

NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK NOMINATION

NPS Form 10-900

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form (Rev. 8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

MAY 4, 1970, KENT STATE SHOOTINGS SITE

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: May 4, 1970, Kent State Shootings Site

Other Name/Site Number: N/A

2. LOCATION

Street & Number: 0.5 miles southeast of the intersection of East Main Street and South Lincoln Street

Not for publication:

City/Town: Kent

Vicinity: N/A

State: Ohio

County: Portage

Code: 133

Zip Code: 44242

3. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property

Private: _
Public-Local: _
Public-State: X
Public-Federal: _

Category of Property

Building(s): _
District: _
Site: X
Structure: _
Object: _

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing

1
1
2
5
9

Noncontributing

1 buildings
0 sites
1 structures
13 objects
15 Total

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register: 6

Name of Related Multiple Property Listing: N/A

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4. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this ____ nomination ____ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ____ meets ____ does not meet the National Register Criteria.

Signature of Certifying Official

Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

In my opinion, the property ____ meets ____ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of Commenting or Other Official

Date

State or Federal Agency and Bureau

5. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this property is:

- Entered in the National Register
- Determined eligible for the National Register
- Determined not eligible for the National Register
- Removed from the National Register
- Other (explain): _____

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

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6. FUNCTION OR USE

Historic: EDUCATION Sub: college

Current: EDUCATION Sub: college

7. DESCRIPTION

ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION:

MATERIALS:

Foundation: concrete

Walls: glass, stone

Roof:

Other: concrete; stone (sandstone, granite); wood; metal (bronze, steel); brick; asphalt

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Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance**Introduction**

The May 4, 1970, Kent State Shootings Site is located on the campus of Kent State University within the city of Kent in northeastern Ohio. Kent State is the second largest university system in Ohio, with an official enrollment in fall 2015 of 41,005 students: 28,457 enrolled through the Kent Campus and 12,024 the unduplicated headcount at Kent State's seven Regional Campuses. The Kent Campus covers approximately 948 contiguous acres of rolling Ohio topography and includes more than one hundred buildings.

On May 4, 1970, the Ohio National Guard dispersed college students (in a crowd numbering at its height an estimated two to three thousand, including spectators) protesting both the Vietnam War and the physical presence of the National Guard on the Kent State campus. After dispersing the majority of the onlookers and protestors, the Guard fired sixty-seven shots in thirteen seconds, killing four Kent State students and wounding nine, permanently paralyzing one student.

The May 4, 1970, Kent State Shootings Site is located near the center of the Kent State campus and consists of two well-bounded, open, and level areas, separated by Blanket Hill. This large area is similar to many college campuses in the United States, with interspersed green space, classroom buildings, dormitories, recreational facilities, parking lots, and wooded areas. Although the campus was founded in 1910, most of the buildings and physical features in the immediate area of the shootings postdate World War II and are coincident with a period when this portion of campus experienced considerable growth associated with increases in enrollment and an expanded mission.¹ Current uses here show great continuity with those of the 1960s and 1970s, with students and faculty moving to and from classes and gathering for a variety of educational and social purposes.

The May 4, 1970, Shootings Site nominated here resides on 17.24 acres of the Kent Campus. The site includes nine contributing and fifteen noncontributing resources. These resources relate to one of three general subareas of the site: the Commons, Blanket Hill, and the Southern Terrace. The site is an area irregular in shape within which the Ohio National Guard, student protestors, and an active audience of sympathizers and observers ebbed and flowed across a central portion of the campus, beginning at approximately 11:00 a.m. and ending at approximately 1:30 p.m., May 4, 1970.

In 1977–1978, the site was again the center of dissent, when the university announced that it would build a gymnasium annex that in part would lie within what was perceived by many as the May 4 site. Protestors and activists from around the country gathered to preserve and memorialize the site, in what is called the Move the Gym controversy. When the administration proceeded with the building of what is commonly called the gym annex, protestors erected Tent City, where, under a national spotlight, they operated until removed by the campus police on July 12, 1977. Those engaged in the cause continued preservation efforts, which included seeking National Historic Landmark status for the site. The property, which encompasses all locations of the 1970 and 1977 protests, was listed at a national level of significance on the National Register of Historic Places in 2010.

Central Portion of Kent State University Campus (contributing site)

Because so much of the events of May 4, 1970, were shaped by the landscape of this portion of the Kent State campus, the overall site is considered a contributing resource. The site is roughly divided into three areas, the

¹ Scott L. Bills, ed., "Introduction: The Past is Present," *Kent State/May 4: Echoes Through a Decade* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1990), 5–7.

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Commons, Blanket Hill, and the Southern Terrace, and these area are much the same in 1970 as they are today in 2016, with the notable exception of the gym annex on the Southern Terrace.

Historic Physical Appearance of the Site***The Commons***

In 1970, the northern portion of the May 4, 1970, Kent State Shootings Site was composed of a grassy open space known as the Commons. The Commons had an accumulated history of serving as a central campus location for student gatherings, recreation, rallies, athletic victory celebrations, and political demonstrations. It was immediately adjacent to Oscar Ritchie Hall to the north, which at the time served as the student union building. The origins of the name *the Commons* lie well back in university history. The Commons was bordered by walkways and plantings on its northern and southern flanks and was bounded to the east by a partially wooded hill slope, on the west by dormitory buildings, and on the north by classroom buildings, the university power plant, and the Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) building.

On Friday, May 1, 1970, about five hundred students gathered at the Victory Bell on the eastern margin of the Commons for a rally to protest President Richard Nixon's announcement of the invasion of Cambodia. A second rally was called for Monday, May 4.² On Saturday evening, May 2, 1970, one to two thousand students gathered at the northwestern margin of the Commons for a rally near the ROTC building.³ The ROTC building, East Hall, was a rectangular wooden, prefabricated building bought as military surplus after World War II. Its intended design function was that of a military hospital, but it had been used at Kent State as a dormitory, classroom, and last as the ROTC building.⁴ Several students made attempts to set the building on fire. When they were dispersed from the site of the ROTC building, the fire was, by all reports, out.⁵ Just under an hour later, city firefighters were dispatched to the site a second time. They entered campus accompanied by the Ohio National Guard. The building burned down.⁶ The juxtaposition of the ROTC building to the Victory Bell across the Commons, and to events that would take place there two days later, is notable. On May 4, 1970, the Commons was the location of the staging of the National Guard units immediately adjacent to the debris of the ROTC building site at the northwestern end of the Commons and protesting student demonstrators at the Victory Bell near the eastern margin of this area. After the shooting, Guard troops returned to their initial mustering position at the ROTC building debris and students filtered back onto the Commons and along Terrace Drive to the north for a sit-in near the western margin of this portion of the property.⁷

In May 1970, the configuration of buildings and fencing around the margins of the Commons imposed a significant controlling effect on movement in and out of this space. During the May 4 rally, the entire perimeter of the Commons, including the roofs of Stopher, Johnson, and Lake Halls, was lined with hundreds of spectators and others from the Kent community. The roofs of the Stopher–Johnson dormitory complex in particular were crowded with student onlookers, who were alleged by some National Guardsmen to be the source of rifle fire directed down on the Guard by a student sniper(s).⁸ FBI investigation proved the sniper allegation to be unsubstantiated.⁹ Ringed by onlookers, the Commons “formed a gigantic amphitheater focusing

² Carole A. Barbato, Laura L. Davis, and Mark F. Seeman, *This We Know: A Chronology of the Shootings at Kent State, May 1970* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 2012), 2.

³ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁴ James A. Michener, *Kent State: What Happened and Why* (New York: Random House, 1971), 10.

⁵ Barbato, Davis, and Seeman, *This We Know*, 6.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 6–7.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 25.

⁸ William A. Gordon, *Four Dead in Ohio: Was There a Conspiracy at Kent State* (Laguna Hills, CA: North Ridge Books, 1995), 49–50, 194–95, 232.

⁹ I. F. Stone, *The Killings at Kent State: How Murder Went Unpunished* (New York: Vintage Books, 1970), 88; William W.

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upon a small stage of green.”¹⁰ These onlookers, who are counted among the two to three thousand in the protest crowd, might be considered an audience, rally sympathizers, participants, and/or simply the curious. Together with the physical and built environments, these individuals helped to frame the events of that morning, but at the same time were themselves part of these events.

During the second period of significance, the Commons was again the site of student protest, this time associated with the Move the Gym controversy. A protest rally here on August 20, 1977, featuring folk singer Joan Baez and speeches by several of the parents of the dead and wounded students, attracted an audience of about fifteen hundred. On October 22, 1977, in defiance of a court order, about five hundred protestors again met on the Commons. They were dispersed by Kent city and Streetsboro police, who used tear gas and arrested six protestors. The Commons was unaltered from its 1970 historic condition in 1977, although the Art Building, completed in 1972, had been constructed just beyond the western margin of property boundaries.

Blanket Hill

Immediately east of the Commons, Blanket Hill rises as high ground on the Kent State University campus. Here the mass of Taylor Hall, which in 1970 was the home of the School of Journalism and the *Daily Kent Stater* student newspaper, together with flanking Johnson and Prentice Halls, served to channel foot traffic through relatively narrow ninety-foot-wide passageways on the two sides of this four-story building, thus connecting the northern and southern portions of the site. This foot traffic pattern was reflected in the distribution of historic sidewalks and pathways. The northern slope of Blanket Hill was wooded, more so to the northeast than to the northwest. The southern slope of the hill was a more open configuration of lawn, trees, and sidewalks leading to the Southern Terrace. Blanket Hill was bordered to the west by the Stopher–Johnson residence hall complex and on the north, with a noticeable drop in elevation, fenced tennis courts, and a parking lot.

On May 4, 1970, when students at the Victory Bell rally on the Commons were approached by advancing guardsmen, they retreated south through both passageways, climbing Blanket Hill. Some congregated along the southern flank of Taylor, but most of the others descended the reverse slope to the east in the vicinity of the Prentice Hall Parking Lot and adjacent Practice Field. The guardsmen of Company C of the First Battalion, 145th Infantry Regiment, established a stationary position in the northern passageway between Taylor and Prentice, thus blocking additional student movement to or from the Commons. At the same time, Troop G of the Second Squadron, 107th Armored Cavalry Regiment, and Company A of the First Battalion, 145th Infantry, pursued students through the southern passageway and toward the Practice Field. After retreating from the Practice Field on the South Terrace, the National Guard reascended Blanket Hill, turned, and fired their rifles, pistols, and shotguns from the vicinity of the Pagoda. Four student protestors, Joseph Lewis, John Cleary, Thomas Grace, and Alan Canfora were wounded on Blanket Hill east of Taylor Hall, two of them immediately adjacent to the *Solar Totem #1* sculpture.

In 1977, during the second period of significance, the Move the Gym protest established an encampment on Blanket Hill known as Tent City. Tent City consisted of tents, a first-aid facility, a day-care tent, hammocks, signage, fencing, and other construction meant to shelter students protesting an annex to Memorial Gym planned by the Kent State University administration. This ad hoc community, headed by the newly founded May 4th Coalition, lasted for sixty-two days. It was the center of a series of Move the Gym rallies, attracting to it a variety of student and nonstudent factions supporting a broad range of political and social issues. The Move the Gym protest and Tent City centered on the belief that to alter the historic landscape was to obscure the memorialization of May 1–4, 1970. Attention had again focused on Kent State. On July 12, 1977, in the

Scranton et al., *The Report of the President's Commission on Campus Unrest* (Washington, D.C.: US Government Printing Office, 1970), 279.

¹⁰ Michener, *Kent State*, 330.

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presence of national news media and about eight hundred others, unarmed Kent Campus police physically removed and arrested 193 individuals occupying Blanket Hill, including the parents of slain student Sandy Scheuer and wounded student Alan Canfora.¹¹ Despite continuing protests and attempts by the coalition at a legal solution, construction on the gym annex began September 12, 1977. Throughout the two months of protest and after, Kent State had a local, state, and national media profile. National attention continued after construction began as active work by the coalition engaged the White House in the students' pursuit of National Historic Landmark status for the May 4 site. Following thorough consideration, the Department of the Interior was not able at that time to decide in favor of the National Landmark designation. (See discussion in section 8.)

The Southern Terrace

In 1970, the third area of the site, the unnamed terrace southeast of Blanket Hill, contained the Prentice Hall Parking Lot and Practice Field at a lower elevation to the south. In the northeastern corner of the Practice Field, the four bases and pitcher's mound of a baseball infield are clearly visible in a 1970 aerial photograph; football was practiced here as well. The Southern Terrace was bounded on the north by the facade of Prentice Hall dormitory and on the east by Midway Drive, which partially crossed the campus. The eastern and southeastern portions of this area were bounded by a six-foot-high chain link fence capped with barbed wire. Seven students were shot in and around the blacktop of the Prentice Hall Parking Lot, an eighth student was shot on the far side of Midway Drive to the east, and a ninth student was shot farther south and immediately adjacent to what is now the gym annex. This portion of the site also marks the southeastern-most march of the National Guard and their kneeling position on the grassy Practice Field prior to the shootings. Elements of the Guard's presence on the Practice Field included the order for Troop G to assume a kneeling firing position while pointing its weapons at students in the Prentice Hall Parking Lot, the exchange of several rocks, which fell short, by both guardsmen and students, and a huddled discussion among Guard officers. These elements bear directly on the subsequent shooting at the Pagoda on Blanket Hill. As noted by Davies, "What happened on the practice field is inseparable from what happened a few minutes later at the Pagoda."¹²

During the second period of significance, 1977–1978, the southern portion of the Southern Terrace was directly altered by the building of the gym annex. The historic barbed wire fence was removed, the landscape regraded, and the gym annex constructed. A chain link fence was built around much of this property in 1977 at the time of the Move the Gym protest. The fence was cut by protesters so that they could enter and occupy the site to stop construction. The gym annex, which was built to contain a variety of classrooms, athletic courts, practice facilities, office space, and an Olympic-sized swimming pool, opened in July 1979.

Present Physical Appearance of the Site, 2016

As listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2010, the May 4, 1970 Shootings Site consists of a 17.24-acre area with landscaping, buildings, and functions dedicated to the same range of purposes in 1970 and 1977–78 as a state university dedicated to higher learning. On the Commons, the remnants of the ROTC building are no longer visible, but plantings, the open grassy expanse, and some of the walkways area look much the same as they did in 1970 and 1977–1978. Student usage of the Commons remains much as it was during the periods of significance, with the notable addition of activities centering on memorialization of May 4, 1970. The Commons area now includes an annual commemoration program that begins near the Victory Bell; *The Kent Four* sculpture interpreting the May 4 event; and two of the seven permanent May 4 Walking Tour interpretive trail markers. Contributing resources include the Victory Bell and Lilac Lane and boulder marker,

¹¹ Thomas R. Hensley, "Kent State 1977: The Struggle to Move the Gym," in Hensley and Lewis, *Kent State and May 4th* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 2001), 149, 153.

¹² Peter Davies, *The Truth About Kent State: A Challenge to the American Conscience*. With the Board of Church and Society of the United Methodist Church (New York: Farrar, Straus Giroux, 1973), 42.

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while noncontributing resources include *The Kent Four* sculpture (with accompanying sign) and the two signs associated with the May 4 Walking Tour.

Blanket Hill as a grass- and tree-covered landscape feature with Taylor Hall as a center point carries a strong continuity of function with that of the periods of significance. The most notable alteration is the presence of the May 4 Memorial (noncontributing), a low stone, cement, and earth construction on the northern portion of the hill and well away from the main activities of 1970 and 1977–78. Taylor Hall (contributing) continues to function mainly as office and classroom space with the notable addition of the May 4 Visitors Center in 2010 on the first floor. The facade of Taylor Hall at the location of the Visitors Center has exterior windows featuring a photographic decal approximately ninety feet wide by nine feet high illustrating the student protest movement in Kent in October 1969. In addition to Taylor Hall, contributing resources here include the Pagoda and the *Solar Totem #1* sculpture. Noncontributing resources include the May 4 Memorial, the Ohio Historical Marker, and three trail markers that are part of the May 4 Walking Tour. Adjacent to the historic property, the Stopher–Johnson residence hall complex was rebuilt in 2008, largely on its original footprint.

On the Southern Terrace, the Prentice Hall Parking Lot continues to serve its original function. Bollards and in-ground name plaques now commemorate the four locations where the four students were fatally shot. These are noncontributing resources. The *B'nai B'rith Hillel Marker*, located at the western end of the Prentice Hall lot, is a contributing resource relative to the second period of significance. The gym annex (noncontributing) does not lie over the Guard's 1970 kneeling position, or where the officers conferred on the former Practice Field, but does cover ground that the Guard traversed to get to the field. Some original functions of the instructional space within the gym annex have changed programmatically.

Other Contributing Resources

1) *Taylor Hall* (contributing building).

Taylor Hall, a rectangular, four-story building of dark glass and cement with a Greek-influenced peristyle of linear columns is located at the apex of Blanket Hill.¹³ Taylor Hall was named for William Taylor, a former professor of journalism. It currently houses academic dean offices, the architecture and environmental studies and communication studies programs, and the May 4 Visitors Center.

Designed by architects Ward and Schneider, it was built in 1967 and is 65,564 square feet in size. Taylor Hall fits within the New Formalism style, which Whiffen describes as characterized by buildings that are self-contained, free-standing blocks, with strictly symmetrical elevations. New Formalism buildings feature skylines that are level, and they are often defined at the top by a heavy, projecting roof slab. Wall surfaces are always smooth, often glossy, and employ a wide range of materials for facing. Columnar supports are more forcefully molded than in International or Miesian styles.¹⁴ On May 4, 1970, Taylor Hall was an integral part of the cultural landscape and figured centrally into the Ohio National Guard's plan to drive demonstrators from the Commons. At the beginning of the rally on the Commons below and to the north, the Taylor Hall portico and overlooking windows were crowded with student onlookers. As the Guard advanced to flanking positions to the north and south of the building, respectively, tear gas entered the building air conditioning ducts, causing some to leave the building, and thus contributed to the growing crowd east of the building at the time that shots were fired.¹⁵ In 1970, Taylor Hall was the home of the School of Journalism, as well as the student newspaper, the *Daily Kent Stater*. Student journalists and photographers captured the Guard's movement and student reaction in more than one thousand photographs, which helped to provide an accurate picture of what happened. The

¹³ Michener, *Kent State*, 10.

¹⁴ Marcus Whiffen, *American Architecture Since 1780: A Guide to the Styles* (Cambridge, MA: M.I.T. Press, 1969), 257.

¹⁵ Michener, *Kent State*, 332, 337, 340.

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exterior of Taylor Hall is the same today as it was in 1970; the only noticeable minor changes are the resurfacing of the cement portico with an asphalt and pebble composition, the installation of ADA accessible doors on the northern and southern elevations, and the installation in the windows of the former *Kent Stater* office the wall-sized decal signifying the May 4 Visitors Center.

2) *The Victory Bell* (contributing object). UTM 17 0471073 4555525

The Victory Bell was placed on the Commons in 1950 by Kent State President George Bowman. The actual bronze bell itself came from an old Erie Lackawanna locomotive.¹⁶ The tan brick and sandstone housing was designed by architecture student Arvid Johnson. It is strongly geometric in form with rectangular and trapezoidal elements. It stands seven feet tall and has a basal dimension of fifteen feet. Lighter areas of the brick are associated with the cleaning of graffiti, the remnants of which can still be made out on some surfaces. In early years, the bell was rung to celebrate athletic victories. Color differences in the mortar suggest that some of the upper portion of the housing may have been repointed.

Beginning in the 1960s, the bell signaled the start of political rallies and was the focal point for a number of antipoverty and antiwar rallies.¹⁷ On May 4, 1970, several thousand students participating in the initial protest that noon were concentrated at a rally at the Victory Bell. An audio tape records the Victory Bell ringing at the time that an order to leave the Commons was delivered to students from a National Guard jeep, both before the May 4 shooting and also immediately after the shooting.¹⁸ The Victory Bell is visible in many historic photographs taken on May 4, 1970, and its appearance is the same then and now.

3) *Lilac Lane* (contributing structure) and *Boulder Marker* (contributing object). UTM 17 0470934 4555602

The Commons is bounded to the north and east by Lilac Lane, a curving east–west walkway flanked by approximately eighty-five established lilac bushes on either side. It extends in a gradual curve from a six hundred-pound memorial granite boulder near Oscar Ritchie Hall in the northwest to Prentice Hall in the east, covering a distance of about 520 feet. The bronze plaque on the boulder marker at the north end of Lilac Lane reads: “Lilac Lane. A memorial to Anna Ulen Engleman. 1873–1943 | Presented by James Ozro Engleman. President Kent State University, 1928–1938. | I marvel at returning life that changes beauty into greater beauty. A.U.E.”

Lilac Lane and the northwestern terminus boulder marker are visible in historic photographs taken May 4, 1970. The boulder marker is a useful visual reference for the location of the burned ROTC building immediately to the west since both are visible in the same historic photographs. On May 4, 1970, the shrubs of Lilac Lane and an associated temporary construction fence following its perimeter provided an active and recognizable boundary to the eastern margin of the Commons area. A comparison of aerial photographs shows that the construction of Lilac Lane predates May 4, 1970, and appears the same in 2015 as in 1970 and 1977–1978. It is an intact feature of the cultural landscape that contributes to the integrity of the site.

4) *The Pagoda* (contributing object). UTM 17 0471130 4555436

The Pagoda was a classroom project of five architecture students, one of whom was Robert Gressard. Constructed of wood and concrete, it was completed shortly before the weekend of May 4, 1970. It is approximately nine feet tall and is located immediately southwest of Taylor Hall. On May 4, 1970, the Pagoda served as a focal point for the advance and retreat of the Guard. Some researchers have argued that the Pagoda was a convenient landmark on high ground and was thus a logical place to sight rifles.¹⁹ “As the photographic

¹⁶ Ibid., 13.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Joseph Kelner and James Munves, *The Kent State Coverup* (New York: Harper and Row, 1980), 177–78.

¹⁹ Gordon, *Four Dead*, 60.

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backdrop for events which swirled around it, this Japanese pagoda became the most familiar landmark in Kent.”²⁰ The pagoda appears the same in 2015 as it was in 1970.

5) *Solar Totem #1* (contributing object). UTM 17 0471143 4555455

This sculpture by Akron-area artist Don Drumm is constructed of welded COR-TEN@ plate steel and was erected immediately south of Taylor Hall in 1967. It is fifteen feet tall and comprised of two interlocked towers composed of approximately one hundred rectangular and trapezoidal steel panels welded together to form a series of elements—some open and some closed. Its original intent was to “evoke the totemic status of the region’s most precious and problematic industrial product” manufactured in the steel mills of northeastern Ohio.²¹

This sculpture can be seen prominently in several historic photographs, and it appears that several students took shelter behind it at the time of the shootings. A .30 caliber armor-piercing bullet from an M-1 rifle perforated the sculpture at the time of the shootings, approximately three feet from its base. The Bureau of Criminal Investigation laboratory working for the Ohio attorney general’s office determined that the bullet “had entered the sculpture from the direction of the corner of Taylor Hall.”²² Its artist, Don Drumm, noted, “That bullet hole is a fingerprint of time. . . . I don’t want anyone to touch that bullet hole. It is a record of a tragic time and to me it is a symbol of peace.”²³ The only alterations to the sculpture since 1970 result from its use for chalked messages symbolic of May 4: peace signs; drawn flowers; and statements such as “Remember Allison,” “Peace should always be ours,” “Rotten, odious, terrible, cancer,” “Love you Bill, we also remember you,” “There will be an answer, let it be,” “Save our troops,” and “Love and peace.” It has been argued that *Solar Totem #1* is one of the most important vernacular expressions of memory of May 4, 1970.²⁴

6) *The Prentice Hall Parking Lot* (contributing structure).

