future; what occurs in the present sets up the course of events that will follow in the future.

In the context of this research, I want to draw attention to this work that the past does on the present, and ultimately on the future. I aim to understand and explain how and why Abraham Lincoln is memorialized in North America, and the ways in which people’s views of him have changed over time. Mexico possesses four statues of Lincoln, and has immortalized him through these physical representations.¹⁶¹ In Mexico’s own historical context, with particular reference to the Liberal Mexican struggle against the French intervention, Lincoln has come to embody the role of the United States in that conflict.

I will first examine the multiple meanings ascribed to the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C. and how these meanings have changed over time. Then I will turn to an analysis of two of the four statues in Mexico and the ways in which institutional memory plays a role in establishing a historical narrative.¹⁶² I aim to uncover the significance of Lincoln in Mexico through examination of two of the Lincoln statues that Mexico proudly displays. Due to the creation of a global memorialization of Lincoln, he is identified all around the world as the

¹⁶¹ While many nations around the world possess statues of or memorials to former President Lincoln, it is significant that there are four statues within one foreign nation.

¹⁶² For the statues in Mexico, I do not have access sources that allow me to tell the popular narrative regarding these statues. I cannot read or understand Spanish, which prevents me from analyzing how the people of Mexico interpret and reinterpret these statues, as I was able to do with the Lincoln Memorial.

primary defender of democracy. However, as we have already come to understand, Lincoln did not actively provide support to Mexico during their struggle against the French. In spite of this, he is still honored by Mexico in a variety of ways. I suggest historical, ideological, and political reasons that Lincoln, rather than any of the other key figures discussed in previous chapters, receives such honor within and beyond his own nation.

I will identify the ways in which these selected sites can help us to understand how various individuals and organizations have transformed the memory of Lincoln over time. Additionally, I will explore what motivated them to modify the view of Lincoln both in the United States and around the world. I argue that the function of memory serves to return a past to the present.¹⁶³ By this, I mean that various forms of memory bring events of the past into our present. These past events are what we, in the present, consider to be “history.” Memory allows for the recall of these historical events in the present, and we continue to remember them, further cementing these events as ones of the past.¹⁶⁴

In particular, I emphasize the significance of collective memory as it relates to reinterpretation of the Lincoln Memorial. Collective memory is a way for societies to reflect their own personal experiences by way of reinterpreting the past. This type of memory is created through continuous reinforcement of ideas, as well as with the use of official memory, which is

¹⁶³ Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, 2000, in *The Collective Memory Reader*, ed. Jeffery K. Olick, Vered Vinitzky-Seroussi, and Daniel Levy (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 476.

¹⁶⁴ For more on what has shaped my thinking on this topic, I have provided additional context for the understanding of writing about memory and history: The historical past is a concept which allows us to reflect on a people in a place before the now. This term allows for the analysis of events that are in the past, relative to my own life. The historical present is when we talk about people in their present. If I were to write in the historical present, I would have to avoid the pitfalls that come with hindsight, which is often a challenge for many historians. I would need to remove my own personal judgements and identities in order to write in this way. The historical future identifies the creation of a future in the present. Through one’s actions in the present, he/she is setting the course for things that will happen in his/her future. This future that is being actively created is one that is already part of history, due to its creation in the present. These ideas are crucial for the understanding of the ways in which history and memory are intertwined. Cited here: Chandra Bhimull (lecture, Colby College, Waterville, ME, October 28, 2019).

constructed by a person or group in a position of power. Official, or institutional memory, becomes important for the analysis of the states of Lincoln in Mexico.

Societies create and preserve collective memories in multiple ways, such as creating physical locations or representations of people/places/events to be remembered, as well as continual discourse surrounding the subject to be remembered. These methods, individually and collectively, result in the transfer of a past into the present. James Young explains that there is a difference between the specific aims of monuments and memorials. Memorials are used to recall past death and/or ritualize a form of remembrance. Monuments, on the other hand, function as celebratory markers that make the subject something or someone perpetually present.¹⁶⁵ Statues, the subject of my work, fall into the category of both a monument and a memorial. A memorial represents something or someone that should never be forgotten, while a monument indicates something or someone that should always be remembered. Young explains statues as “a monument to heroism” while simultaneously a “memorial to tragic loss.”¹⁶⁶ From this knowledge, we can understand how the memory and memorialization produced by the construction of a statue can easily change over time, due to the formation of both collective and official memories.

The four statues of Abraham Lincoln in Mexico, two of which I examine in this chapter through the lens of official memory, as well as the thousands of statues of him that exist around the globe, are a monument to his achievements, but also a memorial of his tragic death. In a traditional analysis, we understand that the creators and commissioners of these works want us to always remember Lincoln’s successes, while also encouraging us, as viewers, to never forget the

¹⁶⁵ Young, *The Texture*, 3.

¹⁶⁶ Young, *The Texture*, 4.

tragedy associated with the end of his life. However, as I will go on to explain, these statues are part of a larger, targeted narrative that aimed to provide physical representations of nations united by their belief in democracy as a socio-political system.

Before I analyze the statues of Lincoln in Mexico, it is crucial to address one of the most widely recognized sites dedicated to the former President: The Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C. (see fig. 8). This site is one of great national pride, but also one of significant controversy for many in the United States, both past and present. The way U.S. Americans have used, and continue to use, it illustrates how the meaning of a memorial, but this one in particular, can be transformed over time through the functions of both collective and official memory. These memories can be exploited and altered in order to rally the nation, based on the social, political, or economic situation at hand. Providing an example of the way Lincoln is memorialized within the U.S. helps to establish a basis for the broader continental claims about the ways in which he is remembered.

The Memorial was revealed on Memorial Day, May 30, 1922 (see fig. 9). Some initial viewers critiqued its exterior resemblance to a Greek temple and the work's lack of ability to fully encapsulate Lincoln's personality, while others admire the clear mark of nobility presented by the design, as well as the ease with which the work was able to function fluidly between time periods.¹⁶⁷ Essentially, some Americans felt that the Memorial appeared dated, which would leave Lincoln and the memory of him in the past. Others, though, saw it as a structure that could transcend architectural trends, allowing the Memorial to remain culturally, politically, and

¹⁶⁷ Bullard, *Lincoln in Marble*, 336.

socially relevant well into the future. At the dedication ceremony, Lincoln's son, Robert Todd Lincoln, was present, as was then-President Warren G. Harding (see fig. 10).