The Prentice Hall Parking Lot achieved its present configuration sometime prior to May 4, 1970. It was probably constructed at the time that the Prentice Hall dormitory was built in 1959.²⁵ The Prentice Hall Parking Lot is a flat, open, rectangular, asphalt-covered lot extending over an area of approximately 210 by 125 feet, with spaces for eighty-eight vehicles, including two spaces designated for May 4 Visitors Center patrons. Today it mainly services faculty and staff working in Taylor Hall and the gym annex. Seven students were shot in and around the Prentice Hall Parking Lot by the Guard positioned near the Pagoda on May 4, 1970.

7) *B’nai B’rith Hillel Marker* (contributing object). UTM 17 0471196 4555497

In 1971, on the first commemoration of May 4, 1970, B’nai B’rith Hillel placed a cast aluminum plaque in the Prentice Hall Parking Lot in memory of the four slain students. This marker was stolen on the evening of May 3, 1974, and was destroyed. It was replaced the following year on May 3, 1975, with a new pink granite marker.²⁶ Subsequently, this also was damaged and has been replaced by a third marker, again of granite. The two-foot-high, rectangular pink granite stone serves as one focal point of May 4 memorial observances on the Kent Campus. Every year on the evening of May 3, it marks the end of the Candlelight March that weaves its way around the campus starting at the Victory Bell. The march ends at this marker where some recite the Kaddish and Lord’s Prayer and participants leave their lit candles in remembrance, while the Candlelight Vigil begins at the four places in the Prentice Hall Parking Lot where the four students were fatally wounded. This

²⁰ Michener, *Kent State*, 354.

²¹ John F. O’Hara, “Kent State/May 4 and Post War Memory,” *American Quarterly* 58 (2006), 312.

²² Kelner and Munves, *Kent State Coverup*, 220.

²³ Jeanine Centuori, “The Residual Landscape of Kent State May 4th, 1970,” *Landscape Journal* 18, no. 1 (1999), 6.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 5.

²⁵ Martin K. Nurmi, “The Years of Growth: 1955-1970,” in Hildebrand, William H., Keller, Dean H., and Herington, Anita D., eds., *A Book of Memories: Kent State University 1910-1992* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1993), 129.

²⁶ Bills, “Introduction,” 53, 54.

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marker was listed as a noncontributing resource when the site was placed on the National Register in 2010, but now is judged to be a contributing resource relative to the second period of significance (1977–1978).

Noncontributing Resources

1) *Gym Annex* (noncontributing building).

The gym annex was designed by Richard Fleischman Architects, Inc., of Cleveland, Ohio. It was built in 1978–1979 as an addition to the Memorial Gym (now Memorial Athletic and Convocation Center). Construction extended northward into the Practice Field area, which required the regrading of a portion of Blanket Hill. The gym annex (now Memorial Athletic and Convocation Center Annex) is a fan-shaped, two-story building designed to house instructional physical education facilities: an Olympic-sized swimming pool, game rooms, a dance studio, handball courts, basketball courts, locker rooms, classrooms, and offices. It encompasses 255,318 square feet. The gym annex employs broad surfaces of unadorned brick and smoked glass, reflecting Miesian influence in its tinted glass curtain walls, exposed brick surfaces, and flat roof. At the time of this writing, the gym annex is used by the School of Health Sciences and also houses dance studios, basketball courts, a former pool area now repurposed, reconfigured space for architecture studios, interior design studios, and classrooms. Many of the intended uses of the gym annex have been modified substantially in terms of programmatic use. The building is also showing its age and soon will require substantial structural renovation if it is to remain in use.²⁷ Beginning in 1972, the proposed construction of the gym annex on the site known for the May 4, 1970, events served as a focal point for continuing controversy and protest demonstrations, as mentioned above and discussed below in section 8.

2) *Jeffrey Miller individual marker* (noncontributing object). UTM 17 0471188 4555479

As a result of a request from the May 4 Task Force student organization and the families of the slain students, Kent State University authorized the installation of four markers locating the places in the Prentice Hall Parking Lot where Sandy, Bill, Allison, and Jeff fell on May 4, 1970. The markers were dedicated on September 8, 1999. Each consists of a low granite berm outlining a rectangular space approximately five by twelve feet, a nameplate, and six lit, black, precast composition bollards.

3) *Allison Krause individual marker* (noncontributing object). UTM 17 0471208 4555504

See above.

4) *William Schroeder individual marker* (noncontributing object). UTM 17 0471229 4555487

See above.

5) *Sandra Scheuer individual marker* (noncontributing object). UTM 17 0471233 4555506

See above.

6) *The Kent Four* (noncontributing object). UTM 17 0471001 4555532

The Kent Four sculpture was created by artist Alastair Granville-Jackson in 1971 and dedicated during the first commemoration. Originally, it was located on a level lawn west of Stopher–Johnson and outside the boundaries of the May 4, 1970, Kent State Shootings Site. The sculpture of painted steel has as its main elements a series of upturned, symmetrically placed tubes on a pedestal symbolizing the modification of four rifle barrels into trumpets of deliverance. It was intended that this sculpture have flames coming from the tube orifices, and in fact these were lit at times. The sculpture was relocated, along with an explanatory sign, within the historic property boundary near its eastern margin and to the southeast of the Art Building in 2006, in conjunction with the renovation of the Stopher–Johnson complex and after the periods of significance.

²⁷ Elwin Robison, personal communication to Mark Seeman, 2006.

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7) Ohio Historical Marker (noncontributing object). UTM 17 0471188 4555520

In 2006, an Ohio Historical Society marker was placed approximately seventy-five feet east of the southeast corner of Taylor Hall. The text recounts the main facts of the May 4, 1970, shootings, their relationship to President Richard Nixon's announcement of the invasion of Cambodia, and resulting nationwide protests.

8) May 4 Memorial (noncontributing structure). UTM 17 0471142 4555554

The May 4 Memorial commemorates the events of May 4, 1970. The construction was based on a design submitted by Chicago architect Bruno Ast in response to a national design competition sponsored by Kent State University in 1986. The memorial, dedicated on May 4, 1990, lies along the extreme eastern margin of the site's core area. The main structural elements include a seventy-foot-wide plaza bounded by a granite walkway, a low granite entryway, and four freestanding rectangular granite pylons that increase in size as they gain distance from the plaza. Engraved on the plaza's stone threshold is the inscription "Inquire, Learn, Reflect." As conceptualized by Kent State artist Brinsley Tyrrell to symbolize the number of US losses during the Vietnam War, 58,175 daffodils were planted on the slope upon which the memorial lies. Planted in 1989, the daffodils first bloomed for the twentieth May 4 commemoration in 1990.

9) May 4 Walking Tour Interpretive Trail Markers.

The seven May 4 Walking Tour markers were installed and dedicated for the fortieth commemoration in 2010. The base of each trail marker is aluminum covered in durable exterior metallic paint. Each marker stands on a single bent aluminum leg that extends three feet into the ground and is bolted to a poured concrete footer. The top of each marker has an aluminum panel to which is affixed the interpretive panel. The panel is composed of high-pressure laminate. The interpretive panels on markers one through four, six, and seven are three feet in width and two feet in height. Marker 5 has a double panel that is six feet in width and two feet in height. Interpretive panels contain identifying numbering and titling. Each marker features both text and photographs to convey the chronology of the May 1–4 demonstrations, set in the context of the student protest movement of the Vietnam era. Markers are set within the site so that the perspective in the photos matches the current perspective that the viewer sees from each marker.

Site Integrity

The cultural significance of a property can be conveyed if it retains sufficient integrity to do so. While the May 4, 1970, Kent State Shootings Site is not precisely the same as it was in 1970 or 1977, it exhibits a high degree of integrity. University campuses are dynamic settings, with many pressures for the reconfiguration of resources and physical space. This has not always resulted in the complete preservation of the resource.

A strong majority of the core area of the May 4, 1970, Kent State Shootings Site is little changed since the periods of significance, recognizing that reversible land use changes do not affect overall condition.²⁸ Taking into consideration the post-1970 construction of the May 4 Memorial and the gym annex, the May 4 Kent State Shootings Site retains a large amount of historic integrity. The main adverse impacts of post-1970 construction are not concentrated in any one part of the site. The construction of the May 4 Memorial near the northeastern boundary of the property in 1990 constitutes an alteration over the 1970 and 1977 conditions, but as it is at ground level, the essential features of this area remain; post-1970 and post-1977 construction have minimally detracted from integrity. There has been tree growth over the years on the side of Blanket Hill between the Pagoda and the Prentice Hall parking lot. Although the tree growth interferes with the Ohio National Guard site

²⁸ David W. Lowe, *Battlefield Survey Manual* (Washington, D.C.: American Battlefield Protection Program, National Park Service, 2000), 30.

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lines that existed on May 4, 1970, this is a reversible situation. Historic view sheds for the most part remain unencumbered.

The construction of the gym annex in 1977 near the southern boundary does alter and fragment the site on part of the historic Practice Field. Still, the original grade and boundaries of the Practice Field can be recognized in the area. It should be kept in mind that the gym annex is an academic building in a university setting and it has outlived the original designed function of the building. The Move the Gym protest was unsuccessful insofar as the gym annex was built, and the annex stands now as a noncontributing resource. It does serve as a significant physical reminder that peaceful protest does not always prevail and that memorialization takes place in a negotiated, and sometimes contentious, sociopolitical context.

Conversely, when the university rebuilt the Stopher–Johnson dormitory complex in 2006, which lies adjacent to the west side of the historic property, it engaged in consultation and took care to rebuild on the original footprint and in architectural style, materials, and roofline close to the original 1956 buildings. One of those consulted by the university was John Cleary, who graduated from Kent State with an architecture degree. (He was also wounded on May 4, 1970.) Kent State University has a history of recognizing the historical importance of the May 4 site in its planning processes and has a continuing commitment to the maintenance of the integrity and feel of the site.

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LIST OF CONTRIBUTING AND NONCONTRIBUTING RESOURCES

RESOURCE	YEAR BUILT	CONTRIBUTING STATUS	RESOURCE TYPE
Central Portion of KSU Campus to include The Commons, Blanket Hill, and The Southern Terrace		Contributing	Site
Taylor Hall	1967	Contributing	Building
Victory Bell	1950	Contributing	Object
Lilac Lane and Marker	ca. 1940	Contributing	Structure and Object
Pagoda	1970	Contributing	Object
<i>Solar Totem #1</i> Sculpture	1967	Contributing	Object
Prentice Hall Parking Lot	ca. 1959	Contributing	Structure
B'nai B'rith Hillel Marker	1975	Contributing	Object
Gym Annex	1978	Noncontributing	Building
Jeffrey Miller Marker	1999	Noncontributing	Object
Allison Krause Marker	1999	Noncontributing	Object
William Schroeder Marker	1999	Noncontributing	Object
Sandra Scheuer Marker	1999	Noncontributing	Object
<i>The Kent Four</i> Sculpture	1971	Noncontributing	Object
Ohio Historical Marker	2006	Noncontributing	Object
May 4 Memorial	1990	Noncontributing	Structure
Walking Tour Trail Marker 1	2010	Noncontributing	Object
Walking Tour Trail Marker 2	2010	Noncontributing	Object
Walking Tour Trail Marker 3	2010	Noncontributing	Object
Walking Tour Trail Marker 4	2010	Noncontributing	Object
Walking Tour Trail Marker 5	2010	Noncontributing	Object
Walking Tour Trail Marker 6	2010	Noncontributing	Object
Walking Tour Trail Marker 7	2010	Noncontributing	Object

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State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas and Periods of Significance Noted Above.**Introduction**

In 1970, “student unrest was considered the major social problem in the United States.”²⁹ On May 4 of that year, Kent State University was placed in an international spotlight after a student protest against the Vietnam War and the presence of the Ohio National Guard on campus ended in tragedy when the Guard shot and killed four and wounded nine Kent State students. The May 4, 1970, Kent State Shootings Site is nominated as a National Historic Landmark under Criterion 1. This property is also eligible for consideration under Criterion Exception 8 because even though the events are less than 50 years ago, it is extraordinarily nationally significant, given its broad effects in: 1) increasing and broadening the base of protest against the Vietnam War and affecting public opinion about the war; 2) creating a legal precedent through a US Supreme Court decision (which arose from the trials subsequent to the shootings) that public officials acting in the capacity of their office can be brought to trial for their actions; 3) effecting prompt change in military policy for civil disturbances; 4) causing the largest nationwide student strike in United States history; 5) achieving national prominence in 1977 and 1978 as a site of student protests to preserve a place in order to recognize and understand an important chapter in US history; 6) and for the symbolic status the event has attained as a result of a government confronting protesting citizens with unreasonable deadly force.

The historical and social significance of May 4, 1970, is best understood within the context of the larger national student protest movement at the time. With roots in the peace movement and the civil rights movement of the early sixties, the student protest movement coalesced for college students in the burgeoning antiwar movement of the mid-sixties. On college campuses, the generation gap of the sixties was strongly felt, with those in positions of authority—parents, campus administrators, politicians, and law enforcement officials—squarely lined up on one side of the divide and rising numbers of students on the other. On May 4, the Ohio National Guard literally lined up on one side of the university Commons, with students gathered on the other. Most students were observers, many felt aligned with the general counterculture movement, and some were campus activists. While President Richard Nixon’s own comment on the shootings asserted authoritarian values and lacked sympathy—“This should remind us all once again that when dissent turns to violence it invites tragedy”³⁰—this watershed moment spurred the spread of antiwar sentiment throughout the nation, crossing over the generation gap. What Nixon failed to see, his staff recognized: *Kent State* was one of the major symbolic events of the Vietnam War, marking the beginning of the end of Nixon’s presidency.³¹

During these war years, the legal aftermath of May 4 was well on its way to becoming one of the longest, costliest, and most complex set of courtroom struggles in American history, setting precedent in the US Supreme Court.³² Thus, the significance of the May 4, 1970, Kent State Shooting Site is its contribution to shaping the political landscape in terms of protest and movements, government and military institutions, and political ideas and culture (NHL Theme IV). The historical events that occurred on the May 4 site relate specifically to civil rights and the national student protest movement that arose in the 1960s and 1970s. The Kent State Shootings Site encompasses two periods of significance: May 1–May 4, 1970, the four days of protest during which the shootings took place, and 1977–78, when protestors led the effort called Move the

²⁹ James Max Fendrich, “The Forgotten Movement: The Vietnam Anti-war Movement,” *Sociological Inquiry* 73, no. 3, 2003, 350.

³⁰ A. J. Langguth, *Our Vietnam: The War 1954-1975* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000), 570.

³¹ H. R. Haldeman, with Joseph DiMona, *The Ends of Power* (New York: Time Books, 1978), 107.

³² Thomas R. Hensley, “May 4th Trials,” in Hensley and Lewis, *Kent State and May 4* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 2001), 64, 77.

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Gym which sought to stop construction of a gym annex on the Kent State campus, which would lie partially within the site that they sought to preserve for its historical and social significance.

Student Activism in the Civil Rights Movement

Many historians contend that the modern civil rights movement had its beginnings in the early 1950s: in the desegregation cases leading to *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954 and the subsequent founding of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) in 1957 by Martin Luther King Jr., Ralph Abernathy, Joseph Lowery. Student protest as one aspect of this growing social movement was marked on February 1, 1960, when “four black students from North Carolina Agricultural and Technical College staged a historic sit-in at a segregated lunch counter in Greensboro, North Carolina,” after which, “the spread of sit-ins and other civil rights activities aroused the conscience of the nation and encouraged many students to express their support for civil rights through nonviolent direct action.”³³ The next month saw the formation at Shaw University in Raleigh, North Carolina, of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), dedicated to the fight against racial discrimination. Ella Baker, a veteran of SCLC, but dissatisfied with the lack of a leadership role for her under the Baptist mindset, was one of SNCC’s founders. Other SNCC leaders included John Lewis, James Forman, Robert Moses, Marion Barry, and Stokely Carmichael (Kwame Ture). SNCC, which bore the emblem of a black hand and a white hand clasped in solidarity, was closely linked to the SCLC through its dependency on that organization for funds.³⁴ Funds and support also came from “Friends of SNCC” chapters on campuses outside the south, such as NYU, Chicago, and Berkeley.³⁵ The year 1960 also brought landmark changes that would inspire further protests in which students played key roles: the Voting Rights Act, which outlawed discrimination obstructing voter registration, and *Boynton v. Virginia*, which ruled for the desegregation of interstate bus terminals and facilities. By May 1961, Freedom Riders, student protestors among them, began to test *Boynton v. Virginia*.

In one of the most notable events of student participation in the civil rights movement, college student James Meredith became the emblem of the testing of another institution, the racial divide in higher education in the South, which had remained solidly in place. Inspired by John F. Kennedy’s inauguration and driven by his own ideas of equality and citizenship, Meredith, a twenty-nine-year-old Air Force veteran, wrote the day after the inauguration to request an application for transferring from Jackson State, a college in which only African American students were enrolled, to the University of Mississippi, to which only white students had been admitted.³⁶ Delays and legal sidesteps were employed to prevent Meredith’s registration, and a legal battle pitted the governor of Mississippi, Ross Barnett, against the NAACP. Finally, in late August 1961, the Supreme Court, with the backing of the White House, effectively overruled the openly segregationist Mississippi judges obstructing Meredith’s case. Comparable to Ohio Governor James Rhodes’ hard-line, inflammatory address the day before the shootings at Kent State, Governor Barnett declared: “No school will be integrated in Mississippi while I am your Governor. . . . There is no case in history where the Caucasian race has survived social integration.”³⁷ On September 15, Attorney General Robert Kennedy, made the first of many phone calls aimed to convince the governor to follow the law with minimal federal intervention, but that was not to be. On September 29, 1962, President Kennedy forced Meredith’s acceptance at the university.³⁸ Nevertheless, with two thousand onlookers, the governor confronted Meredith on campus and denied his admittance. President

³³ Scranton et al., *President’s Commission*, 21.

³⁴ Andrew Young, *An Easy Burden: The Civil Rights Movement and the Transformation of America* (New York: HarperCollins, 1996), 137, 126, 303, 308, 164.

³⁵ Betty Garman, “A Note About Friends of SNCC—What Do They Do?” Civil Rights Movement Veterans, Tougaloo College.

³⁶ William Doyle, *An American Insurrection: the Battle of Oxford, Mississippi, 1962* (New York: Doubleday, 2001), 17–21.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 65.

³⁸ Taylor Branch, *Parting the Waters: America During the King Years* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1988), 651; Adam Fairclough, *Better Day Coming: Blacks and Equality, 1890-2000* (New York: Viking Press, 2001), 266.

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Kennedy forced the governor to allow Meredith to enroll and on September 30 officially federalized the Mississippi National Guard, despite concerns about their loyalty; confirmed that the governor had arranged for highway patrolmen to guard against the growing segregationist crowd in Oxford; waited for news that Meredith was safely on campus; and then made an address to the nation. Soon after, the crowd attacked Meredith's federal marshal guards standing outside the Lyceum, and the patrolmen drifted away. Kennedy quickly ordered federal troops to intervene, but in the time it took them to arrive, two people were killed and hundreds injured in the vicinity of the Lyceum, which stood on the Circle, the common in the center of campus.³⁹ Twenty-three thousand soldiers descended on Oxford, and the next day Meredith attended his first class. Soldiers remained at the University of Mississippi until Meredith's graduation the next year.

Participation in the movement continued to progress. Students already had found and would continue to find support in organization-based efforts to promote positive social change. Further, across the country, new forms of conscious activity were rising on college campuses. Tom Hayden relates that in Ann Arbor in 1959, Robert Alan Haber was planning to revive a group with roots in the labor movement as a new civil rights group called Students for a Democratic Society. On February 1, 1960, Hayden felt that he was seeing "the historic events of the decade unexpectedly beg[i]n" when "four unknown black students staged a sit-in at a segregated lunch counter in Greensboro, North Carolina, and started what was soon called 'the movement.'" He continues:

From that point until the August 1963 march on Washington, there commenced an era of unmatched idealism in America. The student civil rights movement took the moral leadership, showing how values could be translated into direct action. Students across the country became agents for social change on a larger scale than ever before. A new, more hopeful, presidency was in the making. In this brief moment of time, the sixties generation entered its age of innocence, overflowing with hope.⁴⁰

After a period of learning, growth, and interaction with a range of student political organizations, including SNCC,⁴¹ Hayden and others convened in 1962 at Port Huron, Michigan, and declared the foundation of the Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) platform to be "participatory democracy." This would be pursued through direct action, with efforts such as "organiz[ing] slum dwellers in northern cities."⁴² Hayden, Haber, Todd Gitlin, Paul Potter, and Carl Oglesby (a former Kent State student) became early leaders of the SDS. Clearly alluding to JFK's inauguration speech, the SDS doctrine opens with:

We are people of this generation, bred in at least modest comfort, housed now in universities, looking uncomfortably to the world we inherit . . .

In addition to fighting racial and economic inequality, SDS decried nuclear armament, the military-industrial complex, depersonalization, and an apathetic and ineffective university system; these were values widely shared by college students by 1970 when the shootings at Kent State would occur. In 1964, the Mississippi Freedom Summer Project saw one thousand students from all over the country organized by SNCC, the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), and other civil rights groups arrive in the South to conduct a massive voter registration and summer school program. Mario Savio, the future leader of the Free Speech Movement at the University of California, Berkeley, was one of these students. The first of the Freedom volunteers were trained at Western College for Women (now part of Miami University) in Oxford, Ohio, in June 1964.⁴³ Later that same month,

³⁹ Branch, *Parting the Waters*, 671; Gene Ford, "Lyceum-The Circle Historic District," National Historic Landmarks Nomination Form (Washington, DC: National Park Service, United States Department of the Interior, 2008), 7-8.

⁴⁰ Tom Hayden, *Rebel: A Personal Historic of the 1960s* (Los Angeles: Red Hen, 2003), 28-29.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 29-66.

⁴² Scranton et al., *President's Commission*, 22.

⁴³ "Freedom Summer (1964)," *Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Global Freedom Struggle Encyclopedia* (Stanford, CA: Stanford

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local law enforcement officials and Klansmen near Meridian, Mississippi, would take part in the murder of three of these civil rights workers.⁴⁴

In the fall of 1964 at UC–Berkeley, one of the earliest non-Historically Black College and University campuses to adopt the methods of brothers and sisters in the civil rights movement, students protested the university’s sudden invocation of a rule prohibiting political groups from soliciting on campus. When the university suspended eight students who tested the rule and arrested another nonstudent activist, students, including Mario Savio, staged a thirty-two-hour sit-in around the campus police car holding Jack Weinberg, the arrested nonstudent activist. Weinberg was a CORE organizer, veteran of Freedom Summer, and former graduate student in mathematics, who had set up a recruitment table on Sproul Plaza in defiance of the order.⁴⁵ Within two months, a coalition of the political groups on campus formed the Free Speech Movement (FSM) and staged a two-day sit-in beginning December 2 in Sproul Hall, the university administration building. From the front steps, Savio gave his now historic *bodies upon the gears* speech to four thousand people in Sproul Plaza.⁴⁶ The arrest of more than eight hundred people and charges of police brutality led in turn to the mobilization of huge numbers of students and faculty to support FSM goals, along with an unprecedented five-day student strike. By January 1965, Berkeley’s chancellor had taken a leave of absence, and rules governing student political activity had been greatly liberalized.⁴⁷ However, university-imposed penalties and the decision by Governor Brown to send in non-university police were signs that authorities would become increasingly willing to use force against campus protestors.

Berkeley marked a passage in the student protest movement in another important way. According to the President’s Commission, protests at the university that originated in its Free Speech Movement “altered the character of American student activism in a fundamental way.” The commission identified Berkeley as the birthplace of the Berkeley Invention, “an authentic political invention—a new and complex mixture of issues, tactics, emotions and setting—that became the prototype for student protest throughout the decade.” The main characteristics of the Berkeley Invention were: the initiation by a core group of activists; the meshing of “major social and political issues with local university issues”; the disruption of the administration of the university; police intervention, which, in turn, rallied moderate students; and decision making among the protestors through consensus. “The high spirits and defiance of authority that had characterized the traditional school riot were now joined to youthful idealism and to social objectives of the highest importance.” The Berkeley Invention awakened the consciousness of the American Student; it signaled that a new generation had arrived. However, much of America would oppose this change.⁴⁸

Broader Social Protest and Authoritarian Response

In the second half of the sixties, racial discrimination spurred outbursts in the nation’s cities, while continuing to foster student protest. Law enforcement authorities responded with increasing violence. One especially egregious incident, which became known as Bloody Sunday, took place on March 7, 1965, outside of Selma, Alabama. While the civil rights movement had scored a major victory with the Civil Rights Act of 1964 that largely dismantled Jim Crow laws, widespread voting disenfranchisement remained. Adam Fairclough notes that disparity was especially apparent in Selma where whites were slightly out-numbered by African

University, Martin Luther King, Jr. Research and Education Institute, 1964).

⁴⁴ “Chaney, Goodman & Schwerner,” CORE-Congress of Racial Equality.

⁴⁵ Scranton et al., *President’s Commission*, 23; Todd Gitlin, *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage* (New York: Bantam Books, rev. ed., 1993), 161, 164.

⁴⁶ Gitlin, *Sixties*, 291; Seth Rosenfeld, “How the Man Who Challenged ‘the Machine’ Got Caught in the Gears and Wheels of J. Edgar Hoover’s Bureau”, (*San Francisco Chronicle*: October 10, 2004).

⁴⁷ Kirkpatrick Sale, *SDS* (New York: Random House, 1973), 162–63; Scranton et al., *President’s Commission*, 23–24.

⁴⁸ Scranton et al., *President’s Commission*, 22, 24–28; Sale, *SDS*, 167, 169.

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Americans, but made up ninety-nine percent of the electorate. The local white Citizens Council, with the backing of racist officials—a sheriff (with a “posse” of “local roughnecks”), state judge, and Governor George Wallace—strongly resisted any effort to overturn the status quo. Angered by the February 17 killing of twenty-six-year-old voting rights marcher Jimmie Lee Jackson, the SCLC organized a fifty-four-mile march from Selma to the capitol in Montgomery “with the aim of placing the responsibility for Jackson’s death at Wallace’s door.”⁴⁹ David Garrow describes the afternoon of March 7 when, despite disagreements between SNCC and SCLC, SNCC’s John Lewis joined Hosea Williams of the SCLC in leading five to six hundred marchers out of Selma. Upon cresting the Edmund Pettus Bridge, marchers saw fifty Alabama state troopers and several dozen of the sheriff’s posse, some on horseback, waiting three hundred yards past the foot of the bridge, just outside the Selma city limits. As the marchers approached, Major John Cloud of the state troopers ordered them to stop. Williams instructed the marchers to kneel and pray and asked to speak with Cloud, who said they had two minutes to turn around and go back. However, within one minute, not two, he instructed his troops to advance.⁵⁰ Reporters from every major network captured the bloody attack that left more than 150 people injured. The widely distributed powerful images and footage spurred additional marches, national outrage, and real change. With President Lyndon Johnson’s support, Congress quickly passed the Voting Rights Act of 1965. Some feel that on the hallowed ground of the Edmund Pettus Bridge came the denouement of the civil rights movement. Roberts and Klibanoff see the march as the last major unified event of the movement. They turn to John Lewis, who stated, ““After that . . . we just came apart.””⁵¹

Later that year, in August, riots erupted in Watts, a predominantly African American community in Los Angeles, and other cities around the country. There were additional riots in Watts in March 1967, followed by riots in Newark, New Jersey, Detroit, and Minneapolis in July. National Guard units were activated in Detroit, Minneapolis, and Newark. Regarding events in Newark, the New Jersey governor’s Select Commission on Civil Disorders later found that “excessive and unnecessary force” had been used by the New Jersey National Guard.⁵² These incidents in part caused President Johnson in July 1967 to appoint a National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders with Otto Kerner, former governor of Illinois, as chair. The commission’s findings on the 1967 riots held that they were not part of an organized conspiracy, but rather resulted from the accumulation of social ills, among them high unemployment, inadequate housing, racial discrimination, and police repression. Disruptions continued on college campuses as well. In May 1967, the National Guard occupied the grounds of Jackson State University in Mississippi following disturbances there.⁵³ A known nonstudent civil rights activist, Ben Brown, was shot and killed when he exited a restaurant on Lynch Street at the time a demonstration was taking place. Demonstrations again would become notable at Jackson State in 1970 and would indelibly link Jackson State and Kent State.

Another center of student protest in the 1960s and early 1970s, although not highlighted by the President’s Commission on Campus Unrest, was the University of Wisconsin.⁵⁴ Protests at Wisconsin exhibiting characteristics of the Berkeley Invention began in May 1966 with a sit-in protesting Selective Service ranking and continued for several years to come.⁵⁵ Students also felt that the university was complicit with the war effort, particularly due to its Army Math Research Center on campus in Sterling Hall. Army Math in Sterling supported over forty mathematicians and would itself be the target of subsequent protests, culminating in the

⁴⁹ Fairclough, *Better Day Coming*, 289–291.

⁵⁰ David J. Garrow, *Protest at Selma* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978), 73–75.

⁵¹ Gene Roberts and Hank Klibanoff, *The Race Beat: The Press, the Civil Rights Struggle, and the Awakening of a Nation* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2007), 394.

⁵² Harold M. Mayer, *Commission on KSU Violence*, 4 Vols. (Kent, OH: Kent State University Printing Service, 1972), 1:4, 6–7.

⁵³ Mayer, *Commission on KSU*, 1:6–7.

⁵⁴ Scranton et al., *President’s Commission*, 43.

⁵⁵ Sale, *SDS*, 369; Matthew Levin, *Cold War University: Madison and the New Left in the Sixties* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2013), 3–6.

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bombing of that facility by the New Year's Gang in 1970.⁵⁶ In February 1967, Wisconsin experienced the first of two protests against Dow Chemical Corporation, the manufacturer of napalm and as such viewed as part of the Vietnam War machine. The second protest, set in the Commerce Building on the Madison Campus, began October 16 in response to Dow's recruitment on campus and promised to be of a different scale than previous demonstrations.⁵⁷ As SDS historian Kirkpatrick Sale describes, the protest was organized by an Anti-Dow Coordinating Committee, with members of the Committee to End the War in Vietnam and SDS playing prominent roles. On the second day, picketers entered the Commerce Building and declared an end to the recruiting. The number of protestors grew to three hundred and fifty and onlookers to two thousand. When students did not heed administrators' demand to leave, police arrived in increasing numbers and eventually moved in, beating and clubbing the students and quickly clearing the building. Students outside, shocked into action by the brutality of the police began sheltering students exiting the building from arrest, yelling and chanting at the police. For the first time on a major college campus, tear gas was released on a crowd. This further angered the protesters, who began throwing rocks and bricks at the police. The police then released Mace on the crowd, and, reinforced with men from the county sheriff's office in riot gear and police dogs, dispersed the protesters. Sixty-five students and seven police were treated at the local hospital.⁵⁸

An hour after the protest, a large rally began on the library mall, comprised of an estimated five thousand students, who were ringed for protection by three hundred faculty members. Students complained of police brutality and agreed not to attend classes until Dow was forever banned from the university. Within a few days, however, the strike lost its initiative, sixteen students were suspended, and three teaching assistants were fired from their teaching jobs for joining the strike. Dow recruitment was temporarily canceled, and the crisis was over. None of the issues involved—recruitment, protest, police complicity, or violence—had been settled, and they continued to be in contention at Wisconsin for some time to come.⁵⁹ Media in Wisconsin and elsewhere would portray the protest as a student riot.⁶⁰

A significant feature of Wisconsin's Dow protests, Matthew Levin points out, was their organization by an ad hoc committee. This served to limit the exposure of any one group to university retaliation, but also reflected the fact that no single group could command the attention of the entire campus. SDS was not the main force behind the Dow protest. This trend toward ad hoc organization was characteristic of many of the antiwar protests to follow on university campuses around the country, including the Kent State protest of May 4, 1970, which had minimal organization. The second Dow protest also reflected the change from "protest to resistance," which was becoming a more prominent part of the student antiwar movement and would be more fully realized in the Columbia University demonstrations of the following year. This change, not surprisingly, served to solidify a conservative backlash against student protest; for example, Wisconsin state senator Edward Mertz suggested, "We should shoot them if necessary. I would." Still, the Dow demonstration did galvanize student involvement, and the burned bodies of Vietnamese children now symbolized for many the horror of an unwanted war. At Wisconsin and elsewhere, broad segments of the student population were becoming more aware of the cooperative links between federal government, American corporations, and higher education in the war effort.⁶¹ As an afterword to the legacy of Wisconsin's Dow protest, one of the onlookers in the crowd would become the leader of the New Year's Gang that bombed Sterling Hall at the University of Wisconsin in August, 1970, destroying the building and damaging twenty-six other structures, ruining nuclear physics and astronomy

⁵⁶ Sale, *SDS*, 370; Bates, *RADS*, 244.

⁵⁷ Feldman, *Buildings of the University of Wisconsin*, 285; Sale, *SDS*, 369.

⁵⁸ *SDS*, 370–73.

⁵⁹ *SDS*, 373; *Cold War University*, 156.

⁶⁰ Bates, *RADS*, 90.

⁶¹ Levin, *Cold War University*, 144, 124–25, 150, 157, 147–49.

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research projects, and killing a postdoctoral fellow in physics, Robert Fassnacht. The Kent State shootings were a strong motivator for the New Year's Gang.⁶²

Shootings at South Carolina State University–Orangeburg

In 1968, a year historians recognize as especially pivotal, at South Carolina State College (SCSC), a historically black college, students were well acquainted with the ultraconservative white attitudes and actions of Orangeburg County and had actively participated in civil rights protests as early as 1960.⁶³ Well after the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and at a time of increasing integration throughout the South, the All Star Bowling Lanes stood as “the most visible and volatile symbol of segregation in Orangeburg.”⁶⁴ Student frustration centered on failed attempts to integrate this whites-only bowling alley close to campus in the city of Orangeburg. On February 8, after being rebuffed in their attempts to put out a bonfire, heavily armed South Carolina highway patrolmen, Orangeburg police, and the National Guard fired without warning into a crowd on campus of unarmed South Carolina State University student protestors. They wounded twenty-seven students and killed three students.⁶⁵ The shootings were referred to as the Orangeburg Incident by white South Carolinians and as the Orangeburg Massacre by civil rights activists and the African American community.⁶⁶ Jack Shuler comments that at the time the choice of the noun *incident* versus *massacre* lay at the heart of what happened at Orangeburg: use of the word *incident* situated the events somewhere in time—making it a part of an already past history—while the use of the word *massacre* admitted that something truly horrific happened.⁶⁷ The pattern would be repeated.

Two attempts on February 5 and 6 by students to integrate the bowling alley were met by confrontations with law enforcement officers and arrests of protesters. Several hundred students approached the bowling alley to protest the arrests and grew more confrontational to the police who were now reinforced with the highway patrol. The latter began clubbing students, forcing them back toward the college campus. On the way back to campus, students broke windows of white-owned businesses and vandalized parked cars. Governor Robert McNair, who had been informed of the situation, issued a call for approximately two hundred and fifty Orangeburg-area National Guardsmen to report for standby duty. Authorities erroneously blamed outside agitators for the protests.⁶⁸ These actions of the authorities moved the Berkeley Invention into place. The proximate cause of student unrest at South Carolina State College a segregated bowling alley, shifted to the actions of law enforcement and the National Guard once they had “invaded” the campus.⁶⁹ Harsh treatment of student demonstrators widened the base of protest and further encouraged students to work together to assert their rights.

⁶² Tom Bates, *RADS: The 1970 Bombing of the Army Math Research Center at the University of Wisconsin and Its Aftermath* (New York: HarperCollins, 1992), 88, 14–15, 239, 240–41.

⁶³ Jack Bass and Jack Nelson, *The Orangeburg Massacre* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2002), 2, 7–8; Davis, “Civil Rights Movement in Orangeburg.”

⁶⁴ Bass and Nelson, *Orangeburg Massacre*, 15. The segregated All Star Bowling Lanes held a place similar to Lynch Street for students in Jackson, Mississippi (see discussion of Jackson State below).

⁶⁵ Gitlin cites three killed and thirty-three wounded, *Sixties*, 313. Ibram X. Kendi (Ibram H. Rogers), *The Black Campus Movement: Black Students and the Racial Reconstitution of Higher Education, 1965-1972* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 132, note 10 cites three killed and “at least” thirty-four wounded.

⁶⁶ Bass and Nelson, *Orangeburg Massacre*, 3.

⁶⁷ Jack Shuler, *Blood & Bone: Truth and Reconciliation in a Southern Town* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 2012), 6.

⁶⁸ Bass and Nelson, *Orangeburg Massacre*, 16–32. During this time, authorities targeted activist student and SNCC organizer Cleveland Sellers, who would be wounded during the shooting and erroneously charged afterward. *Ibid.*, 7, 34–35, 50, 76.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 25–29, 30–34, 50, 63.

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On Wednesday, February 7, classes at Orangeburg were canceled. City officials came to a campus meeting as an alternative to a student march on city hall to present a list of grievances.. With no real progress achieved through this meeting, students resumed throwing rocks and bottles from the front campus at passing white motorists, prompting police to set up a roadblock manned by both patrolmen and National Guardsmen with fixed bayonets. Protestors now made law enforcement the target of their missiles and set small fires in nearby buildings.⁷⁰

On Thursday, February 8, classes resumed and “an almost eerie calm settled over the campuses of Claflin and South Carolina State colleges.”⁷¹ In the city, however, rumors were circulating that students intended to burn down the town and that black militants were moving in. Governor McNair activated additional National Guardsmen. At approximately 9:30 p.m., students succeeded in lighting a fire in Watson Street, and approximately two hundred students gathered on the nearby embankment and sang and jeered at the police and highway patrol. “For the students, the bonfire was an act of defiance, an outlet for frustration, at last a means of visible protest for grievances.”⁷² A few minutes before 10:30 p.m., firemen, protected by patrolmen and National Guardsmen, doused the bonfire. Students retreated and ran up the embankment toward campus, cursing and throwing several rocks and bottles as they went. A thrown white banister hit the nose and mouth of patrolman David Shealy, who fell. Shouts went out from several patrolmen that Shealy had been shot. No communication sufficiently reached the law enforcement authorities to prevent them from firing. After students had retreated to the vicinity of Lowman Hall, four hundred feet from the embankment, they began drifting back toward the embankment and the authorities who were waiting with weapons periodically raised and lowered. At this time, about five minutes after Shealy was struck, there were about as many law enforcement personnel as students: perhaps 150 students, 66 state highway patrolmen, 45 National Guardsmen, 25 agents of the State Law Enforcement Division (controlled directly by the governor), and several members of the Orangeburg police department in the vicinity of the embankment. When the students were about one hundred feet from the embankment, the highway patrolmen and at least one Orangeburg policeman opened fire with carbines, pistols, and shotguns,⁷³ unexpectedly and without warning. Students at first thought the authorities were firing blanks to frighten them and learned too late that was far from the truth.⁷⁴

The law enforcement members killed three students: Samuel Hammond Jr., aged eighteen, Delano Middleton, aged seventeen, and Henry Smith, aged eighteen. They also wounded twenty-seven students, many of whom were shot in the back. Most of the patrolmen said they had not heard an order to fire, but later their lieutenant, Jesse Spell, said he shouted “Now” to his squad before firing. About one hundred students broke into the SCSC ROTC building, took three rifles and ammunition, and took up defensive positions at the girls’ dormitory. Students were afraid the police might fire again, but were persuaded to give up their weapons after about twenty minutes. The next morning, classes were suspended indefinitely and students were told to go home.⁷⁵

In the aftermath, the US Justice Department arrived in the city, investigated, and charged nine patrolmen with “willfully” shooting and depriving those in the crowd “of life or liberty without due process of law”—a misdemeanor.⁷⁶ Importantly, the ensuing trial was the first in US history in which police were charged with excessive use of force “in controlling unruly campus demonstrations.” Composed of ten whites and two blacks, the jury found the defendants not guilty.⁷⁷

⁷⁰ Ibid., 25–36, 37–47.

⁷¹ Ibid., 49.

⁷² Ibid., 57.

⁷³ Ibid., 49–65, 26.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 87, 149, 241.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 61–77, 80.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 156–57.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 161, 185.

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Many direct comparisons can be made between the events in Orangeburg and the events in May 1970 at Kent State, including the following:

- blaming radical outside agitators for disturbances and circulating rumors,⁷⁸
- increasing law enforcement response to the level of calling in the National Guard,
- students creating disturbances in town and protesting on campus,
- triggering the Berkeley Invention,
- an atmosphere of calm prior to the shootings,⁷⁹
- shooting into a crowd without warning or immediate provocation,⁸⁰
- students thinking authorities were firing blanks to frighten them,⁸¹
- many students being shot in the back,⁸²
- irregularities related to use of weapons (collecting shell casings or swapping weapons),⁸³
- newspaper reports misrepresenting the shooting,⁸⁴
- insinuating there was a sniper,⁸⁵
- a generational and experience gap between the shooters and their victims,⁸⁶
- turning the city into an armed camp after the shootings, with troops, equipment, and a curfew,⁸⁷
- law enforcement authorities who did not have to “pay for the killing and wounding of the students in criminal or civil court,”⁸⁸ and
- the site of the shooting being partially covered with a building.

White opinion on the Orangeburg Massacre was squarely with law enforcement and the governor.⁸⁹ In his study *The Black Campus Movement: Black Students and the Racial Reconstitution of Higher Education, 1965-1972*, Ibram X. Kendi (formerly Ibram H. Rogers) writes, “As when officers killed students at Jackson State in May 1970 and at Southern–U in November 1972,” African Americans were “furious” about the Orangeburg Massacre.⁹⁰ Bass and Nelson agree that the massacre strongly affected other historically black colleges,

⁷⁸ Bass and Nelson, *Orangeburg Massacre*, 80–81, 83, 33; “Governor Rhodes Speech on Campus Disorders in Kent, May 3, 1970” (Kent, OH: Kent State University, Radio-TV Information, May 4 Collection, Special Collections and Archives, Kent University Libraries); Barbato, Davis, and Seeman, *This We Know*, 5.

⁷⁹ Bass and Nelson, *Orangeburg Massacre*, 49; Michener, *Kent State*, 225.

⁸⁰ Bass and Nelson, *Orangeburg Massacre*, 65, 149; Barbato, Davis, and Seeman, *This We Know*, 23–24.

⁸¹ Jack Nelson, “Orangeburg to Kent State,” *The Los Angeles Times*, May 5, 1971, 241; Scranton, et al., *President’s Commission*, 275.

⁸² Bass and Nelson, *Orangeburg Massacre*, 66–71; Barbato, Davis, and Seeman, *This We Know*, 22–23.

⁸³ Bass and Nelson, *Orangeburg Massacre*, 144; Kelner and Munves, 16, 101, 144, 183.

⁸⁴ Bass and Nelson, *Orangeburg Massacre*, 79; *Kent–Ravenna Record–Courier*, May 4, 1970, early edition.

⁸⁵ Bass and Nelson, *Orangeburg Massacre*, 81; Nelson, “Orangeburg to Kent State,” 241; I.F. Stone, *The Killings at Kent State: How Murder Went Unpunished* (New York: Vintage Books, 1970), 88, note 14; Scranton et al., *President’s Commission*, 279.

⁸⁶ Bass and Nelson, *Orangeburg Massacre*, 157; Carole Barbato and Laura Davis, “Ordinary Lives: Kent State, May 4, 1970,” In *Time It Was: American Stories from the Sixties*, eds. Karen Manners Smith and Tim Koster (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2008), 374.

⁸⁷ Bass and Nelson, *Orangeburg Massacre*, 80; Barbato, Davis, and Seeman, *This We Know*, 29.

⁸⁸ Kendi [Rogers], *Black Campus Movement*, 133; Thomas R. Hensley, “The May 4th Trials”, in Thomas Hensley and Jerry Lewis, *Kent State and May 4th: A Social Science Perspective*, 3rd ed. (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 2010), 83.

⁸⁹ Bass and Nelson, *Orangeburg Massacre*, 82–85.

⁹⁰ 132. Kendi sees the Orangeburg and Jackson State killings on different ends of an arc, however: Orangeburg and MLK’s assassination “caught the movement when it was accelerating, compelling militants to slam the pedal of the movement. On the other hand, the Jackson State Tragedy occurred when the movement was slowing.” For Kendi, the importance of the lack of response to the Jackson State killings is that that became “yet another cause of the demise of the BCM,” the Black Campus Movement, which is the focus of his study, 103.

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prompting protests on southern campuses and elsewhere.⁹¹ The Southern Regional Council, a civil rights and research group, conducted its own investigation and concluded in its report of February 25 that there was no support for the governor's claims that black power advocates were to blame, or that students had fired at the state police. The South Carolina State Advisory Committee of the Civil Rights Commission concluded that "without warning of any kind, the armed officers began to fire shotguns at the students . . . [and] most of the injured received their wounds from the back, apparently as they were fleeing."

Nationwide, the shootings of students on the Orangeburg campus received relatively little coverage, and stories that did appear contained many errors.⁹² After the shootings at Kent State, then journalist for the *Los Angeles Times* Jack Nelson explained the lack of coverage of Orangeburg compared to Kent State in this way: "Another vital difference, of course, was that the Orangeburg victims were black. If they had been white, perhaps the nation would have learned something from 'The Orangeburg Massacre.'"⁹³ When Jack Nelson and co-author Jack Bass wrote *The Orangeburg Massacre*, they would offer further explanation of why coverage of Orangeburg was limited. In the Foreword to *The Orangeburg Massacre*, Thomas Pettigrew summarizes: "It was more in keeping with the national mood either to ignore the 'incident' or to accept uncritically Governor McNair's strained explanation."⁹⁴ Again pointing to what Bass and Nelson argue in the book, Pettigrew adds that the Orangeburg Massacre, though a tragedy, received little investigation or coverage because it followed a succession of race riots in major northern cities; it appeared at a time when there was a "backlash" or polarization of racial opinion fueled by fear and uncertainty. Increased black militancy, as exemplified by the rise of the Black Panther party, was also a factor.⁹⁵ One might want to keep in mind, though, that while the President's Commission on Campus Unrest contextualizes its reports on Kent State and Jackson State amidst discussion of a number of other campuses, Orangeburg is not one of them.