Fig. 8: Lincoln Memorial from afar¹⁶⁸



Fig. 9: Dedication of Lincoln Memorial May 30, 1922¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁸ *Dedication, Lincoln Memorial, 5/30/22, 1922, photograph, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2016846402/>.*

¹⁶⁹ *Dedication Lincoln Memorial, 5/30/22, 1922, photograph, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2016846410/>.*

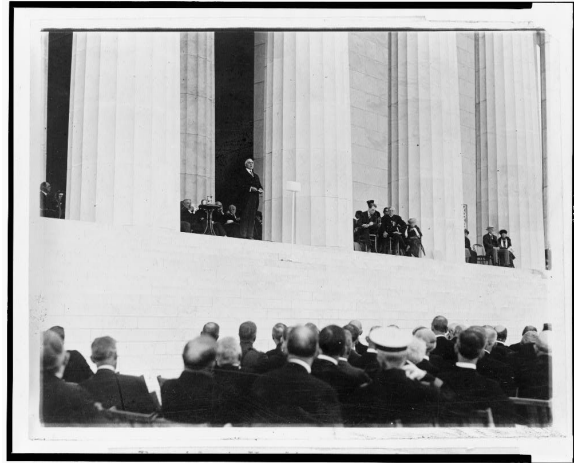


Fig. 10: President Warren G. Harding Addressing the Crowd at the Dedication of the Lincoln Memorial¹⁷⁰

During the ceremony, Harding explained that, “Lincoln ended slavery only to save the Union, not to bring liberty to an oppressed people.”¹⁷¹ While this assessment may have satisfied some, it was not nuanced enough for others, because many people believed Lincoln fought to end slavery, as well as for the preservation of the Union. Harding spoke about the intent of Lincoln's actions, something which is ambiguous, even today.¹⁷² In portraying Lincoln's motives as purely political, Harding avoided the discussion of Lincoln's moral stance on slavery and eliminated the significance of the African-Americans, who, as slaves, were the central point of controversy in the U.S. Civil War. Harding's willful disregard of these formerly enslaved people sanctioned the mistreatment, discrimination, and prejudice that many white Americans exhibited toward African-Americans during the Jim Crow Era.

Another notable attendee at the dedication was Dr. Robert R. Moton, the principal of the Tuskegee Institute, described as being the “representative of his race.”¹⁷³ This marking of Moton

¹⁷⁰ *President Harding snapped [i.e., snapped] at the dedication ceremonies of the Lincoln Memorial today, May 30, 1922, photograph, <https://www.loc.gov/item/94503006/>.*

¹⁷¹ Harold Holzer, *Emancipating Lincoln* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), 165-166.

¹⁷² The debate about Lincoln's moral character, and ultimately his reason for issuing the Emancipation Proclamation, is one that is still discussed in academic circles of the present.

¹⁷³ Bullard, *Lincoln in Marble*, 340.

as the singular representative of African-Americans is incredibly problematic because of the broader social implications that existed during the Jim Crow Era. The other white men at the dedication ceremony utilized Moton's identity to "prove" their inclusivity. The description of Moton as the singular representative of all African-Americans, and the fact that any people of color in attendance at the event were forced to stand at the back of the crowd, highlighted the ceremony as just another representation of race relations in their present day.¹⁷⁴ Another criticism of the Memorial, at the time of its creation, came from Americans who believed one of Lincoln's greatest successes was freeing the slaves. To this group of people, it was shocking that the Memorial bears not a single reference to the Emancipation Proclamation. These criticisms still echo in the minds of some of the domestic and international visitors to the Memorial site in the present day. Inside the temple-like structure are quotes from what have been deemed to be Lincoln's two greatest works: The Second Inaugural Address and the Gettysburg Address. Despite the major legal, political, social, and economic changes altered by the Emancipation Proclamation, its words were not selected to be forever etched into the walls of the Memorial. However, the writing placed above the statue reads:

IN THIS TEMPLE
AS IN THE HEARTS OF THE PEOPLE
FOR WHOM HE SAVED THE UNION
THE MEMORY OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN
IS ENSHRINED FOREVER¹⁷⁵

There is no mention of slavery and Lincoln's Proclamation that legally ended it as an institution.

¹⁷⁴ Holzer, *Emancipating Lincoln*, 166.

¹⁷⁵ National Park Service, "Lincoln Memorial Inscriptions," National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, last modified April 18, 2020, <https://www.nps.gov/linc/learn/historyculture/inscriptions.htm>.

The inscription commands viewers to participate in the recalling of the past. It clearly states that those in the past, the people who benefitted from Lincoln's ultimate sacrifice, should always remember that he saved the Union for their benefit. However, the second speaker at the dedication, William Howard Taft said that the Memorial, "marked the final restoration of 'brotherly love' between North and South. However, nothing was said about brotherly love between blacks and whites."¹⁷⁶ According to Barry Schwartz, the United States Congress built the Memorial in order to commemorate "regional, not racial, reconciliation."¹⁷⁷ The original intent of this massive site of memory was focused on rebuilding and reuniting the nation, rather than celebrating the ending of slavery and the newfound freedom for African-Americans. Again, the speakers at the dedication ceremony, as well as the actual intent of the Memorial itself, attempted to invalidate the existence of the group of oppressed people most significantly impacted by Lincoln's actions. This intentional subversion of African-Americans ultimately perpetuated the ongoing oppression of black Americans. The 'official' memory produced by the inscription on the Memorial wall is open to interpretation. Viewers can understand "the people for whom he saved the Union" to mean either white Americans, or the slaves that he freed through the Emancipation Proclamation. The ceremony speakers, though, attempted to create the "official" memory of Lincoln as one that focused on national unity, rather than racial relations.

Statues are intriguing objects because their physical appearance usually remains unchanged, but the meaning viewers derive from these works of art change over time. The Lincoln Memorial has served as a site for events since it was opened. Marian Anderson, a African-American singer, performed here in 1939. She sang to a crowd of 75,000 people from a

¹⁷⁶ Barry Schwartz, *Abraham Lincoln and the Forge of National Memory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 5.

¹⁷⁷ Schwartz, *Abraham Lincoln*, 5.

stage put up in front of the Memorial, because the prejudiced views of white Americans prevented her, as an artist of color, from being able to book a venue for a performance that would accommodate the thousands of people that hoped to see her perform.¹⁷⁸ Constitution Hall, a venue that had enough space for the show, was owned by the Daughters of the American Revolution, who insisted on upholding the segregated contract laws for performers at the venue, therefore refusing to hold Anderson's concert there. She opened her performance with the song, 'My Country Tis of Thee', a tune that suggests her decision to bring awareness to the hypocrisy of the "freedoms" that the United States prided itself on.¹⁷⁹ The National Park Service declared, retrospectively, that this performance marked a shift in meaning for the Memorial. The building itself and statue of Lincoln inside went "...from being solely a place to celebrate the reunited nation to one that also represented the struggle to extend freedom to every American citizen."¹⁸⁰ This concert was the first step toward the creation of this new meaning of the Lincoln Memorial that was furthered by others in the 20th century who worked toward racial equality in the United States. In the present, we see this moment as an illustration of the malleability of Lincoln and the collective memory surrounding him. Anderson's song selection was just the beginning of attempts that would draw attention to exclusions and qualifications that the United States placed on peoples' rights and freedoms.

In 1963, Martin Luther King, Jr. gave his infamous 'I Have a Dream' speech from the steps of the Memorial. This event evoked Lincoln as a heroic figure who fought for rights and equality. There is now a granite inscription of King's words, which identify the spot where he

¹⁷⁸ Susan Stamberg, "Denied a Stage, She Sang for a Nation," NPR, last modified April 9, 2014, <https://www.npr.org/2014/04/09/298760473/denied-a-stage-she-sang-for-a-nation>.

¹⁷⁹ Stamberg, "Denied a Stage," NPR.

¹⁸⁰ National Park Service, "Lincoln Memorial Important Individuals," National Park Service, last modified April 10, 2015, <https://www.nps.gov/linc/learn/historyculture/lincoln-memorial-important-individuals.htm>.

stood to deliver this address to a crowd of over 200,000 people, both black and white.¹⁸¹ The choice to finish the “March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom” at the Lincoln Memorial evoked socially constructed memories of Lincoln and the values he promoted during his time in the White House. Almost 100 years after his death, Lincoln’s figure was used as a physical representation of the values that Martin Luther King Jr. hoped to convey to the participants and viewers of the March.

However, many contemporary authors, such as Barry Schwartz, contradict this conception of him. Schwartz wrote of Lincoln that he “...was no civil rights champion. He was a Whig who believed in emancipation followed by colonization (deportation) of all former slaves and free blacks.”¹⁸² As Schwartz further explains, sites of memory, like the Lincoln Memorial, serve to “offset the otherwise unpleasant truths of history.”¹⁸³ Collective memory explains the ability of a society to resolve the tension between two contradicting versions of the same story. This occurs through the subversion of this negative, but perhaps not entirely inaccurate, perception of Lincoln in favor of the more positive, constructed meaning that has been constantly reaffirmed by influential Americans, like Martin Luther King Jr. Lincoln’s continuous association with the values of freedom and equality made his memorial the perfect place to gather in support of Martin Luther King’s goals and simultaneously perpetuate this form of collective memory.

One of the most recent events to take place at the Lincoln Memorial was a reception held there in 2009 by president-elect Barack Obama, the first African-American president in United

¹⁸¹ National Park Service, “We Shall Overcome-- Historic Places of the Civil Rights Movement,” National Park Service, <http://nps.gov/nr/travel/civilrights/dc1.htm>.

¹⁸² Schwartz, *Abraham Lincoln*, 2. ; See pages 2-5 in the book to read Schwartz’s selected quotes from Abraham Lincoln in which Lincoln explained he did not want racial equality in the United States.

¹⁸³ Schwartz, *Abraham Lincoln*, 79.

States history.¹⁸⁴ This event served as a way for Lincoln to be a part of a goal of eventual equality that Lincoln did not live long enough to see. Having the reception at this statue of Lincoln allowed him to symbolically participate in the celebration of the momentous triumph of Barack Obama. The evocation of Lincoln's physical body served to represent the values of freedom and equality that have long been attributed to Lincoln's presidency. As the first African-American president in the United States, Obama's choice to hold the reception at this site dedicated to Lincoln reshapes the way we think about the past. While people like Warren Harding and William Howard Taft focused on Lincoln's role in bringing the nation together geographically, Obama utilized Lincoln as a symbol of bringing society and humanity together. Obama's recent action drew a clear connection to the past, but changed the intended interpretation, which collective memory allowed him to do, to fit with what he needed at the time. Collective memory, therefore, is malleable and has the capability to be used for diverse efforts. Monuments and memorials, as sites where collective memory occurs and is continuously reinforced, are sites of the construction, revision, and strengthening of this type of memory.

Collective memory reinforces beliefs and understandings through a unified force. It is essentially a form of distorted history, because it combines historical occurrences with ways of remembering specific symbols.¹⁸⁵ Lincoln, as an internationally known figure, is one of the most interesting characters to analyze through collective memory, because he is constantly being reinterpreted and reused as a symbol of ideals that were ascribed to him following his death. Additionally, people have a selective memory when it comes to Lincoln; people have only

¹⁸⁴ Holzer, *Emancipating Lincoln*, 168-169.

¹⁸⁵ Schwartz, *Abraham Lincoln*, 6-8. ; While history is distorted in some ways due to the nature of the discipline (bias, etc.), the distortion created by collective memory is one that could be avoided. However, due to the power and influence of collective memory, it will likely continue to be used as a tool of controlling a particular narrative to the benefit of a person/group in a position of authority.

remembered what they want to about Lincoln.¹⁸⁶ This is what makes collective memory an intriguing lens to analyze Lincoln- the memory people of the United States have of him is entirely reflective of the ways in which people utilize him as a symbol for their own purposes.

As understood from prior analysis, the original intent of this site was not to celebrate the freedom of the enslaved. The ambiguity of Lincoln's intent behind freeing slaves in the South further complicates the 'heroization' of Lincoln, because many people saw, and still see him, as the savior of the slaves and of democratic government. Lincoln is connected to some of the most divisive issues in U.S. history, and his motives are still under scrutiny: did he free the slaves to save the Union, or because he genuinely believed in the immorality of slavery? This controversy remains relevant in the present day because people are unsure of how to reconcile Lincoln's public legacy with these contradictions to the traditional narrative of Abraham Lincoln as a national hero.

However, over the course of time, various key figures have taken the Memorial and reshaped its social and historical meaning, by giving the site a host of new events and experiences to be associated with it. Of course, the choices of Martin Luther King, Jr., Marian Anderson, and Barack Obama stemmed from other socially constructed ideals of President Lincoln and his stance on slavery. Society, at the times of these events, saw Lincoln as a national hero, particularly for his emancipation of formerly enslaved peoples. This made his memorial the perfect location to hold their events, because it forced the recollection of Lincoln and the values broadly associated with him. The events also reminded audiences of Lincoln's perceived

¹⁸⁶ Schwartz, *Abraham Lincoln*, 12.

willingness to fight for the end of slavery, which evoked intense emotions and brought attention to racial injustice.