Not only did the Orangeburg Massacre receive comparatively less national attention, but also the site was strongly and negatively impacted by the placement of an administration building and parking lot where the shootings took place.⁹⁶ The Orangeburg shooting site is not on the National Register of Historic Places. However, portions of the adjacent campus and the All Star Bowling Lanes are listed on the National Register. There is also a comprehensive NRHP Multiple Property Documentation Form that describes events on the property and others associated with the Civil Rights Movement in Orangeburg County, 1955–1971.⁹⁷ A permanent marker titled "The Orangeburg Massacre" installed on the slope down which the fatally wounded students were pulled to the sidewalk reads:

On February 8, 1968, after three nights of escalating racial tension over efforts by S.C. State College students and others to desegregate the All Star Bowling Lanes, 3 students died and 27 others were wounded on this campus. S.C. Highway Patrolmen fired on a crowd here, killing Samuel Hammond Jr., Delano Middleton, and Henry Smith. This tragedy was the first of its kind on any American college campus.

⁹¹ Bass and Nelson, *Orangeburg Massacre*, 92.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 83.

⁹³ Nelson, "Orangeburg to Kent State."

⁹⁴ *ix*; also see Bass and Nelson, *Orangeburg Massacre*, 83.

⁹⁵ Foreword, *viii–ix*; also see Bass and Nelson, *Orangeburg Massacre*, 82.

⁹⁶ Bass and Nelson, *Orangeburg Massacre*, 212.

⁹⁷ Davis, "Resources Associated with the Civil Rights Movement in Orangeburg County, South Carolina", National Register of Historic Places, Multiple Property Documentation Form (Washington, DC: National Park Service, US Department of the Interior, 1996).

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Racial Conflict of 1968 Continues

On April 4, 1968, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., was assassinated in Memphis, prompting an outbreak of racial violence in 125 cities across the country. Senator Robert F. Kennedy, viewed by students and others as a hope for the end to violence domestically and in Vietnam should he win the presidency, broke the news to an audience of African Americans in Indianapolis that had gathered for his scheduled campaign speech. Citing the loss in his own family, Kennedy acknowledged the bitterness that his listeners would feel over the death of King, yet implored them to continue to work together to change the country for the better. In Los Angeles eight weeks later, June 5, 1968, on the evening that he celebrated his victory in the California primary, RFK himself was assassinated.

On July 29, 1968, racial conflict broke out in the Glenville area of Cleveland in Northeast Ohio. The Ohio National Guard was brought in to assist the police, but this did not prevent extensive looting, arson, and eleven dead (including three police).⁹⁸ In this context, on August 10, 1968, the Kerner Commission formally urged the improvement of riot control training for the National Guard. When the Democratic National Convention was held in Chicago later that month, street demonstrations were met by the Illinois National Guard and federal troops, which were used to support the police. The subsequent Walker Report would conclude that the resulting violence constituted “a police riot.” At the Republican Convention in Miami Beach, an undaunted Ralph Abernathy, successor to Martin Luther King as head of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, led a demonstration to call attention to the plight of the poor in the United States. In late August, racial unrest in Ohio continued, with episodes of arson and looting in Lima and Middletown and the enforcement of a curfew in Akron, Ohio.⁹⁹

The Pattern of Student Protest and Law Enforcement Response

As racial unrest continued to spread throughout the nation’s cities in the latter half of the decade, the number of sit-ins, walkouts, and confrontations increased at US universities. In late April 1968, the proposed construction of a gymnasium by Columbia University in a neighboring New York City park separating the campus from working-class Harlem initiated a major student protest at that university. It is the view of the President’s Commission that the demonstrations, sit-ins, and disruptions that took place at Columbia were important because they “illustrated the spread of the Berkeley Invention and the rising tide of student opposition to war and racial injustice” in the four years following the Berkeley FSM protests. However, according to the commission, at Berkeley the underlying demand was for a more open campus and the removal of restrictions on free speech as imposed by administrators, while at Columbia the goal “was not to make Columbia more neutral politically and more open intellectually, but rather to transform it into a revolutionary political weapon with which they could attack the system.”¹⁰⁰

The Columbia protests stressed three specific criticisms of the university: 1) sponsorship of Vietnam War-related research; 2) insensitivity toward the local black community as represented by the planned construction of a university gymnasium on a park between the campus’ Morningside Heights location and Harlem; and 3) authoritarianism in the form of arbitrary and unilateral administration rulings.¹⁰¹

⁹⁸ “The Glenville Shootout and Ohio’s several other racial disturbances of the 1960s illustrate the lack of opportunity for many people, especially African Americans, in Ohio’s major cities during this era,” “Glenville Shootout.” Riots in Cleveland’s Hough area in the summer of 1966 were another notable mark in the succession of civil disturbances rooted in racial and economic inequality.

⁹⁹ Mayer, *Commission on KSU*, 1:9.

¹⁰⁰ Scranton et al., *President’s Commission*, 35, 37.

¹⁰¹ Gitlin, *Sixties*, 306; Sale, *SDS*, 434; Scranton et al., *President’s Commission*, 36.

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Student Power and Black Power proponents presented an escalating series of demands resulting in the cancellation of classes and the sealing off of the campus. Direct action at Columbia began on March 27 with a hundred-strong delegation to Low Memorial Library (the administration building) with an anti-IDA petition. In return, the university put on probation six SDS chapter leaders (the IDA Six). Two weeks later, a service honoring the late Martin Luther King was disrupted to argue that an institution taking over black property in Harlem for its own purposes was not in fact honoring King at all. This was soon followed on April 23 with the occupation of Hamilton Hall by a coalition of black and white students.¹⁰² In his chronicle of the sixties, Todd Gitlin notes, “The movement, reeling, found fresh inspiration” when “nineteen days after King’s assassination came the student occupation of buildings at Columbia University.”¹⁰³ Stephan Bradley, author of *Harlem vs. Columbia*, writes that Dean Henry Coleman was held hostage in his office in Hamilton, an administrative and classroom building, as part of the protest. A joint Steering Committee made up of student leaders presented six demands: amnesty for the IDA Six, termination of the IDA affiliation, a repeal of a ban on indoor protests, the university’s cooperation in dropping police charges against protesters, and a permanent halt to the construction of the gym. The protesting black students, wanting to make race an issue the university would have to deal with, subsequently asked the white radical students to leave Hamilton and start their own demonstration on the university’s attempt to build the gym elsewhere. Those students moved on to Low Memorial Library, the centrally located administration building, and set up camp in the presidential offices. This was followed on April 24 by the taking of Avery Hall (School of Architecture), on April 25 of Fayerweather Hall, and on April 26 of Mathematics Hall—altogether five campus buildings occupied by students. Gitlin observes that during the occupation there were clear attempts to destroy the symbols of the Establishment, for example by smoking President Grayson Kirk’s cigars, drinking his sherry, and pirating or liberating documents, but in no case were acts of violence committed against persons. The occupation took on the air of a community festival, with students of both sexes moving in, holding ideological and technical debates, eating, sleeping, and even performing a wedding.¹⁰⁴ After eight days of negotiation, the administration called in the police. In the middle of the night of April 30, over a thousand city police raided the occupied buildings, forcibly removing the protestors from university property and arresting more than seven hundred—three-quarters of them students. More than two hundred young people were injured in the arrest.¹⁰⁵ Sale comments:

The police attack coming on the eighth day of the occupation, and with the full approval of the Columbia authorities, was not extraordinarily brutal compared to the treatment dealt to ghetto minorities, the gunning down of unarmed students at Orangeburg, or even the precedents at Berkeley, Wisconsin, and Oakland. But the grim, methodical cruelty, the indiscriminate use of force on any nearby body, the injuries to more than two hundred young people, the mass arrests of more than seven hundred people, and the presence of reporters from every known media, combined to give it a special impact on the students involved, on the flabbergasted faculty, on campuses elsewhere, and on much of the nation beyond academe. It was one more example of students putting themselves on the defensive It was also one more link in the chain of evidence—the police riot at the Democratic Convention would be another one—that active dissent would not be tolerated by the state and violent repression would be.¹⁰⁶

Despite the harsher tactics of law enforcement, it was clear that by the end of April that the students had accomplished their goals: they had stopped construction on the gym and radicalized the student body. What

¹⁰² Sale, *SDS*, 435.

¹⁰³ Gitlin, *Sixties*, 306.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 307.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, *Sixties*, 307–08; Mayer, *Commission on KSU*, 1:8; Sale, *SDS*, 438.

¹⁰⁶ Sale, *SDS*, 438.

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followed was a month-long student strike demanding more university reform.¹⁰⁷ Sale comments that “Columbia 1968 was the most significant student rebellion to date, surpassing even Berkeley 1964. . . . America’s children had not only awakened from the American Dream but were preparing to move on to actually destroying all it stood for. Columbia quickly became the symbol of all campus protest, and it energized the news media, angered the politicians, terrified the academics, and inspired the students.” The Weather Underground Organization, colloquially known as the Weathermen, was beginning to take shape. A faction of the Students for a Democratic Society, the Weathermen was a militant radical left-wing organization. Accused by the media of using classic revolutionary techniques, SDS was now pointed to as the “‘prime mover’” of campus revolts across America.¹⁰⁸ This characterization would become significant to the response of authorities in Kent, Ohio, in May 1970. In addition, the Weather Underground Organization, colloquially known as the Weathermen, had splintered from SDS and was beginning to take shape. Different from SDS, the Weathermen was a militant radical left-wing organization. Failure in many spheres to observe this distinction also influenced response to student protest.

Gitlin contends that the confrontation at Columbia signaled four important transformations in the student movement. First, “deference and civility were resoundingly dumped” as students simply took matters into their own hands, taking over buildings, holding administrators hostage, and taking and destroying university property and records. Second, the movement replaced the university’s imposed culture with their own, building a residential community of protest and freedom in improvised spaces within the buildings they had appropriated. Third, the administration used the police, and police brutality, to violently oppose the student agenda.¹⁰⁹ As at Berkeley earlier, these tactics had the effect of galvanizing and broadening student opposition to the administration’s position. Finally, the press sided solidly with the administration and “built a containing wall against the radical tide.”¹¹⁰ Many of these journalistic accounts were false or exaggerated to the extreme.¹¹¹ For student protesters, and similar to what happened at Berkeley, this merely confirmed their beliefs that the university was indeed part of a larger *system* of social domination that must be torn down.¹¹² It is interesting that much of the Columbia protests centered on the construction of a gym by a university administration appearing to disregard the symbolic importance of that ground to others. This would be the root issue in the Move the Gym protests at Kent State a decade later.

On May 3, 1968, African American students at Northwestern University seized the business office and demanded separate black housing, more scholarships, a greater number of black faculty, and courses designed specifically for African Americans. The university agreed to these demands. That same month, students at Stanford University occupied a building to protest the suspension of seven students who had led a demonstration the preceding fall against CIA recruitment on campus.¹¹³ In 1968, students also seized the administration buildings at the University of Chicago, Ohio State University, and Howard University. The trend continued in 1969 at Harvard University, where student concerns included university policies on ROTC and ownership of working-class housing. On May 7, 1969, paralleling the situation at Northwestern University the previous year, students at historically black Howard University seized eight buildings and forced the university to close.

By 1970, public officials and administrators at universities across the country were well schooled in the history and lessons of the Berkeley Invention. However, the central concern of the authorities was the issue of civil

¹⁰⁷ Stephan M. Bradley, *Harlem vs. Columbia University: Black Student Power in the Late 1960s* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2009), 7, 438.

¹⁰⁸ Sale, *SDS*, 441, 447, 442.

¹⁰⁹ Gitlin, *Sixties*, 307; see also Sale, *SDS*, 439–40.

¹¹⁰ Gitlin, *Sixties*, 308.

¹¹¹ Sale, *SDS*, 442–43.

¹¹² Gitlin, *Sixties*, 309.

¹¹³ Mayer, *Commission on KSU*, 1:5.

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disturbance, not civil disobedience directed at social injustice. They steeled themselves for an escalation of events and vowed to act forcefully.¹¹⁴ In May 1968, Governor Ronald Reagan of California ordered the destruction of People's Park at UC Berkeley. Gitlin comments, "'The repression was so brutal.' For those who paid attention to Berkeley, the sense of white exemption died there, a full year before Kent State."¹¹⁵ Two years later, on April 7, 1970, Reagan tried to rally support when addressing an audience of alumni of the University of California system by pronouncing that radical student protestors should be told, "If it takes a bloodbath now let's get it over with." "The 'bloodbath' statement caught nationwide attention, and was interpreted as Reagan's desire to have a confrontation with students."¹¹⁶ A decade later, still asked by the public about his remark, Reagan explained that his figure of speech was misunderstood; he meant that the university administration would have to "take their bloodbath" by exacting firmer discipline on the dissenters:

This was during the period when Wheeler Hall was burned and when an attempt was made to set fire to the great university library. . . . The university administrators had . . . tried to discuss the differences with the dissenters. But as dissent grew into violence . . . the university administrators were finally coming to the realization that the dissenters were going beyond dissent and did not want a reasoned discussion on their differences and they, the administrators, were in effect indulging in appeasement. I then said these administrators had come to realize the error of their ways and now knew they had to deal directly with the violence. And that is where I used, as a figure of speech, the expression that they, the administrators, knew they were going to have to take their bloodbath by resisting the rioters with expulsion, suspension, etc.¹¹⁷

Significantly, Reagan borrowed Nixon's pronouncement on Kent State—"when dissent turns to violence it invites tragedy"—as he sought to correct the historical record. Still, there was a discernable, executive-level perspective on student protestors, and the President's Commission made a key point in recommending that "public officials at all levels of government . . . recognize that their public statements can either heal or divide. Harsh and bitter rhetoric can set citizen against citizen, exacerbate tension, and encourage violence."¹¹⁸ Nixon's Vice President Spiro Agnew, of course, was notable for such rhetoric against antiwar protestors, calling them, "'home front snipers'" and referring to colleges as, "'circus tents or psychiatric centers for over-privileged, under-disciplined irresponsible children.'"¹¹⁹

The Vietnam War Escalates, Student Protests Escalate

As student activism became more visible across the nation, its concerns for social justice intertwined with the escalation of the Vietnam War. The peace and student civil rights movements became a focused antiwar movement. The President's Commission noted:

¹¹⁴ There were exceptions, as at Yale, where police, administrators, and protestors made provisions to stave off potential violence at a planned rally in support of the Black Panthers on May 1, 1970 (Paul Bass and Doug Rae, "The Panther and the Bulldog, The Story of May Day 1970," *Yale Alumni Magazine* July/Aug [2006], http://archives.yalealumnimagazine.com/issues/2006_07/panthers.html).

¹¹⁵ Gitlin, *Sixties*, 361.

¹¹⁶ Kiron K. Skinner, Annelise Anderson, and Martin Anderson, eds., *Reagan: A Life in Letters* (New York: Free Press-Simon & Schuster, 2003), 191.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 191–92.

¹¹⁸ Scranton et al., *President's Commission*, 10.

¹¹⁹ Gerald N. Rosenberg, "The Sorrow and the Pity: Kent State, Political Dissent, and the Misguided Worship of the First Amendment," in Thomas R. Hensley, ed., *The Boundaries of Freedom of Expression & Order in American Democracy* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 2001), 18.

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The growing frequency with which campus protest reflected the Berkeley scenario was largely the result of the emergence and development of three issues: American involvement in the war in Southeast Asia, the slow progress of American society toward racial equality, and charges of “unresponsiveness” against the federal government and the university and against their “repressive” reaction to student demands.¹²⁰

The United States began funding South Vietnam’s war efforts in 1955, soon after the generation that would protest the war was born. As that generation hit adolescence, John F. Kennedy, the youngest president in US history told them:

The torch has been passed to a new generation of Americans—born in this century, tempered by war, disciplined by a hard and bitter peace, proud of our ancient heritage, and unwilling to witness or permit the slow undoing of those human rights to which this nation has always been committed, and to which we are committed today at home and around the world.

The student SDS authors of the Port Huron Statement heard in Kennedy’s inaugural speech and saw in his sending of advisors to South Vietnam in 1962, the year of their statement, a perpetuation of the military-industrial complex against which Kennedy’s predecessor, Dwight Eisenhower, had cautioned the public. Lyndon Johnson, Kennedy’s successor, who had hoped to found his legacy on attacking poverty, would go down in history instead for his escalation of the war. Johnson sent the first US combat troops to Vietnam in March 1965. That month saw the first SDS-sponsored teach-in, held at the University of Michigan and followed by thirty-five others throughout the country. In April came the first major antiwar demonstration of the Vietnam era—a march on Washington organized by SDS, SNCC, and other activist groups, in which approximately twenty-five thousand people participated. As Gitlin experienced it, the crowd felt the best speech of the day was delivered by Paul Potter, then president of SDS: “His argument was that the brutality manifested in Vietnam was connected to the brutality of American society and that in order to stop the war we had to change the system.”¹²¹ 1965 also marked a renewed connection of civil rights leaders, notably Martin Luther King Jr., with student protesters and the antiwar movement. Coretta Scott King had been active in this area going back to her student days at Antioch College in Ohio when she worked for the Women’s Strike for Peace. MLK often asked her to appear at peace demonstrations in his stead, especially prior to his strong and very public anti-Vietnam Riverside Church speech, regarded by some as one of the finest of his career.¹²² The formation of the Spring Mobilization Committee to End the War in 1966 further marked a clear “coming together of the civil rights and anti-war movements,” with numerous former SNCC organizers such as James Bevel and Bernard Lafayette now coming north to work in the growing antiwar campaign.¹²³

Despite increasing protest, the war continued to escalate. Stanley Karnow relates that by the end of 1967, the number of US troops in Vietnam increased from two hundred thousand to half a million. As it had been for the civil rights and student movements, 1968 was a decisive year in the Vietnam story. In late January, the Tet offensive began with well-coordinated, widespread attacks by the North Vietnamese and Vietcong guerilla forces on more than one hundred South Vietnamese cities and towns, including the historic city of Hue. In Saigon, the American Embassy was attacked and five soldiers were killed. After three weeks of fighting, Hue was recaptured by South Vietnamese troops. General William Westmoreland sent a request for more than two

¹²⁰ Scranton et al., *President’s Commission*, 29–30.

¹²¹ Christian G. Appy, ed., *Patriots: The Vietnam War Remembered From All Sides* (New York: Viking Penguin, 2003), 266.

¹²² Andrew Young, *An Easy Burden: The Civil Rights Movement and the Transformation of America* (New York: HarperCollins, 1996), 424–28.

¹²³ Norma Becker, “Harassing Anti-war Demonstrators,” in Bud Schultz and Ruth Schultz, eds., *The Price of Dissent: Testimonials to Political Repression in America* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2001), 310.

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hundred thousand additional troops, but the request was denied. Within a month, in late February, well-respected CBS television news anchor Walter Cronkite returned from Vietnam to predict that the war could not be won and would likely end in stalemate. Expecting middle America to agree, Johnson announced he would not seek a second term as president, leaving the Democratic nomination to his vice president, Hubert Humphrey, who was narrowly defeated by Richard Nixon. Nixon assured America that he, “would end the war and win the peace,” which some interpreted to mean that he now had a secret plan to end the war.¹²⁴

In 1969, the long process of peace talks, which had begun January 25 of that year, continued in Paris, with expanded delegations including members of the Saigon government and the Vietcong. In June, President Nixon began withdrawing troops from Vietnam as part of his Vietnamization efforts. Nevertheless, antiwar protests continued, with huge rallies in Washington, D.C., in October and November, the latter rally drawing over half a million people. The diffuse leadership of such efforts was in the hands of groups such as Cleveland Peace Action, the American Friends Service Committee, the Black United Front, and the New Mobilization Committee to End the War in Vietnam. In mid-November, news of the My Lai massacre, which had occurred in 1968, was revealed by the press to the general public, generating protest on college and university campuses.¹²⁵ For some, My Lai recalled the brutality of which Paul Potter had spoken during the first march on Washington in 1965. In addition to a general dissatisfaction with the justification for the Vietnam War, the increased relevance of the draft for college students brought immediacy to opposition of the war. One particular issue of contention for college student protestors was the request by draft boards for universities to turn over the academic records of draft-age students. As early as May 1966, there had been a major student sit-in in the Administration Building on the University of Wisconsin–Madison campus to protest draft deferment examinations. On March 4, 1967, a presidential commission had recommended comprehensive revisions of the Selective Service law, including termination of deferments for graduate students, the institution of a lottery system, and the calling up of 19-year-olds first. Subsequently, students around the country gathered around TV sets wherever they could find them the evening of December 1, 1969, to see where they and their brethren would hit in the first draft lottery since 1942—proof that Nixon’s plan to end the war was failing. A key feature of the Vietnam draft was a change from the *draft-the-oldest-man-first* policy for men aged eighteen to twenty-six to one that featured a random drawing, thus putting larger numbers of younger men at higher risk.

In 1970, peace talks continued, some in secret, and the drawdown of troops continued. There was a sense that the war might be coming to an end. However, this all changed the evening of April 30, when President Nixon announced on national television that the United States had invaded Cambodia. This further proof that rather than ending, the war was spreading¹²⁶ represented the worst of broken promises to the young, including the students of Kent State, who would join the eruption of protest at colleges and universities around the country. The protests at Kent State May 1–4 began as protests of the expansion of the war into Cambodia. William Shawcross in his book, *Sideshow: Kissinger, Nixon and the Destruction of Cambodia*, indicates that Nixon was convinced at this point that the invasion of neutral Cambodia represented the kind of bold action that was necessary to make history, despite warnings from his advisors, but history has shown his policy here to be flawed, and, in fact, few enemies were found.¹²⁷ Records of the so-called Daniel Boone squads and the Operation Menu missions also make clear that the United States secretly had been ignoring Cambodia’s neutral status for years prior to April 1970.¹²⁸ Shortly after the shootings at Kent State, Nixon and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger did have doubts about their Cambodian policy, but Nixon said at that point: “‘Henry, we’ve done it. Never look back.’”¹²⁹ Shawcross notes, “Now Kent and Cambodia were to be forever linked.”¹³⁰

¹²⁴ Stanley Karnow, *Vietnam: A History* (New York: Viking, 1983), 696–97, 539, 561, 597.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 697–98.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 624–27.

¹²⁷ William Shawcross, *Sideshow: Kissinger, Nixon and the Destruction of Cambodia* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1979), 152.

¹²⁸ Karnow, *Vietnam*, 603–07; Shawcross, *Sideshow: Kissinger, Nixon*, 152.

¹²⁹ Shawcross, *Sideshow: Kissinger, Nixon*, 154.