Ron Eyerman suggests that “the past becomes the present through symbolic interactions.”¹⁸⁷ This perspective holds true for the Lincoln Memorial, as evidenced by the multiple events held there. A concert, a speech, and a celebratory reception indicate how Lincoln’s physical image and values, as depicted by the Lincoln Memorial, have remained. These events also highlight how he has been reinterpreted and utilized by various people of color with the goal of demonstrating the quest for equality and freedom for all people in the United States, regardless of the color of their skin.

Abraham Lincoln is a fixture in U.S. society as a result of his leadership throughout the Civil War. There are over 200 statues of Lincoln in the United States alone, indicating that people in the past have felt that he is worth both remembering and not forgetting.¹⁸⁸ The incredibly high number of statues indicates the significance that Lincoln had, and continues to have, on this nation, lasted long after the end of the Civil War and after his murder. Other nations in North America, Mexico in particular, also saw, and continue to see, this lasting legacy of Lincoln as something that can be preserved in both monumental and memorial form. As previously mentioned, Mexico has four different statues of the 16th U.S. President in four different cities. Each one is created in a context unique to its craftspeople and its geographic location. By exploring the historical and physical contexts in which these statues exist, I aim to

¹⁸⁷ Ron Eyerman, "The Past in the Present: Culture and the Transmission of Memory," 2004, in *The Collective Memory Reader*, ed. Jeffery K. Olick, Vered Vinizky-Seroussi, and Daniel Levy (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 305.

¹⁸⁸ Scott Turow, "Statue Stories Chicago: Abraham Lincoln," Statue Stories Chicago, <http://www.statuestorieschicago.com/statues/statue-lincoln/>; For additional context: Remembrance refers to the continued reinforcement of a memory, while not forgetting is about preventing a memory from being lost.

articulate why Lincoln has continued, from the 1860s through to the present day, to be a significant figure in Mexican history, one that was important enough to memorialize in material form.

In order to understand the motivation behind the creation of these statues and forms of remembrance in the second part of the 20th century, we must discuss the global historical context of the Cold War Era. Following the conclusion of World War II in 1945, the United States emerged as a global hegemonic power. The primary goal of the United States in the period that followed was the pursuit of a policy of containment of communism.¹⁸⁹ This meant that the U.S. would take action, if necessary, in order to stop the spread of communism beyond where it already existed.¹⁹⁰ Political scientist Lars Schoultz explained that, "...communism as an economic policy is not a threat... U.S. citizens conceive of the threat in terms of political ideology communism vs. pluralism or, more commonly, dictatorship vs. democracy."¹⁹¹ Schoultz went on to say that the "idea of communism" was less problematic in the minds of U.S. policy makers than when it is "...coupled in some way with the armed might of a superpower."¹⁹² This information becomes relevant in the discussion of the memory of Abraham Lincoln, because he became the symbolic figure of U.S. democracy, and physical representations and celebrations of Lincoln and his values were used to implicitly mark other nations' support of the pro-democracy and anti-communist movements. This drove many U.S. politicians and citizens, who feared the

¹⁸⁹ Lar Schoultz, "Communism," In *National Security and United States Policy Toward Latin America*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), 106.

¹⁹⁰ The idea of not threatening communism where it already exists, while simultaneously preventing its spread (containment policy), echoes the United States' pre- and early Civil War Era idea of not destroying the system of slavery where it already existed, but not allowing its expansion either. This comparison is minimally relevant here, but provides an opportunity for further reflection of the similarities of these two situations.

¹⁹¹ Schoultz, "Communism," 106.

¹⁹² Schoultz, "Communism," 106-107.

spread of communism, to promote the collective remembering of Lincoln and the democratic system he died to preserve.

On September 2, 1957, the United States Congress approved the formation of the Lincoln Sesquicentennial Commission.¹⁹³ The purpose of this group was to organize domestic and international celebrations and commemorations in honor of the 150th anniversary of the birth of Abraham Lincoln. The introduction of the document states, “the wish of the American people, as expressed through their representatives in Congress, to commemorate the anniversary in a fitting and proper manner, signifies that they have not forgotten the virtues exemplified by him, and they intend to perpetuate them in the American way of life.”¹⁹⁴ The Commission’s explicit mission was to include people of all backgrounds within the United States and abroad, while the implicit goal, I argue, came from the United States government’s Cold War Era desire to determine other nations’ stance on democracy versus communism.¹⁹⁵ While gauging initial interest in this year-long celebration, “one working closely with the Commission soon had the feeling that the name ‘Lincoln’ is still magic in our land, and the principles and ideals of which he stood hold the interest of the people of the world.”¹⁹⁶ The U.S. government established the framework for commemorating Lincoln, creating an institutionalized form of remembrance. The government published this almost 200-page document as a way to make their work part of the official historical record, and provide easier access to this information. This institutionalized form of memory functioned as a way for the United States to tell the specific narrative that they

¹⁹³ Lincoln Sesquicentennial Commission, *Abraham Lincoln*, VII.

¹⁹⁴ Lincoln Sesquicentennial Commission, *Abraham Lincoln*, XIII.

¹⁹⁵ In this Cold War context, I define communism as more than just an economic structure, as a political and social system as well. In doing so, I use the term communism to encompass all three of those aspects, which makes it comparable to the system of democracy. Democracy, as it has been used throughout this work, includes the economic, political, and social aspects of a nation.

¹⁹⁶ Lincoln Sesquicentennial Commission, *Abraham Lincoln*, XIII.

wanted people around the world to read. It encouraged other nations to participate in this celebration, and in doing so, identify themselves as friends of democracy and enemies of communism. By publishing everything together in this document, which served as a form of propaganda, the United States had significant influence over what the public knew. At the end of the introductory section, it states that of the “most significant of all aspects of the Lincoln Sesquicentennial Year is the fact that by international accord, Lincoln is recognized as transcending partisan consideration and is the ‘Symbol of the Free Man’.”¹⁹⁷ This title framed the way in which the United States aimed to have Lincoln portrayed around the world. It also sought to identify the United States as one of world’s most powerful democratic nations, in hopes of unifying an international coalition of anti-communist sentiment.

Later in the document, there is an entire section centered around Lincoln’s international influence. This section served to identify those nations that had essentially confirmed their support of not just Lincoln, but of democracy. Countries that had particularly large or significant celebrations were included with their own subsection. The beginning of this section states:

His image as the symbol of the free man grows in the hearts of people the world over. The Sesquicentennial celebration abroad showed a growing hunger among the millions of the world to seek ways of working toward a goal of understanding and peace. Examples of Lincoln’s life inspired organizations, institutions, and individuals in some 90 foreign countries to cooperation in spreading his ideals and principles throughout the world. There was no set pattern of participation--each country celebrated according to its own customs.¹⁹⁸

This section clearly aimed to serve the United States’ reputation, as the world power aimed to serve as a global model for values of liberty, equality, freedom, and democracy. The inclusion of

¹⁹⁷ Lincoln Sesquicentennial Commission, *Abraham Lincoln*, XIV.

¹⁹⁸ Lincoln Sesquicentennial Commission, *Abraham Lincoln*, 100.

so many countries was purposeful; it demonstrated implicit unity against communism through the honoring of Lincoln as the symbol of democracy.

Within this international chapter, Mexico has its own section, detailing the ways in which our southern neighbor celebrated the anniversary of Lincoln's birth. In 1959, U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower traveled to Mexico and gifted Mexico's president a bust of Abraham Lincoln crafted by Leo Cherne. This gift was meant to symbolize "freedom and friendship" between the United States and Mexico.¹⁹⁹ The bust rests in Guadalajara, Mexico, along the Avenue of the Americas, which lies just outside the city. During the celebration taking place in honor of Lincoln, the mayor of Guadalajara announced the naming of Lincoln Street, as well as the display of a bronze plaque that commemorated the 150th anniversary of the birth of Lincoln. The entire ceremony was broadcast on the radio in Guadalajara, as well as other areas of Mexico.²⁰⁰ The material representation of Lincoln in Mexico supports the idea that his body acts as a conduit for conveying the values of freedom, equality, and good relations between the United States and Mexico.

In addition to these celebrations, other areas in Mexico memorialized Lincoln in other ways, as part of the anniversary of his birth. Mexico City held various public celebrations, as well as an essay contest named after Lincoln, which encouraged young students to participate. In Monterrey, the city held a five week lecture series at the University of Nuevo Leon. The beginning of the ceremony was recorded and broadcast around Mexico, as were the lectures in the series. Topics of the lectures focused on Lincoln's work in the White House. A local artist from the city created an oil painting of former President Lincoln, and said he "hoped the

¹⁹⁹ Lincoln Sesquicentennial Commission, *Abraham Lincoln*, 119.

²⁰⁰ Lincoln Sesquicentennial Commission, *Abraham Lincoln*, 120.

painting would demonstrate the respect and affection that the Mexican people feel for Abraham Lincoln.”²⁰¹ Through these various forms of remembrance and commemoration, Lincoln became a celebrated and incredibly well-known figure throughout Mexico.

To close the section on Mexico’s relationship with Lincoln and the ways in which the nation chose to honor him, there is a letter from Robert C. Hill, who was the U.S. Ambassador to Mexico during the time of the Commission. The letter was, in a way, a diplomatic necessity during this Cold War Era. He wrote, “Lincoln is one of our historic figures who commands great admiration throughout Latin America and especially here in Mexico where he is placed side by side with Benito Juárez, one of Mexico’s national heroes...He stands for those enduring and eternal principles and values of our democratic system of Government: equality and justice.”²⁰² Here, the Ambassador draws a clear connection between Lincoln’s name and figure and the values he is associated with. As a government figure, Hill furthered the creation of an institutionalized form of remembering, in that his correspondence was kept and valued due to his political status. Additionally, Hill’s statement implicitly confirmed Mexican support of democracy in the global conflict between democracy and communism. This serves as an example of how political authority provides opportunities for contributions to the construction of official, institutional memory. While some of these events stemmed from the work of the U.S. government, the Mexican government also contributed to the organization of an official memory, likely as a way to further associate themselves with Lincoln’s memory, his collectively understood ideals, and to gain the respect and protection of their northern neighbors. By

²⁰¹ Lincoln Sesquicentennial Commission, *Abraham Lincoln*, 120.

²⁰² Lincoln Sesquicentennial Commission, *Abraham Lincoln*, 120.

participating in this memorialization of Lincoln, Mexico could discreetly display support for the U.S. democratic side of the Cold War.

A few years passed following the Sesquicentennial before the first full Lincoln statue was erected in Mexico. The statue itself came to rest in Ciudad Juárez, and was placed on Paseo Lincoln, or 'Lincoln Boulevard' (see Fig. 11). It was revealed and dedicated on April 10, 1964.²⁰³ Crafted by Angel Terrac, and standing eleven and a half feet tall, Lincoln is depicted in what is known as the orator's pose. He is standing in this way in "memory of the eloquence of the Gettysburg Address that showed his people the path of right."²⁰⁴ Antonio J. Bermudez, Director General of Mexico's National Border Program, delivered these words as part of his dedication address to what was deemed to be an "Abraham Lincoln memorial." The use of the term "memorial," defined as a way to ritualize remembrance, to describe the statue raises questions about the purpose and goals of its material presence.²⁰⁵

Classifying this statue as a memorial indicates that the work is intended to continually reinforce the memory of Abraham Lincoln. Additionally, Bermudez's role as a government official furthers the inherently constructed form of institutionalized memory. As an authority figure, his words were heard by people throughout Mexico, but also around the world, and they were cemented into an institutionally controlled historical narrative. However, there is certainly the possibility of other created meanings through popular, collective memory.²⁰⁶ At the time of

²⁰³ Herald-Post, "Leaders of Two Nations Praise Lincoln and Juarez," in *Statues of Abraham Lincoln*, comp. Lincoln Financial Foundation (Indiana State Library, 1964), previously published in *Herald-Post* (El Paso, TX), April 10, 1964, <https://archive.org/details/statuesofabrahtlinc/page/n29/mode/2up>.

²⁰⁴ Antonio Bermudez, speech, April 10, 1964, in *Statues of Abraham Lincoln*, comp. Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection (n.p.: Indiana State Library, 2012), <https://archive.org/details/statuesofabrahtlinc/>.

²⁰⁵ Young, *The Texture*, 3.

²⁰⁶ Due to source and language limitations, I do not have access to collective or popular memories as they pertain to this statue.

the statue's installation, though, still in the midst of the Cold War Era, Mexico had to continue to demonstrate anti-communist sentiment in order to remain in line with the United States. Mexico reinterpreted the global view of Lincoln, based on standards set by the United States, in order to provide evidence and implicit support of democracy.