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Activism and The Counterculture

By the spring of 1969, in the wake of the national organization's splintering due to increasing internal political factionalism, the dissolution of SDS chapters began at many college campuses, including Brandeis, Berkeley, Columbia, Texas, Michigan State, and Kent State.¹³¹ Nevertheless, students throughout the country generally saw themselves as part of a *counterculture* that had infused American society in every corner. The spirit of the Summer of Love, a gathering of as many as 100,000 people in summer of 1967 in the Haight-Asbury neighborhood of San Francisco, and its prelude, the Human Be-in, a rally in Golden Gate Park in January of 1967 which proclaimed *Make Love Not War*,¹³² had made its way to middle America by the summer of 1969. The Woodstock festival, "3 Days of Peace & Music," took place in that last summer of the decade of the 1960s. Grounding her study of the sixties generation on Karl Mannheim's "The Problem of Generations," Rebecca Klatch asserts, "Like classes, generations represent an objective condition, regardless of whether individuals consciously recognize their commonality." Those who "develop a subjective consciousness of their location, thereby becom[e] a potential force of social change." A generation that attended college in unprecedented numbers, students in the sixties entered an environment that supported the questioning of traditional values and bonded with others who were experiencing the same changes. "Other significant factors in the formation of the 1960s leftist youth protest include the effects of affluence on the development of 'post-materialist' values, the significance of growing up in the nuclear age, and the spread of youth culture."¹³³ "To be seen as a hippie in the mid-sixties was . . . not simply to be part of a new fashion trend; it was instead interpreted by many as a commitment to an alternative life course, a sign that one had made a break with the values and ways of life defined by one's parents, school, and community."¹³⁴ "Music was an integral part of the counterculture, a further expression of opposition to established rules and institutions."¹³⁵ Music "gave people a sense of generational solidarity and a sense that they were different and a sense different from the rest of the country, different from any other generation in American history, that they were in some ways special and blessed and it gave them a sense of being embattled, of . . . being considered outsiders, reprobates, bad people."¹³⁶

"The counterculture was able to reach a much larger audience because of postwar America's middle-class affluence." Young people had more disposable income to spend on clothes and music and mass media had a new ability "to promote and disseminate youth culture[, thereby] further accelerat[ing] this generation's collective identity."¹³⁷ Another component of the youth culture that "acted to unite individuals in opposition to straight society" was drugs.¹³⁸ Both drug use and a loose "range of beliefs and practices" caused the counterculture to be dismissed or damned by at least the earlier SDS members, though other activist groups and individuals would embrace it.¹³⁹ For the average college student, harassment for appearance and suspected drug use was more immediate than any disapproval by somewhat older activist members of the generation. "Such repression led to the delegitimation of institutional authority, radicalizing youth along the way."¹⁴⁰ Gitlin adds,

¹³⁰ Ibid., 153.

¹³¹ Rebecca A. Klatch, *A Generation Divided: The New Left, the New Right, and the 1960s* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1999), 201. "Kent State" added by authors to Klatch's list.

¹³² Gitlin, *Sixties*, 212.

¹³³ Klatch, *Generation Divided*, 3–5.

¹³⁴ Jack Whalen and Richard Flacks, *Beyond the Barricades: The Sixties Generation Grows Up* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989), 2, 11, quoted in Klatch, *Generation Divided*, 135.

¹³⁵ Klatch, *Generation Divided*, 135.

¹³⁶ Greil Marcus, transcript from "Breaking Boundaries: Testing Limits", *Making Sense of the Sixties*, no. 3, aired on PBS, January 22, 1991, quoted in Klatch, *Generation Divided*, 135.

¹³⁷ Klatch, *Generation Divided*, 136.

¹³⁸ Paul Willis, "The Cultural Meaning of Drug Use," in Stuart Hall and Tony Jefferson, eds., *Resistance through Rituals: Youth Subculture in Post-War Britain* (London: Hutchinson, 1976), 106–18, summarized in Klatch, *Generation Divided*, 153.

¹³⁹ Klatch, *Generation Divided*, 135–57.

¹⁴⁰ Milton Mankoff and Richard Flacks, "The Changing Social Base of the American Student Movement." *Annals of the*

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“If you had started out smoking dope, growing your hair, discarding your bra partly to join the crowd and partly to shock adults . . . only to end up getting harassed and busted, it was natural to ask questions about the society that was treating you like a freak.” The police, restaurateurs, landlords, and city officials discriminated actively against “young people whose looks they didn't like.” “As old authorities lost their hold, politicians got mileage out of denouncing student radicals and hippies and black militants, all clumped together as battalions undermining the rule of the father-state and the family's own father.”¹⁴¹ Radicalization had its limits, however, as the rejection of the revolutionary and violent Weathermen faction by the mainstream SDS illustrated. Klatch shows that even those, such as member of the Weathermen Lynn Dykstra, who had “giv[en] themselves to the revolution with the whole of their lives” might draw a line. Klatch reports Dykstra's outlook with: “By the time of the 1969 SDS convention Lynn had contemplated losing her life to the revolution: ‘It was more of a martyrdom feeling that we were right and they were wrong and if they shot us, it would just help our cause. But we weren't trying to get killed. . . . None of us were *that* crazy.’”¹⁴²

Student Activism at Kent State

Established in 1910 as a teacher-training school, Kent State Normal School (as it was originally called) was named for William S. Kent who donated the land for the original campus. (Kent was the son of the namesake of Kent, Ohio.) The university did not hold its first classes until 1912. These classes met in various extension centers in cities around Kent until 1913 when the first buildings on campus opened. The first class of 34 students graduated in July of 1914. Over the years since its opening, the university has added degrees and research opportunities at both the graduate and undergraduate level. The campus in Kent has grown to include more than 100 buildings, and the university has expanded to a number of regional campuses around Northeast Ohio.

By the second half of the twentieth century, Kent State, following a long record of social activism, was engaged in the student protest movement. Between 1965 and 1970, more than ten student groups were active on the Kent Campus protesting against the war and on behalf of civil rights issues.¹⁴³ Representatives from these groups organized local events and participated in national-level protests as well. Activities of the Kent Committee to End the War in Vietnam (KCEWV), one action group, made frequent appearances on the front page of the student newspaper. The KCEWV began holding silent vigils on Wednesdays after the beginning of the war in 1965 and organized many rallies.¹⁴⁴ In October 1967, the group recruited two hundred people to take part in the National Mobilization Committee's national rally in Washington, D.C., and march on the Pentagon.¹⁴⁵ On campus, the group protested being photographed—characterizing photographing as police harassment; the police in return contended that photos were taken to ensure that no ““professional demonstrators”” (or ““outside troublemakers””) were participating in an on-campus demonstration, which would have violated university policy.¹⁴⁶ In November 1967, faculty and graduate student members of the committee held a four-day “Vietnam school” on campus addressing the history of the war and its media coverage.¹⁴⁷ For Veterans Day, the KCEWV

American Academy of Political and Social Sciences 395 (May 1971), 54-67, summarized in Klatch, *Generation Divided*, 156.

¹⁴¹ Gitlin, *Sixties*, 216–17.

¹⁴² Klatch, *Generation Divided*, 202–03.

¹⁴³ Jennifer Leadbetter, “Student Activism,” Unpublished paper based on research from the *Daily Kent Stater* (Kent, OH: Kent State University, 2002), 1. Thomas M. Grace, *Kent State: Death and Dissent in the Long Sixties* (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2016) examines the long history of social and political activism prior to and in the aftermath of the May 4 shootings, through the end of the Vietnam War.

¹⁴⁴ Gary Smith “‘Kent Committee to End War’ Begins Program of Education,” *Daily Kent Stater* (Kent, OH: Kent State University, October 29, 1965)

¹⁴⁵ “KCEWV in D.C. Rally,” *Daily Kent Stater* (Kent, OH), October 20, 1967)

¹⁴⁶ Stu Feldstein, “Protest Photos Debated” (Kent, OH: *Daily Kent Stater*, October 31, 1967); Joe Grisola, “Kent Protestors Photograph Protestors” (Kent, OH: *Daily Kent Stater*, October 27, 1967.

¹⁴⁷ “4 Days, 18 Discussions: KCEWV School to Probe War” *Daily Kent Stater* (Kent, OH), November 3, 1967.

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vigil was part of a nationwide student protest against Dow Chemical's production of napalm.¹⁴⁸ In December, the group protested outside an induction center in Cleveland during National Draft Week.¹⁴⁹ KCEWV started the new year by forming a group to counsel students on draft deferments.¹⁵⁰

Classes began at Kent State fall quarter of the charged year 1968 with cautioning remarks by President Robert White, aware—as any university administrator in the country would have been—that, “the year ahead could be difficult.” Fall enrollment topped twenty thousand on the Kent Campus, a considerable increase of more than seventeen hundred over the previous year. The term began on Jewish New Year, causing some faculty to cancel classes and some students to see the administration as insensitive.¹⁵¹ In October 1968, the Kent State chapter of Students for a Democratic Society emerged, “superseding the Kent Committee to End the War in Vietnam.”¹⁵² On October 8, three hundred students took part in the Kent Free University, a teach-in organized by the campus SDS chapter.¹⁵³ Kent State SDS members attended a campaign rally by Richard Nixon at nearby University of Akron, shouting, “we want truth,” “law and order, no justice,” and “Chicago.”¹⁵⁴ The month ended with a visit from Columbia SDS leader Mark Rudd, who addressed one thousand on campus about Columbia's student strike in the spring of that year.¹⁵⁵ On November 13, 1968, a coalition led by SDS and Black United Students (BUS), the latter of which had been formed on the Kent Campus on May 21, 1968, staged a sit-in to block recruitment on campus for the police department of Oakland, California.¹⁵⁶ The Oakland police department was notorious for its repressive treatment of the Black Panthers in their home city of Oakland, which also had been the site of an antidraft demonstration on October 20, 1967—the largest up to that time—during the nationwide Stop the Draft Week.¹⁵⁷ After protestors against the Oakland police were brought up on disciplinary charges, 250 black students, “many wearing arm bands marked ‘unity[,]’ marched off campus” to leave for Akron, Ohio, “in a silent, peaceful demonstration” in support of the students threatened with dismissal and in protest of the denial of amnesty for those students.¹⁵⁸ They returned after three days, when the university, citing insufficient evidence of disorderly conduct, dismissed its case against the students.¹⁵⁹

In the spring of 1969, SDS members began a concerted campaign against university policy, demanding: 1) the abolition of campus ROTC; 2) the termination of the Liquid Crystal Institute, a center of study founded in 1965 which combined basic and applied research on liquid crystal technology; 3) the removal of the state crime laboratory from campus; and 4) the abolition of the degree program in law enforcement. In April 1969, a disciplinary hearing was scheduled for students who attempted to post these demands on the Administration Building—which had led to immediate revocation of the SDS charter. Two hundred supporters were met by about fifty counterdemonstrators outside the Music and Speech building where the hearing was to be held, and a

¹⁴⁸ Sue Daly, “Napalm Producers: KCEWV Protest Dow” (Kent, OH: *Daily Kent Stater*, November 1, 1967; Barb Hille, “Campus Group Urges Disposal of Vigil Pix” (Kent, OH: *Daily Kent Stater*, November 2, 1967).

¹⁴⁹ “KCEWV to Protest at Induction Center” (Kent, OH: *Daily Kent Stater*, December 6, 1967).

¹⁵⁰ Saul Daniels, “The Draft. Hell No We Won't Go!” (Kent, OH: *Daily Kent Stater*, January 17, 1968).

¹⁵¹ Mayer, *Commission on KSU*, 1:10.

¹⁵² Bills, “Introduction,” 8.

¹⁵³ George Markell, “Perspective: Self Expressive Education Free University” (Kent, OH: *Daily Kent Stater*, October 8, 1968); Steven Shotsberger, “University of SDS” (Kent, OH: *Daily Kent Stater*, October 8, 1968).

¹⁵⁴ Sue Krawetz, “8,000 Listen as Nixon Raps Administration” (Kent, OH: *Daily Kent Stater*, October 15, 1968).

¹⁵⁵ “Chairman of Columbia SDS: Rudd Explains Student Movement” (Kent, OH: *Daily Kent Stater*, October 29, 1968); George Markell, “Rudd Rips US Policies to DKS” (Kent, OH: *Daily Kent Stater*, October 29, 1968).

¹⁵⁶ “Black United Students” Special Collections and Archives (Kent, OH: Kent State University Libraries); Fred Haymond, Harold Greenburg, et.al., “BUS-SDS Blocked SAC; Dr. White: ‘Action Intolerable’” (Kent, OH: *Daily Kent Stater*, November 14, 1968.)

¹⁵⁷ “1967: Thousands Join Anti-war Movement.” *On this Day, 1950-2005: 20 October* (London, England: BBC News).

¹⁵⁸ William H. Hildebrand, “Each Fall During the 1960s Brought Flocks of Gifted Young Faculty,” *A History of Kent State University: Nearing a Century of Kent Pride* (Kent, OH: Kent State University, 1998), 18.

¹⁵⁹ Bill Armstrong, “KSU Administration's Evidence Insufficient to Charge BUS, SDS” (Kent, OH: *Daily Kent Stater*, November 21, 1968.)

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scuffle ensued. Inside, the hearings were disrupted and shut down. The campus police sealed those protestors who had entered inside the Music and Speech building and turned fifty-eight over to the Highway Patrol for transport to jail. Four SDS leaders were eventually convicted of assault, battery, and inciting to riot and were sentenced to one year in the Portage County jail.¹⁶⁰

Despite revocation of their charter, members of the Kent State SDS chapter remained active through the remainder of the 1968–69 academic year. On April 28, 1969, well-known SDS national spokesperson Bernardine Dohrn helped lead a teach-in regarding the four demands made by the Kent State SDS two weeks earlier.¹⁶¹ On May 22, members of the Kent State SDS chapter attempted, unsuccessfully, to break up an ROTC review. The federal government evidenced its interest in Kent State. The Federal House Committee on Internal Security held two days of hearings on the activities of SDS, during which President Robert White and Chester (Chet) Williams, director of safety and public services at Kent State, were among the witnesses on June 24. Williams indicated that campus police were not sufficient to deal with mass violence, but also stated that arrangements of cooperation with local police and security organizations were in place and had previously been successful.¹⁶² On campus, President White asserted that the university would follow a policy of arrests and suspension for those involved in further disruption.¹⁶³ White further commented:

Kent State University undeniably faces a crossroad. . . . Universities have never before faced the assaults of the present. They produce tensions and strains, and exact a cost in many ways. Kent State University has become an open and announced target. That seems to be the unfair reward of those institutions which have been the most open.¹⁶⁴

The discussion over police and administrative responses to student demonstrations continued at Kent State with the submission of a position paper on September 8, 1969, to President White by Barclay McMillen, a faculty member in political science and the president's assistant. McMillen emphasized "personalizing the university" as a strategy for combating student disaffection and potential police excesses.¹⁶⁵

The University opened for academic year 1969–70 without special note on September 29, 1969. Then on October 15, 1969, Kent State University students participated in the National Moratorium, a massive nationwide protest of the Vietnam War, purported to be the largest antiwar protest to that time in United States history. The *Daily Kent Stater* reported that thirty-five hundred students from the Kent Campus participated in activities including a rally on the Commons and a march into the downtown area.¹⁶⁶ A second National Moratorium was held November 15, 1969, in San Francisco and Washington, D.C. Arriving on the bus organized by the campus Student Mobilization Committee (SMC) chapter and in cars and vans, Kent State students were counted in the crowd of half a million at the Washington demonstration.¹⁶⁷ That fall also featured such local protests as the serving of a thin broth of unseasoned pumpkin soup to passersby in front of the student union. The soup, identified as staple fare of the Vietnamese diet, was meant to symbolize the simplicity of the nation of farmers upon which the United States swept down with its military power and technology.

¹⁶⁰ Mayer, *Commission on KSU*, 1:14; "Arrest 6 for ROTC Disruption" (Kent, OH: *Daily Kent Stater*, May 22, 1969).

¹⁶¹ John Darnell, "Discuss SDS Demands at Teach-In" (Kent, OH: *Daily Kent Stater*, April 30, 1969).

¹⁶² Mayer, *Commission on KSU*, 4:60–63.

¹⁶³ Bills, "Introduction," 9.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁵ Mayer, *Commission on KSU*, 1:13.

¹⁶⁶ "Moratorium Day: 3500 Sing "Give Peace a Chance"" (Kent, OH: *Daily Kent Stater*, October 16, 1969); Mayer, *Commission on KSU*, 1:14.

¹⁶⁷ Leadbetter, "Student Activism," 7.

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Toward the beginning of the second half of the academic year of 1969–1970, the national SMC, along with the New Mobilization Committee to End the War in Vietnam, and the Vietnam Moratorium Committee, organized a National Student Anti-War Conference at Case Western University in nearby Cleveland for February 1970. Organizers declared that the three thousand attendees represented "the biggest gathering of radicals in the US" The Kent SMC chapter planned on participating in the April 15 National Student Strike of high schools and colleges throughout the US and on holding a series of smaller protests in the week leading up to the major protest. The theme for the mass antiwar events was "Bring all the GI's Home Now."¹⁶⁸ The first April event at Kent State, however, was a speech on the tenth by Jerry Rubin, an outspoken YIPPIE leader, a national figure who attracted a crowd of about two thousand to a rally on front campus calling for the young of the white middle class to "rise up," because "being young in America is illegal."¹⁶⁹ April 16 saw an encounter between police and marchers at the AT&T building in Downtown Kent.¹⁷⁰ On the first April 22 Earth Day, students, campus and county law enforcement authorities, the county's Animal Protective League, and a Portage County prosecutor all showed up in front of the student union to stop the napalming of a dog, as announced in a Social Problems class session by Robby Stamps, who later would be wounded on May 4.¹⁷¹ The possession of napalm was a federal offense. Revealing "There is no napalm. There is no dog," one of the six students who had conceived the protest upbraided the crowd for being willing to stop injury to an animal but not willing to take action to stop the use of the napalm on people in Vietnam.¹⁷² The four SDS leaders convicted in the Music and Speech incident of April 8, 1969, were released from jail on April 29.¹⁷³ The *Daily Kent Stater* ceased publication that spring on April 30, but student photographers would be crucial in documenting the events to unfold beginning the next day.

Historiography

The recounting of what happened on May 4, 1970, for many is not history, but memory. Claire Bond Potter and Renee Romano categorize events such as the shootings on May 4 as "recent history." Writing about the recent past comes, they say, with "the dilemma of crafting a narrative of events that have no clear end and can be ongoing." The past is still present, and "history can 'talk back' to the historian." Facing this reality, historian Arthur Schlesinger said he was "willing to take his chances on writing history from 'a zone of imperfect visibility.'"¹⁷⁴ Julia Rose terms the genre "difficult history." "Interpretations of difficult histories in museums and at historic sites," Rose says, can offer "authentic evidence" and provide visitors opportunities to "expand their understandings of the history." "When learners come to understand the circumstances of mass violence and oppression, they are more likely to ask questions and demand to know more about the history and the people affected by the history, then and now."¹⁷⁵ Nearly all visitors arrive at the May 4 site with *logical* notions about what happened. If the guardsmen shot, they have reasoned, it must have been because the students were rioting, thus inciting such violence. When visitors learn the documented evidence of what happened, they reach evidence-based conclusions on their own about the sequence of events. The distances between the Pagoda from where guardsmen shot and the markers where the slain students fell testify without words to the historical truth. Further authenticated evidence is available within the May 4 shootings site through the May 4 Visitors Center

¹⁶⁸ "Radicals Plan April Anti War Rallies" (Kent, OH: *Daily Kent Stater*, February 17, 1970).

¹⁶⁹ "Rubin to Speak Here Today" (Kent, OH: *Daily Kent Stater*, April 10, 1970); Michener, *Kent State*, 179.

¹⁷⁰ Judy Greiner, "Police, Marchers Clash at AT&T" (Kent, OH: *Daily Kent Stater*, April 16, 1970).

¹⁷¹ Harold Greenberg, "Crowd Rallies to Stop Napalming of Dog" (Kent, OH: *Daily Kent Stater*, April 23, 1970); Robert Stamps, "Save the Pooch," in Susie Erenrich, ed., *Kent and Jackson State: 1970-1990*, 2nd ed. (Woodbridge, CT: Vietnam Generation & Burning Cities Press, 1885), 119.

¹⁷² Stamps, "Save the Pooch," 122.

¹⁷³ Bob Carpenter, "'Kent Four' End Sojourn in County Jail" (Kent, OH: *Daily Kent Stater*, April 30, 1970).

¹⁷⁴ Renee C. Romano and Claire Bond Potter, eds., *Doing Recent History: On Privacy, Copyright, Video Games, Institutional Review Boards, Activist Scholarship, and History That Talks Back* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2012), 10, 12.

¹⁷⁵ Julia Rose, *Interpreting Difficult History at Museums and Historic Sites* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016), 25, 49.

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museum and documentary, Walking Tour and documentary, and educational brochure. The short history below, “The Day the War Came Home,” first was drafted in 2009—early in a lengthy and inclusive consultative process that began in 2007 and extended through 2013, when the May 4 Visitors Center was dedicated during the Forty-Third Annual May 4 Commemoration. (Appendix 1. provides a description of the consultation process.) The narrative continues to be a living thing. In 2016, key unanswered questions remain and varying viewpoints and interpretations exist. Narrative in “The Day the War Came Home” acknowledges open questions and varying interpretations, while sharing what is known now. Questions should continue to be asked, so that they might become, in Rose’s words, “pathways to social justice.”¹⁷⁶

The Day the War Came Home

At Kent State in 1970, interested authorities (campus, local, state, and national) were better acquainted than most students with the broad recent history of the student protest movement. With a perspective informed—consciously or culturally—by the Berkeley Invention, these authorities viewed the student protest movement as both deeply organized and mobilized in the form of so-called *outside agitators* bent on violence, who were to be suppressed with every available measure. On Friday, May 1, two peaceful demonstrations took place on the Kent State campus following President Nixon’s televised announcement of the invasion of neutral Cambodia on April 30, 1970. First, in an antiwar demonstration, campus graduate students in history symbolically buried a copy of the Constitution (Nixon had *murdered* it) at the base of the Victory Bell. Near the conclusion of the rally, undergraduate student Ken Hammond, who had been aligned with SDS, spoke up to call for a rally on Monday, May 4, so that students could further consider the escalation of the war—evidenced by bombing within the border of Cambodia—along with any response to this news from the university administration and whether Kent State should join a national student strike.¹⁷⁷ Second, the campus group Black United Students held a rally to protest the violent tactics used by the Ohio National Guard against students of color at Ohio State University during an antiwar demonstration the previous evening. Black students cautioned their peers to stay away from any gatherings over the weekend.¹⁷⁸ That Friday night, prompted by a mix of political protest and high feeling from the first warm spring night, several disturbances occurred, including a small trash fire started by members of a motorcycle gang that were doing tricks on their bikes in the middle of the street, individuals stopping cars to ask drivers their opinion of Cambodia, and one or more beer bottles thrown at police cars. For a long stretch of the evening, police cars stayed out of the area as the mayor amassed additional forces from a neighboring police department and the county sheriff’s department. When law enforcement began clearing the streets with squad formations and tear gas, some in the crowd took on a harder political edge and broke windows in business buildings, aiming particularly to harm those that might be profiting from the war effort, but breaking windows in local businesses as well, resulting in \$10,000 in total damages. The mayor declared a state of emergency and ordered the bars closed, which forced hundreds more students, now disgruntled, onto the streets and into the midst of a police action. As much of the crowd was forced eastward along Main Street toward the Kent State campus, the mayor called the governor’s office to report—erroneously—that SDS had taken over a part of the city.¹⁷⁹ The governor, in return, dispatched an Ohio National Guard liaison officer to Kent.¹⁸⁰ Sixty people were arrested, “not an unusually large number for a weekend evening in downtown Kent.”¹⁸¹ The remainder of the night was quiet. The President’s Commission concluded:

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., 28, 50.

¹⁷⁷ Barbato, Davis, and Seeman, *This We Know*, 1–2.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 2.

¹⁷⁹ Joe Eszterhas and Michael D. Roberts, *Thirteen Seconds: Confrontation at Kent State* (New York: Dodd Mead, 1970), 35–46; “Tragedy in Our Midst: A Special Report” (Akron, OH: *Akron Beacon Journal*, May 24, 1970); Barbato, Davis, and Seeman, *This We Know*, 3–4.

¹⁸⁰ Barbato, Davis, and Seeman, *This We Know*, 3–4; Mayer, *Commission on KSU*, 1:14.

¹⁸¹ Kelner and Munves, *Kent State Coverup*, 1; “Struggle to Recovery” (Kent, OH: *Kent* 3, no. 6, June 1970), 4.

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The pattern established on Friday night was to recur throughout the weekend: There were disorderly incidents; authorities could not or did not respond in time to apprehend those responsible to stop the incidents in their early stages; the disorder grew; the police action, when it came, involved bystanders as well as participants; and finally, the students drew together in the conviction that they were being arbitrarily harassed.¹⁸²

While it may not be possible to align all features of the Berkeley Invention with the night of May 1, 1970, in downtown Kent, one factor clearly applies: “police intervention, which, in turn, rallied moderate students.”¹⁸³ Many did feel “arbitrarily harassed,” and many would turn out in greater numbers as demonstrations continued on campus for the next three days. Among these varying groups of demonstrators, many already felt rankled by Nixon’s Cambodia invasion as the breaking of a promise to end the war. Many would continue to be disturbed by what they perceived as unjust law enforcement responses to their expressions of dissent.

Saturday, May 2, began with some students assisting shop owners in cleaning up glass from the broken windows downtown and a series of meetings as university and Kent city personnel planned for additional trouble and set curfews for the city and campus. The university worked with the National Guard liaison to plan how arrests would be conducted on campus: first the university would call on campus police, second the sheriff’s department, and third the State Highway Patrol. Liaison Lt. Charles Barnette warned that if the National Guard were called to assist, “it would make no distinction between the city and the campus and would assume complete control of the entire area.”¹⁸⁴ Next, the university planned social activities on campus for students and distributed a flyer explaining the curfew and stating that peaceful assemblies were *not* banned on campus. Rumors circulated among officials of the city and the university that the campus’ ROTC building would be a target.¹⁸⁵ Encouraged to do so by some townspeople and by Lt. Barnette, shortly after 5:00 pm, Mayor Leroy Satrom requested that the Ohio National Guard be sent to Kent.¹⁸⁶ “Companies A and C, 145th Infantry and Troop G, 107th Armored Cavalry Ohio National Guard, mobilized on April 29, 1970, in conjunction with the Teamster strike and on active duty since that date, were alerted and prepared to move to Kent.”¹⁸⁷ “As a Guard unit rode down East Main Street, it was stoned by persons hiding among trees. Specialist 4th Class Ronald West of Troop G of the 2nd Squadron, 107th Armored Cavalry Regiment, was cut in the mouth by glass when a rock broke the windshield of a jeep in which he was riding, and several other guardsmen in the unit reported they were hit by stones or pieces of brick.”¹⁸⁸ Tom Grace notes the strain of duty at the Teamsters strike and comments on the rock throwing: “Troop G would not forget the battering.”¹⁸⁹

At 7:00 p.m., students began gathering on the Commons. At 7:30, they were approximately six hundred in number. In attendance as observers, faculty marshals distributed the university flyer with curfew information. The group left the Commons, marched past the dormitories, and returned to the Commons, now numbering one to two thousand students and some nonstudents.¹⁹⁰ The ROTC building, East Hall, as an emblem of US intervention in Southeast Asia, became the focus of the demonstration¹⁹¹ Beginning about 8:10 p.m., about a dozen demonstrators made a number of failed attempts to set the building on fire. After about thirty minutes,

¹⁸² Scranton et al., *President’s Commission*, 242–43.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, 25–26.

¹⁸⁴ James J. Best, “The Tragic Weekend of May 1 to 4, 1970,” in Hensley and Lewis, eds., *Kent State and May 4*, 12; Scranton, *President’s Commission*, 244–45.

¹⁸⁵ Davies, *Truth About Kent State*, 16; Scranton et al., *President’s Commission*, 244, 246–47.

¹⁸⁶ Mayer, *Commission on KSU*, 1:17; Scranton et al., *President’s Commission*, 246–47; Stone, *Killings at Kent State*, 65.

¹⁸⁷ Stone, *Killings at Kent State*, 65.

¹⁸⁸ Scranton et al., *President’s Commission*, 251.

¹⁸⁹ *Kent State: Death and Dissent in the Long Sixties*, 216, 205.

¹⁹⁰ Best, “Tragic Weekend,” 13; “Struggle to Recovery,” 5; Davies, *Truth About Kent State*, 16–17; Scranton et al., *President’s Commission*, 248.

¹⁹¹ Stone, *Killings at Kent State*, 66.

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there was some level of fire in the ROTC building, which was not guarded by campus police as it had been the evening before when a student broke one of its windows. Kent city firefighters were notified at 8:49 of a fire at the building and arrived at 9:00 p.m. When firefighters arrived, protestors threw some rocks and tugged on and made some attempts to cut the hoses. Campus police remained away until 9:15, just as the firemen were leaving. A number of sheriff's deputies and highway patrolmen also came to the scene. By all reports, the fire was out at this time. Tear gas was used to disperse protestors. Around 9:45, the ROTC building began burning again, this time "furiously" and to the ground, as the fire department returned, escorted by the National Guard. University Security Director Chester Williams and Police Chief Donald Schwartzmiller admitted guardsmen onto campus and led them to the ROTC building.¹⁹² Until midnight, the Guard kept the campus cleared using tear gas and bayonets. Although it is generally assumed that the ROTC building was destroyed as a result of attempts by student protestors to burn the building, some suggest that the leveling of the building was the work of outside *agents provocateurs*.¹⁹³ Responsibility has never been publically determined. Early chronicler of the events, James Best, observed, "There is little direct evidence that radicals were directly involved in Saturday night's events. Certainly the bulk of the crowd at the fire was neither radical nor revolutionary."¹⁹⁴ Best also points to the President's Commission, which found:

As the ROTC building burned, the pattern of the previous night was repeated—authorities arrived at the scene of an incident too late to apprehend the participants, then swept up the bystanders and participants together in their response. Students who had nothing to do with burning the building—who were not even in the area at the time of the fire—resented being gassed and ordered about by armed men. . . . Student resentment of the Guard continued to grow during the next two days.¹⁹⁵

The Guard was billeted in the gymnasium, and the athletic field south of Summit Avenue was used as a heliport.¹⁹⁶ The Ohio National Guard in Kent and at Kent State was composed of troops from the 107th Armored Cavalry Regiment and the 145th Infantry Regiment. On the evening of May 2, they numbered 1,196 men, and arrived with full equipment, vehicles, and three helicopters.¹⁹⁷ The Guard's presence on campus added to the broader issue of the Cambodia invasion as a focus of discontent for many students.¹⁹⁸

Governor James Rhodes arrived on the Kent State campus the following morning, May 3, 1970, and declared that the university would remain open. At a morning news conference at the Kent fire station, the governor vowed to "eradicate the problem." Rhodes used the harsh rhetoric of other public officials like Nixon, Agnew, and Reagan as he delivered a fist-pounding speech, cited previous violent protests at Miami University and Ohio State University, and typified protestors at Kent State as "worse than the 'Brown Shirt' and the communist element and also the 'night riders' and the vigilantes. They're the worst kind of people that we harbor in America." Rhodes vowed "to employ every force of law," to "get to the bottom of the situation here at Kent—on the campus—in the city."¹⁹⁹ Following his fifteen-minute oration and before taking questions, Rhodes called on other officials to make statements. First, Adjutant General Sylvester Del Corso of the Ohio National Guard declared, "We will apply whatever degree of force is necessary to provide protection for the lives of our citizens and its property." Next, Robert Chiaramonte of the Ohio State Highway Patrol stated that he expected to see

¹⁹² Kelner and Munves, *Kent State Coverup*, 211–12.

¹⁹³ Barbato, Davis, and Seeman, *This We Know*, 5–7.

¹⁹⁴ Best, "Tragic Weekend," 15.

¹⁹⁵ Scranton et al., *President's Commission*, 253.

¹⁹⁶ Mayer, *Commission on KSU*, 1:19; Bills, "Introduction," 14; Davies, *Truth About Kent State*, 19.

¹⁹⁷ Kelner and Munves, *Kent State Coverup*, 1.

¹⁹⁸ Davies, *Truth About Kent State*, 148.

¹⁹⁹ "Governor Rhodes Speech on Campus Disorders in Kent, May 3, 1970," Kent State University, Radio-TV Information (Kent, OH: Special Collections and Archives, Kent State University Libraries, Box 70, folder 27, May 4 Collection).

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sniping next and pledged, "They can expect us to return fire." Third, Kent mayor Satrom confirmed, "We will take all necessary, I repeat, all necessary action to maintain order."²⁰⁰ Rhodes then met Kent State President White at the University Airport on Sunday morning to inform him of "a law-enforcement problem caused by 400 troublemakers who had descended on his campus with a view to closing it" and further that "the matter was out of White's hands." From that point on, White "never doubted that the Guard had taken control over the campus," which university officials who attended the press conference also believed.²⁰¹ Further, dismissing the county prosecutor's urging that the university be closed, Rhodes asserted that doing so "would be playing into the hands of the SDS and the Weathermen."²⁰² Many attribute Rhodes' tough law-and-order stance to his being at the end of a hotly contested race for the Republican nomination for a US Senate seat. He would lose in the primary the day after the shootings. With Rhodes' visit, the role of the National Guard changed from protecting property and assisting local law enforcement officials to one of breaking up any assembly on campus, peaceful or otherwise.²⁰³

During the afternoon on Sunday, both students and townspeople walked around campus to see the sight of 850 guardsmen surrounding the burned ROTC building and posted throughout the grounds with bayoneted rifles.²⁰⁴ Rather than conveying any sense of impending violence, the atmosphere was, in author James Michener's apt term, like a "carnival," and archival photographs capture vignettes of students fraternizing with the soldiers.²⁰⁵ Sunday evening, students, when stopped by the National Guard at the campus boundary by reason of the city curfew, staged a sit-in on the northwest edge of campus at Lincoln and Main. Seeking to present demands to the president and mayor, including abolition of ROTC and removal of the Guard from campus, the protestors instead were misled by a student who "talked with police officials and then announced to the crowd that 'the National Guard would be immediately leaving the front Campus . . . in response to their demands that they speak with Mayor Satrom, President White, and/or Governor Rhodes.'"²⁰⁶ Tricked into standing up and moving onto the sidewalk, they were dispersed with teargas and bayonets. Several students received bayonet wounds, and others were hit with rifle butts.²⁰⁷ The campus was noisy and confused during the rest of the night as helicopters hovered overhead. Some students were caught unable to return to their dormitories due to a hurriedly imposed campus curfew.²⁰⁸ Fifty-one were arrested that night for curfew violations.²⁰⁹

Another campus rally had been announced for noon on Monday, May 4.²¹⁰ The approximately twenty thousand students at Kent State University attended their classes that day as usual, since school was in session, but there was nothing usual about the sunny, brisk spring morning. The preceding several days had seen earnest protest to the Vietnam War, a civil emergency had been declared in Kent on May 2, 1970, and was still in force, a curfew was in effect both in the city of Kent and on the Kent State University campus, and Governor Rhodes had given his "worst type of people" speech.²¹¹

Morning classes on May 4, 1970, began with somewhat higher than normal student absenteeism, but with a "superficial appearance of normality."²¹² Several false bomb threats caused several classes to be canceled and

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

²⁰¹ Kelner and Munves, *Kent State Coverup*, 155; Barbato, Davis, and Seeman, *This We Know*, 8.

²⁰² "Struggle to Recovery," 5.

²⁰³ "Tragedy in Our Midst"; Davies, *Truth About Kent State*, 22.

²⁰⁴ Stone, *Killings at Kent State*, 72.

²⁰⁵ Michener, *Kent State*, 225, 256, 259.

²⁰⁶ Barbato, Davis, and Seeman, *This We Know*, 11.

²⁰⁷ Mayer, *Commission on KSU*, 1:21; Davies, *Truth About Kent State*, 26-27; Barbato, Davis, and Seeman, *This We Know*, 11.

²⁰⁸ Mayer, *Commission on KSU*, 1:22.

²⁰⁹ Davies, *Truth About Kent State*, 28.

²¹⁰ Michener, *Kent State*, 327; Barbato, Davis, and Seeman, *This We Know*, 2, 12.

²¹¹ Bills, "Introduction," 13; Davies, *Truth About Kent State*, 21-22.

²¹² Mayer, *Commission on KSU*, 1:22.

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one building to be evacuated. The Ohio National Guardsmen stood at their posts throughout campus in full gear with bayoneted rifles guarding the entrances to the campus, its buildings, and the burned remnants of the ROTC building. University president Robert White met at 7:00 a.m. with his cabinet and at 8:00 a.m. with the executive committee of the Faculty Senate. At the latter meeting he agreed to hold a faculty meeting to discuss the situation on campus.²¹³ At 10:00 a.m., General Robert Canterbury of the Ohio National Guard called a meeting that was attended by the Guard legal officer Major William R. Shimp; university officials President White and Vice President Matson; Kent city mayor Satrom; Kent city police chief Roy Thompson and safety director Paul Hershey; and Major Donald E. Manly of the Ohio Highway Patrol.²¹⁴ Because there was confusion over the two sets of curfew hours established for the city of Kent and the campus, it was decided that a single curfew from 8:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. would be enforced by both. Also at this meeting General Canterbury commented that he wanted to withdraw his troops as soon as possible, perhaps as early as that evening. Toward the end of the meeting there was some discussion over the noon rally scheduled on the Kent Campus.²¹⁵ There are differing accounts regarding the resolution of the decision to ban the rally according to testimony before the President's Commission and later court testimony. For example, General Canterbury testified that the first time he learned about the May 4 rally was at the morning meeting when he had asked President White if the rally should be banned. White had responded that it should be, according to Canterbury. However, President White later refuted Canterbury's claim, stating, "From past history, all know that my response would have been affirmative to a rally." Confusion was evident in the minds of other participants at the meeting as well; some did not recall President White agreeing that the rally should be banned, but did come away thinking that the rally was banned.²¹⁶ The university prepared a second flyer announcing a curfew, that the Guard was in charge of the campus and empowered to make arrests, and that all rallies were banned due to the governor having declared a state of emergency. Only the curfew information was true. Few students saw the flyer and word spread that there would be a rally on the Commons at noon.²¹⁷

At 11:15 a.m., a meeting between the city, Kent State, the police, and military leaders was convened to address confusion over the banning of the rally, but by that time the Victory Bell was already ringing, summoning people to the rally on the Commons. At approximately 11:30 a.m., General Canterbury arrived at the Campus Administration Building—the headquarters for the Guard. Upon entering the building he said that the rally on the Commons was banned. "Major John Simons, chaplain of the 107th Armored Cavalry Regiment, expressed concern that the students might be unaware that the noon rally had been prohibited. He [Canterbury] said a campus official told him that the University radio station would 'spread the word.'" General Canterbury, who did not have time to change into his uniform, and Lieutenant Colonel Charles Fassinger, the highest-ranked officer in uniform during the rally, arrived at the Commons between 11:30 and 11:49 a.m. They saw the crowd growing larger, from about five hundred to around two thousand by noon.²¹⁸ By 11:45 a.m., troops had taken their position around the site of the ROTC building at the northern edge of the Commons. There were one hundred and thirteen Guardsmen on the Commons at this time: fifty-one from Company A of the First Battalion, 145th Infantry Regiment; thirty-six from Company C of the First Battalion, 145th Infantry; sixteen from Troop G, Second Squadron, 107th Armored Cavalry Regiment; and ten officers. Troops were led by General Canterbury, Lt. Col. Fassinger, and Major Harry Jones.²¹⁹ Canterbury ordered dispersal of the crowd; Fassinger ordered the troops to form a line near the ROTC site; and "those who had not already done so were ordered to 'lock and load.'"²²⁰ By all accounts the assembly was peaceful.²²¹

²¹³ Scranton et al., *President's Commission*, 259.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 260.

²¹⁵ Best, "Tragic Weekend," 19.

²¹⁶ Scranton et al., *President's Commission*, 261.

²¹⁷ Barbato, Davis, and Seeman, *This We Know*, 13.

²¹⁸ Scranton et al., *President's Commission*, 261, 263–65.

²¹⁹ Davies, *Truth About Kent State*, 34; Michener, *Kent State*, 329–30.

²²⁰ Scranton et al., *President's Commission*, 263.

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At the time the rally was beginning, morning classes were ending. Many students were breaking for lunch or returning to their dorms. The Hub cafeteria in the student union, where students could go for lunch or to talk and relax between classes, was adjacent to the Commons and the remains of the ROTC building. With the Commons as the center and heartbeat of the campus, the crowd size grew quickly. The lie of the land encouraged onlookers as well: “The hills made a natural amphitheater from which students could watch events on the Commons floor.”²²² The motivation for those on the Commons at this time thus varied: some were protesting the continued occupation of the Guard and the treatment of students on *their* college campus; some were continuing the protest lodged on Friday after President Nixon announced the expansion of the war into Cambodia; and others were curious passersby crossing the Commons on their way to and from class. Faculty marshals were present at the site of the rally, as they had been at rallies of the previous few days.

At 11:45 a.m., as the Guard formed up near the ROTC building; protestors were located around the Victory Bell five hundred feet to the east. Using a bullhorn, KSU police officer Harold Rice relayed Canterbury’s order for the crowd to disperse.²²³ The crowd may not have heard Rice, or, even if they did, they did not disperse. Next Rice was driven across the Commons in a military jeep accompanied by two guardsmen, “who rode ‘shotgun’ in the rear seat.” Rice used the bullhorn to announce, “Leave this area immediately. Please, for your own safety.” The jeep was met with shouts and jeers by the demonstrators, some chanting, “Pigs off campus!” “1, 2, 3, 4. We don’t want your fucking war,” “Power to the people,” and “Strike, Strike, Strike.”²²⁴ Some of the demonstrators threw rocks, with one hitting and bouncing off the jeep’s tire. The jeep went back to the line of guardsmen near the ROTC site. The crowd cheered. Protestors remained in place at the Victory Bell. Several gestured unfavorably to the Guard. The jeep went out two more times, each time being met with cheers as it retreated. The third time Major Jones ran out to the jeep and ordered it to return to the line of guardsmen at the northwestern corner of the Commons.²²⁵

The dispersal announcement did not disband the peaceful rally. General Canterbury next gave the order to disperse the crowd with tear gas. Lt. Col. Fassinger ordered eight to ten grenadiers with M-79 grenade launchers to fire two volleys of tear gas into the assembly.²²⁶ This did cause some of those on the Commons to scatter and retreat slightly up Blanket Hill toward Taylor Hall. Some of the tear gas canisters fell short because of poor aim and the fifteen-mile-per-hour winds that were blowing from the southwest.²²⁷ Some of the tear gas canisters were thrown back in the direction of the line of the Guard. This caused some demonstrators to cheer and chant “Pigs off campus.”²²⁸ At this point, another announcement was made over a loudspeaker for all to disperse. Again, some responded with chants and jeers. According to the President’s Commission, “Many students felt that the campus was their ‘turf.’ Unclear about the authority vested in the Guard by the governor, or indifferent to it, some also felt that their constitutional right to free assembly was being infringed upon. As they saw it, they had been ordered to disperse at a time when no rocks had been thrown and no violence or wrong act had been committed. Many told interviewers later, ‘We weren’t doing anything.’”²²⁹

²²¹ Ibid., 288; Stone, *Killing at Kent State*, 75.

²²² Scranton et al., *President’s Commission*, 265.

²²³ Ibid., 263.

²²⁴ Scranton et al., *President’s Commission*, 263; Stone, *Killings at Kent State*, 76; “Struggle to Recovery,” 6.

²²⁵ Scranton et al., *President’s Commission*, 264; Stone, *Killing at Kent State*, 77.

²²⁶ Scranton et al., *President’s Commission*, 265.

²²⁷ “Tragedy in our Midst.”

²²⁸ Stone, *Killings at Kent State*, 77.

²²⁹ Scranton et al., *President’s Commission*, 267.

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At approximately 12:05 p.m., General Canterbury ordered the troops to advance on the demonstrators. Thirty Ohio State Highway Patrolmen stayed on the Commons ready to make any necessary arrests.²³⁰ As reported by Michener, General Canterbury said, ““These students . . . are going to have to find out what law and order is all about.””²³¹ With gas masks on, bayonets fixed, and—unbeknownst to those at the other end of the Commons—rifles locked and loaded, with one round of ammunition in the chamber, guardsmen advanced toward the crowd. Company A was on the right flank, Company C was on the left flank and Troop G took the middle. As the Guard advanced, they launched more tear gas into the crowd. Because of the tear gas and the advancing armed troops, some of the demonstrators retreated up Blanket Hill between Taylor Hall and Johnson Hall; others retreated toward the east between Taylor Hall and Prentice Hall, and some retreated inside the buildings to put water on their faces or to avoid the tear gas. Once the Guard was near the Victory Bell, the troops split into two groups. Company C, accompanied by Major Jones, went up Blanket Hill toward the eastern side of Taylor Hall and blocked the passageway between Taylor and Prentice Hall. Troop G and Company A, led by General Canterbury and Lt. Col. Fassinger, followed the majority of demonstrators up Blanket Hill between Taylor and Johnson Hall.²³²

After advancing up Blanket Hill, Company C on the left flank held a line between Taylor and Prentice Hall that prevented any demonstrators from returning to the Commons. Company A and Troop G upon reaching the top of Blanket Hill near the Pagoda (the highest piece of land), rather than remaining there to block reentry to the Commons, proceeded down toward the Practice Field. The demonstrators parted to let the Guard pass. Some of the demonstrators retreated down the hill toward Lake and Olson Halls to avoid being directly in the path of the Guard as they continued to advance toward the Practice Field. Other demonstrators found themselves on the Practice Field as they retreated in front of the Guard. On their march to the Practice Field the Guard slowed to give these students time to leave the area through a small opening in the Practice Field fence. This took some demonstrators to Midway Drive and a gravel parking lot near Dunbar Hall.²³³ Most students left the area entirely. At this point, the assembly on the Commons was in fact disbanded and General Canterbury’s purported mission accomplished.