Fig. 11: Lincoln Statue in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico²⁰⁷

This statue, erected in 1964, came to fruition just a year before the establishment of ‘maquiladoras’, a system of labor in towns along the U.S./Mexico border that allowed Mexican workers who were seeking employment in the United States to work within their nation’s borders, but still receive some of the benefits of working for a U.S. based organization. These assembly stations receive raw materials from the U.S., create a finished product, and then export the product back to the United States. This system worked incredibly well in terms of providing

²⁰⁷ Lincoln in Ciudad Juárez, April 10, 1964, photograph, <https://archive.org/details/statuesofabrahtlinc/page/n23/mode/2up>.

Mexicans domestic opportunities, but it also served to strengthen the economic and social connections of the United States and Mexico.²⁰⁸

However, in 1969, President Nixon declared the ‘War on Drugs’, which specifically targeted the U.S./Mexico border. This created tension between the two nations, despite the unifying anti-communist sentiment, because Nixon never consulted with Mexico on the organization of this new program.²⁰⁹ This created a sense of distrust between the United States and Mexico, a value that Mexicans in the 1960s did not associate with the United States government, due to the precedent set by Lincoln’s government in the 1860s. This point serves to highlight that Mexico, particularly those whose views aligned with the Mexican Liberals of the past era, remembered Lincoln through the powerful lenses of both collective and official memory. They saw Lincoln’s presidency as heroic, which we now understand to be much more nuanced due to the concept of collective memory as it was developed by the U.S. government during the Cold War Era.

This statue of Lincoln, serves the U.S. and Mexican governments’ intent of displaying how one physical body can stand in for the values and struggles of both the United States and Mexico during the 1860s. This serves to link the two nations during the time of the statue’s reveal, showing the importance of displaying loyalty to democracy, rather than communism during the Cold War Era. While viewers can possess and assign agency to physical representations of Lincoln’s body, so, too, can Bermudez’s speech. While Lincoln has been dead since April 1865, Bermudez uses language that essentially restored Lincoln’s life for the purpose of perpetuating the ideals and values he has been collectively associated with. He stated that

²⁰⁸ Council on Foreign Relations, "U.S.-Mexico Relations," Council on Foreign Relations, <https://www.cfr.org/timeline/us-mexico-relations>.

²⁰⁹ Council on Foreign Relations, "U.S.-Mexico Relations."

Lincoln stood in the town of Juárez, which allowed the two to rest “from a vantage point of glory” and “Juárez and Lincoln are now witnessing the flowering of the seed that they themselves planted in the distant past, and which shall open new and lucid paths in our international coexistence.”²¹⁰ Bermudez’s goal for this statue was to memorialize the relationship that Lincoln and Juárez worked to establish 100 years ago, and allow it to serve as the basis for a strong international relationship moving forward from the present and on into the future. He went on to say, “may their memory be the inspiration of our thoughts,” which suggests that he hoped the images and values triggered by the names and physical embodiments of these men would resonate with people of a different time period, but still lead to the establishment of better relationships between the two nations.²¹¹ People who view the statue, whether they are from Mexico, the U.S., or another country entirely, are a part of this symbolic system that organizes memories of the past and brings them into the present.²¹² This helps us to understand that not just the institution of the state, but its people as well, work together to create collective memory.

News of the statue’s reveal was published in newspapers in both nations. The New York Times wrote that the reason for the statue was deeply rooted in the sense of “respect and friendship” Mexico felt toward Lincoln, as “he is considered to have been one of the chief moral supporters of Mexico’s struggle for freedom from foreign domination.”²¹³ Just across the border in El Paso, Texas, The Herald-Post reported the connections many Mexicans saw between former U.S. President Abraham Lincoln and former Mexican President Benito Juárez. Both

²¹⁰ Bermudez, speech, in *Statues of Abraham*.

²¹¹ Bermudez, speech, in *Statues of Abraham*.

²¹² Michael Werner, ed., *Encyclopedia of Mexico: History, Society, and Culture* (Chicago, IL: Fitzroy Dearborn, 1997), 163-165, accessed November 12, 2019, <https://search.credoreference.com/content/title/routmex?tab=entries>.

²¹³ “Mexican Monument Honors Lincoln,” in *Statues of Abraham Lincoln*, comp. Lincoln Financial Foundation (Indiana State Library, 1964), previously published in *The New York Times* (New York), April 5, 1964, <https://archive.org/details/statuesofabrahtlinc/page/n25/mode/2up>.

served as post-mortem representatives of their respective nations during this celebration. The Herald-Post recorded, "Abraham Lincoln and Benito Juárez never met, but their thoughts and aims and hopes for freedom and justice for mankind were of one mould."²¹⁴ The way that Lincoln treated Mexico, as institutionally remembered by many Mexicans and U.S. Americans, as well as Mexico's desire to demonstrate anti-communist sentiment during the Cold War, served as a basis for the positive international relationship that Mexico aimed to establish with the United States.²¹⁵

The second statue of Lincoln to appear in Mexico was just two years later, on April 15, 1966. This statue, placed in Mexico City, is a replica of the 'Standing Lincoln' statue in Lincoln Park in Chicago (see Fig. 12). That statue was created by Augustus Saint-Gaudens. The United States replicated his work to give to Mexico as a gift in commemoration of their independence from Spain in 1821, and as a way to ensure the continued anti-communist solidarity.²¹⁶ This gift was required to be approved by Congress, and the location where it would reside was decided by both Mexico and the United States together. The statue rests in the Polanco neighborhood of Mexico City, in Lincoln Park.²¹⁷ While the statue itself was presented under the pretense of honoring Mexico's independence, it was revealed on the 101st anniversary of Lincoln's death.

²¹⁴ Herald-Post, "Leaders of Two Nations," in *Statues of Abraham*. ; I am unable to read newspapers published in the Spanish language. Accounts in Spanish would certainly nuance this account, but my own language skills have limited my ability to include those sources in this work.

²¹⁵ Certainly, collective memory is relevant in memories constructed by Mexicans, but as previously mentioned, I am unable to access sources that would illuminate this. However, it is still crucial to acknowledge that while it is not a part of this story that I am able to tell, there are forms of memory making, beyond the institutional, that exist within Mexico as it relates to this statue.

²¹⁶ Donna Gill, "Sculptor Will Fight for New Lincoln Work," in *Statues of Abraham Lincoln, Mexico City, Mexico*, comp. Lincoln Financial Foundation (Indiana State Library, 1965), previously published in *Chicago Tribune* (Chicago), November 1, 1965, <https://archive.org/details/statuesofabrahslinc/page/n9/mode/2up>; "Lincoln Statue Unveiled in Mexico City," *Lincoln Lore*, no. 1540 (June 1966): 3-4, <https://www.friendsofthelincolncollection.org/lore-archive/>.

²¹⁷ "Lincoln Statue," 3-4.

This invokes the values associated with Lincoln, including the institutionally remembered desire for preservation of democracy. This was incredibly important during the 1960s, as the United States demanded reassurance of other nation's stances on communism in order to prove a commitment to democracy. President Lyndon B. Johnson and his wife, alongside Mexico's President Gustavo Díaz, unveiled the commemorative work of art. The speeches given at the dedication of the statue focused less on Lincoln and much more on the friendship between the United States and Mexico.²¹⁸ This is incredibly important to acknowledge, because while the statue depicted Abraham Lincoln, the symbolic meaning behind this material representation of his body indicates that his body stood for values of friendship, mutual respect, and democratic unity between the United States and Mexico.



Fig. 12: Lincoln Statue in Mexico City, Mexico²¹⁹

²¹⁸ "Lincoln Statue," 4.

²¹⁹ Lincoln Statue in Mexico City, April 15, 1966, photograph, <https://archive.org/details/statuesofabrahslinc/page/n3/mode/2up>.

The statue itself, a replica of the Chicago statue dedicated in 1887, has a significant contextual background. Augustus Saint-Gaudens, the sculptor, was a thirteen year old boy when he saw Lincoln en route to his first inauguration as President of the United States. Just four years later, Saint-Gaudens saw Lincoln's body on display in City Hall. He witnessed Lincoln depart for Washington, D.C. alive, with numerous challenges ahead, and then saw his lifeless body following the years of national and international struggle to preserve the Union. I assert that both the United States and Mexico created a collective memory of Lincoln. These collectives share some common values, but also have characteristics that are unique to their respective nation. For example, at the time of the statue's installation, Mexico associated Lincoln with international friendship, likely due to his role in the Spot Resolutions and his perceived contributions to the Liberal government during the US Civil War Era. This differs from US memories of Lincoln, because to many people in the United States he is solely a national hero, known for freeing the slaves and for saving the Union. However, collective memory, which both Mexican and U.S. governments institutionalized, plays a key role in the reason for the honoring of Lincoln as a symbol of democracy and friendship. As I have shown throughout this chapter, Mexico honored Lincoln as a way to show their implicit support for the United States and democracy, and discreetly deny any ties to the communist system.

Through these various displays of memory and memorialization, the work of the United States government, in concert with other nations' governments, have created an institutionalized, collective memory, which has continued to reaffirm Lincoln's place in global history. These efforts were supported and enhanced by the creators of statues and memorials, but also reconstructed and reinterpreted by people like Marian Anderson, Martin Luther King, Jr., and

Barack Obama. These three contributed to the creation of Lincoln's memory in the broader community. Unintentionally, the collective memory surrounding Lincoln has silenced the impact of other key individuals that I previously discussed, such as Matias Romero and Ulysses S. Grant. The work of these men, and many others, has become part of this collective, but also institutional, remembrance of Lincoln's many successes.

Lincoln has become institutionalized as a symbol of democracy as well as friendship among nations. Eisenhower said of Lincoln that he, "belongs not only to the ages, but to all humanity. Immortality is in the hearts of all who love freedom everywhere in the world."²²⁰ This quote from Eisenhower suggests that those who demonstrated a gratitude for Lincoln were also displaying implicit support of the United States' side in the Cold War. From the perspective of the United States, democracy was the best way to combat the negative influences of communism. Eisenhower's suggestion of those "who love freedom" is a way of discreetly calling attention to those who support anti-communist government systems.²²¹ Through the work of the Sesquicentennial Commission from 1959-1960, former President Eisenhower furthered Lincoln's global presence, and reminded people, "that the spirit of Lincoln be close at hand as we meet each successive challenge to freedom is the earnest hope of all Americans--indeed it is the hope of freedom's sentinels wherever they stand."²²² By encouraging a global view of Lincoln and the values the world has come to associate with him, the Commission promoted the success of international relationships not only in the present, but also on into the future.

The theme of the Commission, "Lincoln Symbol of the Free Man," is likely what attracted many foreign nations to participate in the commemoration of Lincoln and the

²²⁰ Lincoln Sesquicentennial Commission, *Abraham Lincoln*, 166.

²²¹ Lincoln Sesquicentennial Commission, *Abraham Lincoln*, 166.

²²² Lincoln Sesquicentennial Commission, *Abraham Lincoln*, 167.

promotion of the values that almost 100 years of collective memory prescribed to him. During this time around the world, there was a significant push toward decolonization as a means to achieve sovereignty. This global sentiment drove many nations to want to participate in the commemoration of a man they deemed to represent the freedom that they were fighting for. Additionally, Eisenhower furthered the collective memory of Lincoln in U.S. society by using his authoritative position to write this view of Lincoln into national documents, providing yet another form of institutionalized memory that commemorates the nation's sixteenth President.

The various ways in which Abraham Lincoln was, and still is, celebrated and remembered around the world signify the malleability of his work and his words, which have been preserved, but also reinterpreted, well into the present day, due to both collective and institutional memory. While symbols of Lincoln remain, their meanings have been constantly refined in order to fit a specific era, event, or situation. Society in the United States has taken what people in the past have wanted to remember about Lincoln and adapted it to their own present situations. By doing this, the reputation and memory of Abraham Lincoln is continuously reinterpreted and built upon, leading to the widely positive reputation that he has in the United States, but also around the world.

The memory of Lincoln is distorted by the desire of people and government institutions to reinterpret him and his associated values for use in continental historical contexts. In this chapter, Lincoln and his ties to democracy symbolize a beacon of hope for pro-democratic nations in the Cold War Era. Lincoln's reputation has been questioned, particularly in recent years, but these ideas that contradict the dominant narrative have a difficult time taking hold in the minds of scholars, students, and general society, because the collective memory has been

perpetuated by institutions like national governments, museums, and monuments, which encourage people to trust these official narratives as they change over time. This shapes my story of Lincoln because it is important to understand how these memories of him came to be. Without understanding that they are revised memories constructed with specific goals in mind, viewers might choose to accept them as truth, rather than see them within the context that they were created.