Company A and Troop G advanced down the reverse slope of Blanket Hill past Taylor Hall, across an access road, and onto the Practice Field. Along the east side of the Practice Field was a six-foot chain link fence capped with barbed wire.²³⁴ At this time, in the view of the President’s Commission, “The feeling had spread among students that they were being harassed as a group, that state and civic officials had united against them, and that the university had either cooperated or acquiesced in their suppression. They reacted to the guardsmen’s march with substantial solidarity,” vocalized in epithets directed at the Guard. The Guard, on the other hand, “generally felt that the students, who had disobeyed numerous orders to disperse, were clearly in the wrong,” and the burning of the ROTC building seemed evidence of the destruction that students could cause.²³⁵

The crowd split. Some of the more vocal demonstrators ended up in the Prentice Hall Parking Lot, but the majority of the crowd ranged along the balcony of Taylor Hall or onto the hill to the south of Taylor Hall overlooking the Practice Field above the access road. Both the Justice Department, which summarized the FBI Report, and the President’s Commission concluded that while the guardsmen were on the Practice Field, demonstrators threw rocks at them. Guardsmen threw tear gas canisters at the demonstrators in the Prentice Hall Parking Lot and toward those standing on the hill below Taylor Hall and threw some rocks as well. Some canisters were lobbed back at the Guard. Both groups’ reports speculated that a construction site at nearby

²³⁰ Stone, *Killings at Kent State*, 78.

²³¹ *Kent State*, 331.

²³² Stone, *Killings at Kent State*, 78.

²³³ *Ibid.*, 79–80.

²³⁴ Michener, *Kent State*, 337.

²³⁵ Scranton et al., *President’s Commission*, 266–67.

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Dunbar Hall provided stones to throw.²³⁶ The distance between the guardsmen and the students resulted in many of the rocks falling short. Four guardsmen claimed they were hit with rocks at this time.²³⁷ “The distances between the mass of the students and the Guards were later stepped off by expert judges, who concluded that students would have required good right arms like Mickey Mantle’s to have reached the Guardsmen with even small stones.”²³⁸

During their ten-minute stay on the Practice Field, some members of Troop G were ordered to kneel and point their rifles toward the demonstrators.²³⁹ The demonstrators in the Prentice Hall Parking Lot directly in the line of fire of the kneeling guardsmen were between one hundred fifty and two hundred feet away.²⁴⁰ Student Alan Canfora, who soon would be shot, went inside the Practice Field fence and waved a black flag to protest the Guard’s actions. Although the Justice Department and the President’s Commission both conclude that this was the time that the National Guard troops were receiving the most verbal and physical abuse, the Guard aimed their rifles but did not shoot in self-defense, an explanation they would later claim as the reason for the subsequent shootings on Blanket Hill. Major Jones, who had accompanied Captain James Ronald Snyder and the members of Company C to their position between Taylor and Prentice Halls blocking access to the Commons, “walked through the crowd to find out if General Canterbury wanted assistance.”²⁴¹ Davies concludes: “If the demonstrators were as dangerous as Canterbury claimed after the killings, could a solitary officer have elbowed his way through them without some kind of incident? Yet that is exactly what happened.”²⁴²

At the time that Major Jones was on the Practice Field, Guard leaders formed a huddle that included Jones, Canterbury, and others, prompting some to speculate that it was at this time that tactics were developed that included firing directly on the demonstrators.²⁴³ Michener theorizes that there was not necessarily an order to fire given at that time, but reasons: “It seems likely, however, that on the football field, when the students were being obnoxious and stones were drifting in, that some of the troops agreed among themselves, ‘We’ve taken about enough of this crap. If they don’t stop pretty soon we’re going to let them have it.’” He further concludes, “It seems likely that some kind of rough verbal agreement had been reached among the troops when they clustered on the practice field.”²⁴⁴

The President’s Commission says that General Canterbury realized that there was nothing more his troops could do on the Practice Field so he ordered them to retrace their steps up Blanket Hill and then back down to the remains of the ROTC building on the far side of the Commons. Canterbury explained: “My purpose was to make it clear beyond any doubt to the mob that our posture was now defensive and that we were clearly returning to the Commons, thus reducing the possibility of injury to either soldiers or students.”²⁴⁵ There was some speculation that the troops had used all of their tear gas on the Practice Field and had none left for the return march to the ROTC building. This was not the case. “Captain Srp and Lieutenant Stevenson of Troop G were aware that a limited supply of tear gas remained and Srp ordered one canister loaded for use at the crest of Blanket Hill.”²⁴⁶ Still, General Canterbury and Major Jones both would claim under oath that the Guard spent all

²³⁶ Scranton et al., *President’s Commission*, 267; Stone, *Killings at Kent State*, 80.

²³⁷ Fourteen other guardsmen also claimed they were hit—mostly likely at this time as well, Stone, *Killings at Kent State*, 81.

²³⁸ Michener, *Kent State*, 336.

²³⁹ Scranton et al., *President’s Commission*, 268; Stone, *Killings at Kent State*, 82.

²⁴⁰ Davies, *Truth About Kent State*, 41.

²⁴¹ Stone, *Killings at Kent State*, 82.

²⁴² *Truth About Kent State*, 38–39.

²⁴³ Davies, *Truth About Kent State*, 41–42; Michener, *Kent State*, 409–10.

²⁴⁴ *Kent State*, 361, 409–10.

²⁴⁵ Scranton et al., *President’s Commission*, 268.

²⁴⁶ Stone, *Killings at Kent State*, 82.

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of their tear gas canisters while on the Practice Field. As the guardsmen and officers marched off the Practice Field and back up Blanket Hill, they maintained a common V-shaped formation. Davies notes that at this time a sequence of photographs used in the subsequent court trials illustrates that members of Troop G lagged behind the others and seemed to be more concerned with the demonstrators in the Prentice Hall Parking Lot much farther away from them than other demonstrators who were closer and in the vicinity of Taylor Hall. Photos further show that guardsmen other than members of Troop G looked forward as they advanced up the hill.²⁴⁷

On seeing what they perceived as a retreat of the Guard, some students felt that everything was over. Some followed behind the Guard at a distance of sixty feet or greater. An 8mm film by student Christopher Abell shows:

A member of Troop G, looking over his shoulder and down toward the parking lot, would have seen five students at a distance of 60 to 85 feet, 25 students between 85 and 175 feet, and 30 students between 175 and 325 feet. . . .

The evidence of the film is that at no time before Troop G opened fire were they being approached by more than 17 students, that none of the approaching students was closer than 85 feet, and that 10 of them were more than 175 feet away. . . .

The film provides conclusive evidence that the guardsmen had not been rushed.²⁴⁸

As the Guard marched up the hill, students ahead parted to let them by. Some demonstrators threw rocks at guardsmen as they marched up the hill toward the Pagoda, but the FBI reported that rocks were not thrown at the time of the shooting.²⁴⁹

As the Guard approached the Pagoda from the east around 12:24 p.m., apparently en route to the ROTC building straight ahead down the Commons side of Blanket Hill, some guardsmen on the trailing edge of the right flank, mostly from Troop G, wheeled 135 degrees to the right to face the direction of the Prentice Hall Parking Lot to the northeast.²⁵⁰ By all eyewitness accounts and photographic evidence, these guardsmen turned in unison, lifted their rifles in unison, pointed their weapons in unison, and began shooting for thirteen seconds, expending sixty-seven rounds.²⁵¹ While the soldiers were firing, Lt. Col. Fassinger, Major Jones, and General Canterbury yelled, "Cease Fire!" Jones hit several men on the helmet to stop their firing.²⁵² Students dived for cover during the thirteen seconds of gunfire.

Guardsmen killed four Kent State University students. William Knox Schroeder, a nineteen-year-old psychology major and member of the ROTC, was shot in the back at the seventh rib while lying prone 390 feet from the firing position. Sandra Lee Scheuer, a twenty-year-old speech pathology and audiology major, was shot in the front side of her neck on her way to a speech therapy class. She also was 390 feet away from the line of fire. Allison Beth Krause, a nineteen-year-old Honors College art major, was diving for cover in the Prentice Hall Parking Lot when she was shot. She was 343 feet away from the line of guardsmen as a bullet passed through her left upper arm and into her left side. Jeffrey Glenn Miller, a twenty-year-old psychology major, was shot through the mouth while facing the Guard 265 feet away.

²⁴⁷ *Truth About Kent State*, 42.

²⁴⁸ Kelner and Munves, *Kent State Coverup*, 174–75.

²⁴⁹ Scranton et al., *President's Commission*, 270–71; Stone, *Killings at Kent State*, 87.

²⁵⁰ Michener, *Kent State*, 340.

²⁵¹ Kelner and Munves, *Kent State Coverup*, 177.

²⁵² Best, "Tragic Weekend," 25.

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Guardsmen wounded nine Kent State students. Joseph Lewis (60 feet away) was shot by two different guardsmen in the right abdomen and the left lower leg; he was closest to the Guard on a walkway near Taylor Hall. John Cleary (110 feet away), who fell near the *Solar Totem #1* sculpture in front of Taylor Hall, was shot in the left upper chest. Thomas Grace (200 feet away) was shot in the left ankle. Alan Canfora (225 feet away) was shot in the right wrist as he was diving for cover behind a tree. Dean Kahler (300 feet away) was shot in the left side of the small of his back while lying prone on the ground near the access road. He was permanently paralyzed from the bullet. Douglas Wrentmore (329 feet away) was wounded in the right knee. James Russell (375 feet away) was the only person outside the angle of gun firing leading to the Prentice Hall Parking Lot. He was near Memorial Gymnasium and at an angle approximately 90 degrees from the other students. His wounds in the head and right thigh were caused by a shotgun blast. Robert Stamps (495 feet away) was shot in the right buttock. The student wounded farthest from the Guard position, D. Scott Mackenzie, was 750 feet away and was shot in the left rear of the neck.²⁵³ All individuals shot on May 4 were Kent State University students. They were not outside agitators or Weathermen. Michener, Mayer, and syndicated columnist Victor Riesel were among those who suggested or stated that outside agitators were to blame for much of what happened on May 4, 1970.²⁵⁴ However, other sources reject the validity of the outside agitator allegation.²⁵⁵ No disruptive outsiders have been identified as participating in the demonstration on May 4.

Terry Strubbe, a student at Kent State, set his tape recorder on his dorm room windowsill on the first floor of Johnson Hall and left for the rally at noon on the Commons nearby. An analysis of that tape recording by engineering firm Bolt, Beranek and Newman of Cambridge, Massachusetts, revealed that the first three shots came from M-1 rifles that were located between the Pagoda and the corner of Taylor Hall. The firm also determined that there were 67 shots, not 61 as previously reported.²⁵⁶ A 2010 examination of a digital copy of the Strubbe recording initiated by Alan Canfora, one of the wounded students, indicated a verbal order to fire was given before the volley of shots.²⁵⁷ Follow-up by forensic audio analysts Stuart Allen and Tom Owen confirmed the order to fire.²⁵⁸ The latter supported the claims of some students and guardsmen who said they heard an order to fire.²⁵⁹

In subsequent analysis of an earlier portion of the Strubbe recording, Stuart Allen concluded that four shots were fired from a .38 weapon 70 seconds before the 67-shot volley fired by the Ohio National Guard.²⁶⁰ Many individuals question the findings of Allen's second round of analysis. In a related aspect, some feel that "plainclothes agent Terry Norman, from whom a .38 revolver was taken shortly after the shootings," was *not* involved in starting the shootings.²⁶¹ For these individuals, questionable findings regarding sounds 70 seconds before the guardsmen shot are not new proof that Norman was involved. Others feel more certain regarding Allen's second round of conclusions and believe that they substantiate the role played by Terry Norman in the

²⁵³ Scranton et al., *President's Commission*, 273–74; Davies, *Truth About Kent State*, 52–55.

²⁵⁴ *Kent State*, 352, 409, 411; *Commission on KSU*, 4:2–23; Davies, *Truth About Kent State*, 142.

²⁵⁵ O'Neil, *No Heroes*, 7; Scranton et al., *President's Commission*, 239; Stone, *Killings at Kent State*, 61; "Tragedy in our Midst."

²⁵⁶ Kelner and Munves, *Kent State Coverup*, 177.

²⁵⁷ Maag, "Kent State Tape is Said to Reveal Orders."

²⁵⁸ John Mangels, "New Analysis of 40-year-old Recording of Kent State Shootings Reveals that Ohio Guard Was Given an Order to Prepare to Fire," *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, May 9, 2010, updated April 23, 2012, http://blog.cleveland.com/metro/2010/05/new_analysis_of_40-year-old_re.html.

²⁵⁹ Scranton et al., *President's Commission*, 275.

²⁶⁰ John Mangels, "Commotion That 'didn't sound right' Led to Re-examination of Kent State Tape," *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, Oct. 8, 2010, http://www.cleveland.com/science/index.ssf/2010/commotion_that_didnt_sound_rig.html; also see note 260 below.

²⁶¹ Grace, *Kent State: Death and Dissent in the Long Sixties*, 357, note 5.

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shootings.²⁶² From another direction, 2012 analysis of the audio by the FBI at the request of the US Department of Justice found neither an order to fire nor gunshots from a .38 caliber revolver. The FBI suggested that the latter sounds were those of doors slamming.²⁶³ Many citizens would like further analysis of the audio recordings to take place.

There were seventy-six armed guardsmen and officers on the top of the hill at the time of the shooting. Guardsmen who fired from the Pagoda were members of Troop G of the Second Squadron, 107th Armored Cavalry, and Company A of the First Battalion, 145th Infantry, along with two members of Company C of the First Battalion, 145th Infantry.²⁶⁴ Accounts of the actions of these members of the Guard vary. According to the President's Commission, "Twenty-eight Guardsmen have acknowledged firing from Blanket Hill. Of these, 25 fired 55 shots from rifles, two fired five shots from .45 caliber pistols, and one fired a single blast from a shotgun."²⁶⁵ General Canterbury, Lt. Col. Fassinger, and Major Jones all claimed to hear a non-military shot which triggered the rest of the volley. The Justice Department summary of the FBI Report concluded, "The FBI has conducted an extensive search and has found nothing to indicate that any person other than a Guardsman fired a weapon."²⁶⁶ The shooting began with no announcement or warning to the students and no immediate provocation. Some guardsmen later claimed they fired because their lives were in danger. Again, the Justice Department's Summary of the FBI Report notes, "Six Guardsmen, including two sergeants and Captain Srp of Troop G stated pointedly that the lives of the members of the Guard were not in danger and that it was not a shooting situation" and that "the claim by the National Guard that their lives were endangered by the students was fabricated subsequent to the event." Furthermore, the FBI concluded that the guardsmen were not surrounded by students, nor was there any rock throwing at the time of the shooting as alleged by some guardsmen.²⁶⁷ The President's Commission concluded: "The indiscriminate firing of rifles into a crowd of students and the deaths that followed were unnecessary, unwarranted, and inexcusable."²⁶⁸

After the thirteen seconds of gunfire, witnesses recalled an eerie silence. As students lay wounded and dying on the ground, members from Troop G and Company A turned and marched back to the site of the ROTC building—unimpeded by the hundreds of students on Blanket Hill on the north side of Taylor Hall or onlookers on the Student Activities Center roof between Stopher and Johnson Halls to the west of the Commons.

Company C, in position on the other side of Taylor Hall near the Prentice Hall dorm to the east, did not fire during those seconds. Following the shootings, Captain Snyder took seven of his men from this contingent to assess the conditions of the students wounded in the Prentice Hall Parking Lot. He reportedly looked at two young men and concluded they were dead.²⁶⁹ Jeffrey Miller had died instantly, but William Schroeder lived for

²⁶² John Mangels relates the .38 caliber shots and Terry Norman in: "Kent State Shootings: Does Former Informant Hold the Key to the May 4 Mystery?" *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, Dec. 19, 2010, http://www.cleveland.com/science/index.ssf/2010/12/kent_state_shootings_does_form.html and "Kent State Tape Indicates Altercation and Pistol Fire Preceded National Guard Shootings," *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, Oct. 8, 2010, http://www.cleveland.com/science/index.ssf/2010/10/analysis_of_kent_state_audio_t.html. For theories on government cover-ups related to Terry Norman, see Laurel Krause and Mickey Huff, "Uncovering the Kent State Cover-up," *Counter Punch*, Sept. 27, 2012, <http://www.counterpunch.org/2012/09/27/uncovering-the-kent-state-cover-up/> and Lesley Wischmann, "Lesley Wischmann Testimonial," *Kent State Truth Tribunal*, May 1, 2, 3 & 4, <http://www.ustream.tv/recorded/6654063>.

²⁶³ John Mangels, "Justice Department Won't Reopen probe of 1970 Kent State Shootings." http://www.cleveland.com/science/index.ssf/2012/04/justice_department_wont_re-ope.html

²⁶⁴ Kelner and Munves, *Kent State Coverup*, 192; Davies, *Truth About Kent State*, 34; Michener, *Kent State*, 329–30; "May 4 Visitors Center, Walking Tour, Memorial."

²⁶⁵ Scranton et al., *President's Commission*, 273.

²⁶⁶ Stone, *Killings at Kent State*, 89.

²⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 84, 87.

²⁶⁸ Scranton et al., *President's Commission*, 289.

²⁶⁹ Best, "Tragic Weekend," 25; Scranton et al., *President's Commission*, 277.

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some time after reaching the hospital. Several of Snyder's men were near the body of Jeff Miller when some angry students yelled obscenities at them. One of the guardsmen threw a tear gas pellet at the student group in response.²⁷⁰ The members of Company C then returned to their skirmish line and eventually back to the Commons. Snyder told the federal grand jury that he found a pistol on Jeffrey Miller's body, but later admitted he had concocted this story to develop a self-defense strategy for the guardsmen.²⁷¹

The students who were witnesses to the shootings were now on their own to care for their classmates who lay dead, dying, and wounded in the Prentice Hall Parking Lot and on Blanket Hill near Taylor Hall. Some ran into the nearby dorms of Prentice and Dunbar Halls to call for ambulances and to find someone to assist them. Some went into Taylor Hall to seek out telephones and to seek help. Other students linked arms around the dead and wounded, while yet other students administered first aid to those who could still be helped. Some students were frozen in place and unable to respond to what they had just witnessed. Still others ran to the Commons screaming for ambulances that had not yet arrived. Faculty marshal Glenn W. Frank, a popular geology professor, rode with an ambulance from the Commons and assisted in getting the dead and wounded into the ambulances.

As some students were assisting with the dead and wounded, others began to gather on the hill above the Commons. After many of the fallen were taken to hospitals, shocked students milled around and also eventually moved toward the Commons. The National Guard stood at one end of the Commons, at the ROTC site, and the students stood near the Victory Bell, until the students moved to a grassy slope of land near Stopher and Johnson Halls where they engaged in a sit-in. Some students expressed anger; others were quiet with shock. Although they did not realize it, the potential was high at this time for further violent action by the Guard. Glenn Frank received permission from General Canterbury to give the faculty marshals some time to try to disperse the students, thereby avoiding any further military action on the part of the Guard. Frank, along with psychology professor Seymour Baron, political science professor Myron (Mike) Lunine, and history graduate student Steve Sharoff—each of whom also tried to negotiate with Canterbury, who remained adamant that the students must leave—worked mightily to convince the students to leave the site.²⁷²

A taped exchange captures Baron's pleas to the students as they called out in their outrage and for action:

Baron: I want to protect your lives. I hope you can understand that. They've got live ammo. . . . They've got .30 caliber ammunition there. That stuff is bad news. . . . Look, for God's sakes, we've made the point. . . . Vietnam, Cambodia We hate it, all of us do . . . every faculty member on this campus does. . . . You're going to lose the whole stinking campus. They're going to destroy this whole university. . . . You've paid the price. The point has been made. A couple of kids have been shot. . . . At least one of them we know has been killed. If we walk down the hill, they're going to shoot.²⁷³

As Baron entreated students not to move nearer to the guard, Glenn Frank thought that Major Jones was moving his men out to confront the students. Frank pleaded, "For God's sake, don't come any closer." Jones replied, "My orders are to move ahead" to which Frank replied, "Over my dead body." Jones did not move forward.²⁷⁴

²⁷⁰ Scranton et al., *President's Commission*, 277.

²⁷¹ Kelner and Munves, *Kent State Coverup*, 123–26.

²⁷² Barbato, Davis, and Seeman, *This We Know*, 25.

²⁷³ Steve Tichenal, "Dr. Seymour Baron Speaks to Assembled Students," *Kent State 1970*, 1970, May 4th, ed. Joe Linstrum et al.

<http://www.kentstate1970.org/timeline/may4th1970/postshooting>.

²⁷⁴ Scranton et al., *President's Commission*, 278.

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In the meantime, General Canterbury, at the skirmish line of guardsmen at the ROTC site, told his troops, "Have your weapons in the ready position."²⁷⁵

Realizing the Guard might start shooting again, Frank went back to the students. A radio station recording captures the continuing shouts and anguish of the students, followed by Frank's desperate plea:

Frank: I don't care whether you've never listened to anyone before in your lives. I am begging you right now. If you don't disperse right now, they're going to move in, and it can only be a slaughter. Would you please listen to me? Jesus Christ, I don't want to be part of this.²⁷⁶

The final plea from Glenn Frank was successful. By 1:30 p.m., the Commons and the adjoining areas were empty of students.²⁷⁷

The university president, on returning from his lunch at the Brown Derby Restaurant, ordered the campus closed as of 1:20 p.m. Later in the afternoon, Judge Albert L. Caris of the Common Pleas Court of Portage County signed an order granting an injunction requested by Portage County prosecutor Ronald J. Kane to close the university until "conditions merit the reopening."²⁷⁸ Students were forced to evacuate the campus immediately, but could not make arrangements for their departure, as Kent Bell Telephone shut down phone service to the dormitories, all traffic in and out of the city of Kent was stopped, and most did not have access to transportation. The dean for student residence life, David Ambler, "had the . . . idea of wheeling out the thirty-six university buses, loading them with students, and starting them off to Cleveland or Columbus, from which spots frantic students could catch what airplanes were available" or otherwise make their way home as best they could. By that evening, all students and personnel had vacated the campus, with the exception of seventy-two international students and residence hall staff. Military personnel patrolled the city and campus and there was a dusk to dawn curfew.²⁷⁹

National Impact of the Shootings at Kent State

Evidence of the impact of the shootings at Kent State on May 4, 1970, continues to grow, as the event remains prominent in collective memory and public culture. In May 2015, two additional new documentaries featuring the May 4 history aired on PBS—*Kent State: The Day the '60s Died* and *Dick Cavett's Vietnam*—as part of its week of special programming remembering the fortieth anniversary of the evacuation of the US Embassy in Saigon. In 2014, CNN produced a Special Report titled *Witnessed: The Killings at Kent State, which aired May 4, with Anderson Cooper as host*. These works join nine previous documentaries, thirty-one books, and many thousands of news stories and articles. In 2013, responding to his experience of the Kent State University May 4 Visitors Center museum, which relates the May 4 shootings in the context of the long sixties, documentarian Ken Burns noted that he would need to rethink his forthcoming Vietnam War documentary to situate Kent State into his account of the war and its contexts. In 2010, Congressman John Lewis presented the keynote address during the dedication of a new May 4 Walking Tour of the site and recognition of its inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places. Walking Tour trail markers are accompanied by an original documentary narrated

²⁷⁵ News film footage in which Canterbury makes this comment is contained the following documentary: Mike Buday, Laura Davis, and Carole Barbato, *Kent State: A Turning Point*, Kent, OH: Kent State University May 4 Visitors Center, 2012.