This chapter serves as the rationale for the U.S. American and Mexican reverence for former President Lincoln. The previous three chapters illustrated that Lincoln did not accomplish all that has been symbolically attributed to him, and this chapter explained how institutional memory in Mexico made this possible. I identified the other key players, like Romero and Grant, who were not previously given enough credit for the work that they did to aid Mexican Liberals in the 1860s. It is my hope that the previous examples of the malleability of collective memory, as it pertained to U.S. memory, and this more nuanced view of Lincoln, will encourage critique and contestation of public memorials and monuments. A deeper analysis of the socio-political context within which institutional memory is created requires the examination of both rhetoric and physical symbols. These concepts are crucial in order to fully understand how and why institutional memory, as it relates to both the United States and Mexico, was, and is, so successful in subverting the content of historical events in favor of a popular narrative.

EPILOGUE

On Sunday evening, May 3, 2020, United States President Donald Trump took a seat in front of a Fox News crew to host a virtual town hall (see fig. 13).²²³ During this time of deep uncertainty, due to the global coronavirus pandemic, Americans deserve to feel united under the presence of competent leadership. This town hall was organized with a specific political goal in mind, not as just another chance for President Trump to defend himself against what he calls the “hostile press.”²²⁴ The White House staff planned this event with the intention of crafting an explicit narrative by drawing on modern American democratic sentiment. This narrative was shaped by the site of President Trump’s conversation with the American people, not by the content of his responses. The background chosen for this evening discussion was none other than the Lincoln Memorial.



Fig 13: Trump’s Virtual Town Hall within the Lincoln Memorial²²⁵

²²³ Allyson Chiu, "Trump Invokes Lincoln to Explain His Bullying, Bragging and Rambling at Coronavirus Briefings," *The Washington Post* (Washington, D.C.), May 4, 2020, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2020/05/04/trump-lincoln-media-coronavirus/>.

²²⁴ Chiu, "Trump Invokes."

²²⁵ Anna Money maker, President Trump at Lincoln Memorial, May 3, 2020, photograph, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/04/us/politics/trump-lincoln-memorial.html>.

The only way Trump was able to actually host his town hall at the base of Lincoln's statue was through a direct order issued by the Secretary of the Interior, David Bernhardt. A federal law protects the area inside the interior of the Memorial by preventing "any event meant to draw an audience" from occurring beyond the columns.²²⁶ Bernhardt justified his exemption, writing:

Given the extraordinary crisis that the American people have endured, and the need for the president to exercise a core governmental function to address the nation about an ongoing public-health crisis, I am exercising my authority to facilitate the opportunity for the President to conduct this address within the Lincoln Memorial... Understandably, the President has, very deliberately, made the decision to address this national crisis at the Lincoln Memorial. I anticipate his doing so will illuminate and reflect the values of our Nation during an unprecedented public-health crisis. Such an action will allow the President and the Nation to use Lincoln's powerful presence and the solemnity of the Memorial to reflect on and draw from our Nation's better angels, and to remind all of us that we can knit our often-divided Nation together in a time of trial.²²⁷

Bernhardt's remarks about the rationale for holding this conference at the Lincoln Memorial, despite the global pandemic and the preexisting federal law prohibiting it, further the creation of an institutionalized memory of Abraham Lincoln. He suggested that Donald Trump, and the United States, would benefit from "Lincoln's powerful presence," and a reminder of our nation's "values."²²⁸ Bernhardt's language falls in line with many other government figures before him, as he evoked Lincoln's name and physical embodiment in an attempt to create a sense of national unity during an international crisis.

²²⁶ Katie Rogers, "Most Events in the Lincoln Memorial Are Banned. Trump Got an Exception.," *The New York Times* (New York), May 4, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/04/us/politics/trump-lincoln-memorial.html>.

²²⁷ National Park Service and David Bernhardt, "Record of Determination for a Temporary Closure of Portions of the Lincoln Memorial," National Park Service: National Mall and Memorial Parks, last modified May 3, 2020, <https://www.nps.gov/nama/learn/management/lincolnrod.htm>.

²²⁸ National Park Service and Bernhardt, "Record of Determination," National Park Service: National Mall and Memorial Parks.

As this thesis has shown, both everyday people and authority figures construct memory to benefit themselves in the contemporary context. In this case, a virtual town hall at the feet of our 16th President was intended to remind the American people that our nation has faced challenges before, and with great leadership, whether it is real or constructed, we can overcome any obstacle. This is the memory Trump and his aides attempted to create for the public.

In order to fully understand the politics of this expertly crafted event, we must examine the context within which this town hall was held. President Trump's name, and tweets, are the subject of daily news cycles. Regardless of which side of the political spectrum your news sources fall on, you will see that Trump's response to the coronavirus pandemic pushed the media to criticize and fact-check his every word. Some see the media as helpful for debunking his statements, while others view the media's actions as an attack on the President and the nation. With this context in mind, we are still left with the question: What was President Trump's motivation to hold his town hall at the Lincoln Memorial?

As I have argued throughout this project, institutional and collective memory are malleable. These two types of memory allow monuments and memorials, like the Lincoln Memorial, to be transformed in meaning based on current context. I assert that the institutional memory in this particular case, shaped primarily by David Bernhardt and President Trump, serves as a form of national propaganda. These powerful men exploited traditional American associations with Lincoln and national identity in hopes of creating a stronger sense of unity and broader support for President Trump's decisions. Trump compared himself to Lincoln to imply to Americans that these two "great" men were incredibly similar. Americans hold Lincoln in such high regard due to both institutional and collective memories of him and his actions. If

Trump associated himself with these highly esteemed values and ideas of modern democracy and unity, then maybe he, too, could be considered one of America's great leaders.

This thesis is not meant to diminish the accomplishments, victories, and movements forward that Abraham Lincoln made, encouraged, and helped facilitate. I did intend, though, to bring attention to key figures, like Matías Romero, Ulysses S. Grant, and Plácido Vega, for their roles in events that are now broadly associated with Lincoln. I gave Mexico agency in the relationship between the United States and Mexico. Diplomacy is not a one-sided endeavor, and it should not be recounted as such. I added nuance to the field of Civil War Era history, and use it as a springboard to discover its continental relevance beyond the 1860s. Through the examination of the 20th century, and even into the present day, this work has contributed to the understanding of the U.S. Civil War as a continental, and even global, event that had implications well beyond the years of 1861-1865.

I used Lincoln and memories of him as analytical tools to call attention to the ways in which we have come to interpret our history. It is crucial to recognize how memories and memorialization are constructed by us and by larger institutions. This understanding provides insight into the shortcomings of the retelling of history and the belief of history as a singular truth. With more awareness of how these narratives come to be, I encourage a more critical analysis of monuments and memorials to historical figures and events. A continental awareness of Abraham Lincoln's ever-transforming legacy facilitates a stronger understanding of how memories originate in the past, but are continuously remade in each new present.

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