²⁷⁶ Scranton et al., *President's Commission*, 278 ; Steve Tichenal, "Dr. Glenn Frank Speaks to Crowd, Urges Crowd to Disperse," *Kent State 1970*, 1970, May 4th, kentstate1970.org, <http://www.kentstate1970.org/timeline/may4th1970>.

²⁷⁷ Best, "Tragic Weekend," 26.

²⁷⁸ "Struggle to Recovery," 11.

²⁷⁹ Michener, *Kent State*, 419–20; "Struggle to Recovery," 11.

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by Julian Bond, who donated his time to record the walking tour narration and his memory of the shootings in an oral history featured in the May 4 Visitors Center. In June 2009, widespread electronic and television news coverage linked the video of the death of a young woman, Neda Agha Soltan, shot during a protest rally in Tehran, to the photograph of Mary Vecchio kneeling over the body of Jeffrey Miller, illustrating that Kent State remains emblematic of the struggle for human and civil rights—all over the globe. In 2008, the Kent State shootings were voted, from among seventy-five choices, Ohio's top news story of the past seventy-five years in an Ohio Newspaper Association poll.²⁸⁰ In a 2007 *Vanity Fair* magazine political cartoon, President George W. Bush's response to the pleas for help of Hurricane Katrina victims in New Orleans is compared to President Nixon's response to the “Kent State massacre.”²⁸¹ US history textbooks highlight this moment in history, often including the iconic photo that captures the tragedy and transgression of that day. This brief sampling, among many such examples, illustrates that the Kent State shootings remain embedded in the American mind and experience. May 4 is recognized as a benchmark in US political and social history, associated with the struggle to end the Vietnam War represented by the student protest movement from the sixties through seventies, a flawed Nixon presidency, and a clash of generational values. The events at Kent State represent a milestone in public memory and the efforts of a new generation to preserve its own past so the next generations might learn. Such an assessment begins with an understanding of President Nixon's initial response to the shootings and continues to the present.

May 4 and the People, the President, and Politics

In November 1969, Americans learned of one of the darkest events of the war overseas as the atrocities committed in 1968 at My Lai were made public. Six months later, Kent State embodied the dark side of the war at home—“a bloodstained symbol of the rising student rebellion against the Nixon Administration and the war in Southeast Asia.”²⁸² Vietnam veterans and even active soldiers in the field saw the military-like events of May 4 as too close to home and too close to their own experiences.²⁸³ In May 1970, during the student strike resulting from the shootings (discussed below), five hundred GIs deserted every day in Vietnam, and there were over sixty-five thousand deserters from the army alone in that year.²⁸⁴ May 4 helped to turn the tide of public opinion against the war.²⁸⁵ The killings at Kent State made clear that:

Death, previously distant, was now close at hand. New groups—Nobel science laureates, State Department officers, the American Civil Liberties Union—all openly called for withdrawal. Congress began threatening the Nixon administration with challenges to presidential authority. When the New York Times published the first installment of the Pentagon Papers on 13 June 1971, Americans became aware of the true nature of the war. . . . Anti-war sentiment, previously tainted with an air of anti-Americanism, became instead a normal reaction against zealous excess. Dissent dominated America; the anti-war cause had become institutionalized.²⁸⁶

The shootings at Kent State dominated the covers of *Life*, *Newsweek*, *Time*, and other magazines. May 4, 1970, became known as *the day the war came home*, a phrase perhaps first used by playwright Arthur Miller in an article for *McCall's*, a staple of middle-American households: “The war finally came home that day in May

²⁸⁰ “Newspaper Association Names Top 75 Ohio Stories.”

²⁸¹ “That Was Then & This Is Now,” 129.

²⁸² “Primaries: Upset Time,” 12.

²⁸³ Moser, *New Winter Soldiers*, 108; Stacewicz, *Winter Soldiers*, 212.

²⁸⁴ Katsiaficas, *Vietnam Documents*, 117.

²⁸⁵ Nolan, “What the Nation Learned at Kent State.”

²⁸⁶ Barringer, “Anti-War Movement,” 1998.

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when American troops killed our children on their school grounds.”²⁸⁷ The shift in America’s view was reflected in Gallup Poll surveys that asked: “In view of the developments since we entered the fighting in Vietnam, do you think the US made a mistake sending troops to fight in Vietnam?” After the shootings at Kent State, Americans increasingly answered, “Yes,” with a five percent change in opinion against the war between April 2–7 and May 21–26, 1970.²⁸⁸ The staff of the *Akron Beacon Journal* won the 1971 Pulitzer Prize for its account of the shootings, and Kent State student John Filo and the tiny *Valley Daily News and Daily Dispatch of Tarentum and New Kensington* won the 1971 spot news photography Pulitzer Prize for the iconic image of Mary Vecchio kneeling over the body of Jeffrey Miller. That image would pervade the hearts and minds of many Americans.

On May 1, 1970, the morning after his primetime appearance announcing the invasion of Cambodia, which lit the fuse to antiwar protests across the nation’s colleges and universities, Nixon was recorded in the hallway of the Pentagon denouncing protestors: “You see these bums, you know, blowing up the campuses. Listen, the boys that are on the college campuses today are the luckiest people in the world, going to the greatest universities, and here they are burning up the books, storming around about this issue. You name it. Get rid of the war[,] there will be another one.”²⁸⁹ After the shootings at Kent State, the president’s tone had not softened. When press secretary Ron Ziegler read Nixon’s prepared comments on May 5, there was no expression of sympathy. Such treatment exemplified Nixon’s side of the generational dividing line. He said to the country, “This should remind us all once again that when dissent turns to violence it invites tragedy.”²⁹⁰ Arthur Krause, whose daughter Allison was a victim of the violence exerted by soldiers on May 4, cried, “My child was not a bum.”²⁹¹

Vietnam historian Stanley Karnow castigates Nixon’s reaction to the shootings at Kent State as “wanton insensitivity,” noting that Secretary of State Kissinger blamed Nixon for failing to find “the language of respect and compassion that might have created a bridge at least to the more reasonable elements of the anti-war movement.”²⁹² Following a pointed press conference during the night of May 8, in which twenty-four of the twenty-six questions involved Cambodia and Kent State, Nixon stayed up late into the morning calling advisors. Aware that students were gathering for a large antiwar march, around 4:20 a.m. he asked his valet if he had ever seen the Lincoln Memorial at night. When the valet indicated that he had not, Nixon impulsively embarked on a visit and confusing interaction with protestors that he claimed was an attempt to better understand the youth. The press and observers, including his own staff, saw Nixon’s appearance at the memorial as evidence of the president’s despair.²⁹³ In his memoirs, Nixon portrays himself as troubled by May 4: citing “the pictures in the newspapers of the two girls and two boys who had been killed at Kent State,” Nixon described the time as, “the most profoundly depressing moment for me during the war years of my presidency.”²⁹⁴ This statement seems at odds, however, with his quashing of any federal grand jury probing the killings. It also has been suggested that although Nixon may have been saddened by the deaths of student protestors, he was more affected by the failure of the FBI to turn up any evidence of communist involvement or agitation. Karnow concludes that the post-Kent State protests and student strikes “briefly sobered Nixon,” but he soon shook this off and decided to

²⁸⁷ “The War Between Young and Old,” 32.

²⁸⁸ Gillespie, “Americans Look Back at Vietnam War.” Twenty-four percent answered *yes* during the first poll, Aug. 27–Sept. 1, 1965; after that, opinion against the war steadily increased. Jan. 15–20, 1970, fifty-seven percent responded *yes*, then the number dipped to 51 percent Apr. 2–7, 1970. Between May 4, 1970, and Jan. 12–15, 1973, negative opinion steadily increased again, reaching sixty percent.

²⁸⁹ de Onis, “Nixon Puts ‘Bums’ Label on Some.”

²⁹⁰ Langguth, *Our Vietnam*, 570.

²⁹¹ *Ibid.*

²⁹² *Vietnam*, 626.

²⁹³ Thomas, *Being Nixon*, 269–76; Weiner, *One Man Against*, 92–93.

²⁹⁴ Nixon, *No More Vietnams*, 162.

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stop “screwing around” with his congressional adversaries and other foes. In the weeks after the shootings, he ordered the formation of a covert team headed by Tom Huston, a former intelligence specialist, to improve surveillance of domestic critics.²⁹⁵

Members of Nixon’s administration viewed the shootings at Kent State as one of the major symbolic events of the Vietnam War as well as the 1960s, one that affected political and legal institutions, college campuses, and the general public. In the *Ends of Power*, Haldeman states that “Kent State, in May 1970, marked a turning point for Nixon” and that the distrust of the FBI investigations of the Kent State shootings began the “downhill slide” into Watergate, eventually destroying the Nixon administration.²⁹⁶ The administration never publically admitted fault in its Vietnam strategy at the time, but Robert McNamara, secretary of defense under John Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson, wrote in 1995, “We of the Kennedy and Johnson administrations who participated in the decisions on Vietnam acted according to what we thought were the principles and traditions of this nation. . . . Yet we were wrong, terribly wrong. We owe it to future generations to explain why.”²⁹⁷

The Kent State shootings broadened the base of protest against the Vietnam War, which crossed over the generation gap and into the political arena. Howard Metzenbaum’s antiwar position helped him win the US Senate seat in Ohio. “After the Kent State shootings, there was no way to keep Vietnam out of a contest for the US Senate,” Tom Diemer notes in his analysis of Metzenbaum’s Senate career. Writing about John Glenn’s loss to Metzenbaum in the primary, Diemer adds that “the tide moved against him [Glenn] near the end of the campaign, as the incursion in Cambodia and the Kent State tragedy seemed to help the staunchly anti-war Metzenbaum.”²⁹⁸ Gitlin further describes the effect in Washington in the wake of the Kent State shootings, along with nationwide reaction:

Lobbying in Washington for an immediate end to the war, students were joined by respectables: a thousand lawyers, thirty-three university heads, architects, doctors, nurses, a hundred corporate executives. Two hundred fifty State Department employees, including fifty Foreign Service officers, signed a statement against administration policy. The enormity of uprising broke Nixon’s will. As Henry Kissinger put it later, “The very fabric of government was falling apart. The Executive Branch was shell-shocked. After all, their children and their friends’ children took part in the demonstrations.”²⁹⁹

Regarding the immediate aftermath of the shootings, Kissinger added that “the tidal wave of media and student criticism powerfully affected the Congress.”³⁰⁰ The day after the Kent State shootings, Nixon assured the furious Congress that US troops would go no more than nineteen miles into Cambodia, and on May 8 he agreed to withdraw ground troops from Cambodia by June 30. Kissinger thought Nixon yielded to “public pressures.”³⁰¹ Then on May 8, the Senate voted to withdraw funding for the Cambodian operation, marking the beginning of a series of measures over the following years to bring funding for the war to an end.³⁰² To appease Congress and the public, Nixon at this time sought to answer the complaint of young people, “Old enough to fight, old enough to vote,” by working with Congress to push through passage of the Twenty-Sixth Amendment to lower the

²⁹⁵ Karnow, *Vietnam*, 626–27.

²⁹⁶ Haldeman, *Ends of Power*, 107.

²⁹⁷ McNamara, *In Retrospect*, xvi.

²⁹⁸ *Fighting the Unbeatable Foe*, 76, 90; see also Glenn, *A Memoir*, 325.

²⁹⁹ *Sixties*, 410.

³⁰⁰ *White House Years*, 512.

³⁰¹ Gitlin, *Sixties*, 410.

³⁰² Hall, *Vietnam War*, 64.

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voting age.³⁰³ While Congress cooperated on lowering the voting age, antiwar sentiment within the group translated into more action. Senator George McGovern, who had introduced an amendment to end the war the day before the Cambodian invasion, pushed for passage by reminding Senators how deeply America was anguished by both the invasion and the deaths at Kent State. He went on to admonish his colleagues as “partly responsible for sending 50,000 young Americans to an early grave,” claiming, “This chamber reeks of blood.”³⁰⁴

The National Student Strike

Across the nation (and the world), the events of May 4 prompted demonstrations and rallies. A week after May 4, one hundred thousand antiwar demonstrators converged on Washington to protest the Kent State shootings and the Nixon administration’s movement into Cambodia. Even though the demonstration was quickly put together, protestors still were able to bring out thousands to march on the Capital. It was an almost spontaneous response to the events of the previous week. Police ringed the White House with buses to block the demonstrators from getting too close to the executive mansion and sandbagged machine gun positions guarded the roofs of other government buildings. Campuses across the country reacted to the shootings at Kent State. As Kirkpatrick Sale notes, “Protests took place at institutions of every type, secular and religious, large and small, state and private, coeducational and single-sexed, old and new.”³⁰⁵ Fifty-seven percent of college and university presidents reported that their institutions experienced a “significant impact” on their campus operations as a result of Cambodia, Kent State, and Jackson State.³⁰⁶ In his essay, “Kent State and Historical Memory,” Thomas M. Grace, himself wounded as a student at Kent State, gives measure to the reaction and sees in its magnitude why the shootings remain a landmark event in public memory:

That the killings later achieved such prominence in collective memory had much to do with the scope of the reaction by American students in the immediate wake of the fatal shootings. Numbers outline the magnitude: students staged demonstrations of some sort on better than half of all college campuses; more than five hundred universities closed for a period of time; and Kent State and fifty others were shut down for the remainder of the academic year. Historians know the statistics, while protestors—estimated at 4,350,000 people—can still call to mind their participation. Reaction first to the United States’ invasion of Cambodia and then to the Kent killings touched every corner of Ohio and the nation.³⁰⁷

It was the first national student strike in US history and the largest student protest the country has experienced.³⁰⁸ While protests on campuses began the night of April 30, immediately upon Nixon’s Cambodia announcement, the Urban Research Corporation concluded from its national survey conducted in May 1970: “This country’s first national student strike was the result of the killing of four students by National Guardsmen and not President Nixon’s Cambodian Action. . . . In spite of Cambodia, without the Kent State deaths, there would have been no national student strike.”³⁰⁹ Researchers sponsored by the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education agreed: “With the Kent State shootings, a powerful, emotional response added new fuel and great

³⁰³ Nixon, “Statement on Signing the Voting Rights Act Amendment.”

³⁰⁴ *Congressional Record*.

³⁰⁵ *SDS*, 636.

³⁰⁶ Petersen and Bilorusky, *May 1970*, 15.

³⁰⁷ 9. Other sources quantifying the scope of the strike include: Urban Research, *On Strike*, 1; Mayer, *Commission on KSU*, 1:27; Michener, *Kent State*, 418; Sale 1973:636-38; Gitlin, *Sixties*, 410; and Fendrich, *Forgotten Movement*, 350.

³⁰⁸ Urban Research, *On Strike*, 1; Gitlin, *Sixties*, 410.

³⁰⁹ *On Strike*, 1.

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numbers to the growing turmoil. . . . Throughout the uprising there was exhilaration from doing something personally significant, taking control of events, achieving solidarity and community."³¹⁰

Kent State and Jackson State

Among the colleges participating in the national student strike and the properties associated with the student protest movement of the 1960s and 1970s, Jackson State University (formerly Jackson State College), in Jackson, Mississippi, is most closely linked to Kent State. Ten days after the shootings at Kent State, in the early morning hours of May 15, 1970, two students were killed and nine were wounded on the Jackson State campus by the Jackson City Police and the Mississippi Highway Safety Patrol. Gene Young, a Jackson State student who helped calm others when the shooting ceased, observed, "In the spring of 1970, no institution of higher education was left untouched by controversy and the courageous chorus calling out [f]or change."³¹¹ He and others identify a complex of political and social issues affecting Jackson State students at that time, most of which were pertinent to the broader student movement: the war in Vietnam; escalation of the war through the US invasion of Cambodia; the draft; ROTC; the killings at Kent State; and racism and repression.³¹²

Since 1965, Jackson students and demonstrative nonstudents who were called *corner boys* had responded to long-standing racial intimidation and harassment from white motorists by in turn harassing white motorists and white police along Lynch Street, the major, four-lane thoroughfare that bisected the campus.³¹³ In addition to their other grievances, students were disgruntled that a bridge had never been built over Lynch Street for their safety.³¹⁴ Disturbances at Jackson State in May 1970 took place on two nights. On the evening of May 13, "youths" threw rocks at cars on Lynch Street; broke the rear windshield of a campus security car; hurled epithets; threatened the two campus ROTC buildings with chanting and rocks, and, later in the night, threw two bottles with gasoline (the one with a burning wick was readily extinguished by an officer); and engaged in several other acts of vandalism.³¹⁵ One "youth" fired four shots in the direction of a traffic light in front of Alexander Hall. Over the course of the evening, three security guards fired shots into the air. The state highway patrol rendezvoused with the city police.³¹⁶ Around 3:00 a.m. on May 14, the Mississippi adjutant general notified the Jackson State president that the Mississippi National Guard had been put on alert and that it would likely use tear gas the following day if disturbances took place. No law enforcement or security personnel were fired upon and no police or highway patrol officer reported firing a weapon.³¹⁷

The summary of the events of May 14 by the President's Commission on Campus Unrest, created by President Nixon as a result of "demands for an investigation of the Jackson and Kent State killings," includes mention that during the day city police shared rumors from "confidential sources" with the highway patrol that there would be trouble at Alexander Hall. That information was not shared with John Peoples, the college president, who was active in communicating with officials and students on May 13 and 14. Further, Peoples' request that Lynch Street be closed was denied. Disturbances began around 9:30 p.m. when rumors spread that Charles Evers, brother of Medgar Evers and mayor of Fayette, Mississippi, and his wife had been shot and killed. Although many on campus discounted the rumor, tension rose and protestors again threw rocks on Lynch Street (it was soon closed, as had happened on the previous night). Protestors also set several small fires and

³¹⁰ Peterson and Bilorusky, *Campus Aftermath*, xi, 1, 3.

³¹¹ "May 15, 1970," 86.

³¹² Young, "May 15, 1970," 86; Weakley, "Mississippi Killing Zone," 71; "Our History"; Spofford, *Lynch Street*, 51, 58, 60; Scranton et al., *President's Commission*, 445.

³¹³ Scranton, et al., *President's Commission*, 413-14; Spofford, *Lynch Street*, 14.

³¹⁴ Spofford, *Lynch Street*, 58.

³¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 36-41.

³¹⁶ Scranton et al., *President's Commission*, 421, 419.

³¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 421.

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overturned and set on fire a dump truck on a campus construction site. The National Guard moved closer to campus and highway patrol and city police, with Thompson's tank, a twenty-three-foot-long armored van that was a "hated symbol . . . of impregnable racism" built to control civil rights demonstrations in Jackson after Medgar Evers was assassinated in 1963, moved onto campus, with a fire truck behind them. Firefighters extinguished the truck fire, without interference from demonstrators. The twenty-six city police and forty highway patrolmen stood in a line between the dump truck and a crowd at Stewart Hall. The crowd at Stewart Hall, delivering jeers and yells, increased in size. "Rocks and pieces of brick were thrown, but there were no serious injuries to firemen or police officers."³¹⁸ Guardsmen, mounted on armored personnel carriers, with "weapons but no ammunition" took a position on the west end of Lynch Street,³¹⁹ and the police chief called the mayor to report "that the situation on campus was worsening."³²⁰ The mayor was informed after the fact that the police and highway patrol were already on campus when the chief called him. The chief dismissed the mayor's request that the National Guard be sent onto campus. Rocks and other objects were thrown from the crowd at this time, and "there were conflicting reports of small caliber gunfire from the area of Stewart Hall." A highway patrolman shot into a fourth-floor window of Stewart Hall; no one was hit. The mayor arrived near campus and began walking toward Stewart Hall with the National Guard. The firemen left, driving the perimeter to go to the other end of campus, where there was another small fire. The police chief later stated that he proceeded from Stewart to Alexander Hall in response to a request for police protection before the fire at the other end of campus was extinguished. He said he saw a crowd of about two hundred at Alexander Hall, which was three hundred yards away and moved there with his officers, the highway patrolmen, and the tank in the lead to clear the streets.³²¹

The President's Commission reports that the tank stopped approximately in front of the west wing of Alexander Hall, the women's dormitory. The police formed a line to the south and east of the tank, and the highway patrolmen to the north and west. Crowd size estimates ranged from forty to four hundred. As they had been at Stewart Hall, students here were ordered to disperse. Students jeered at the police and patrolmen. Two officers reportedly staggered when struck on the helmet by thrown objects.³²² A bottle was thrown from the direction of Alexander Hall and broke on the ground at the feet of the police. The law enforcement officers (highway patrolmen and two city police) released a twenty-eight-second fusillade of "buckshot, rifle slugs, a submachine gun, carbines with military ammunition, and two 30.06 rifles loaded with armor-piercing bullets" directed at students on both the north and south side of Lynch Street. More than one hundred fifty rounds were fired, most "into the air." "Nearly 400 bullets or pieces of buckshot struck Alexander Hall. Immediately following the shootings, highway patrolmen picked up their casings and those of the city police."³²³ By 12:11 a.m. on May 15, a patrolman filed the following report at highway patrol headquarters:

"Advise demonstrators threw rocks at them from a building. In return they tried to get them back into the building and they threw more rocks. Units had to hurt a few."³²⁴

Law enforcement officers killed two students and wounded twelve. Phillip L. Gibbs, twenty-one-years-old, was a junior pre-law major at Jackson State and the father of an eighteen-month-old son. He was slain when shot just under his left eye, twice more in the head, and under the left armpit by double-o buckshot pellets. James Earl Green, seventeen-years-old, was a high school student walking home from work at a local grocery store.

³¹⁸ Ibid., 424, 423.

³¹⁹ "Our History."

³²⁰ Scranton et al., *President's Commission*, 425.

³²¹ Ibid., 425-27.

³²² Ibid., 424-25, 428-29.

³²³ Ibid., 432, 429, 434-35.

³²⁴ Ibid., 435.

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He had stopped across the street and behind the line of police and highway patrolmen to watch what was happening. He was shot fatally by a single buckshot to his chest.³²⁵

In its analysis of the points of the chronology most under dispute, the President's Commission determined the following:

- The crowd of demonstrators (numbering between seventy-five and two hundred) was behind a chain link fence and did not advance on officers prior to their opening fire.
- Shooting commenced five minutes or less after law enforcement arrived at Alexander Hall.
- Demonstrators hurled "vile" epithets at officers at Alexander Hall.
- In addition to the bottle that broke next to an officer, demonstrators threw "a small number of bottles, rocks and bricks" at officers in front of Alexander Hall.³²⁶

At least one patrolman and one reporter said that there was sniper fire directed at the police, and more specifically that at least some of this came from the stairwell window of Alexander Hall.³²⁷ The President's Commission presents refuting evidence and cites the FBI's determination that all bullets and pellets were "fired from outside the building [Alexander Hall]." While skeptical of many statements made by officers, the commission states, "The most favorable reading of the evidence tending to support a finding that there was such gunfire indicates that at most two shots were fired from one window."³²⁸ It adds:

The Commission concludes that the 28-second fusillade from police officers was an unreasonable, unjustified over-reaction. Even if we were to assume that two shots were fired from a window in the west wing of Alexander Hall, the 28-second fusillade in response was clearly unwarranted. Peace officers should respond to sniper fire by taking cover and holding their fire. The Jackson City Police sniper team on the scene should have been used to deal with reported sniper fire. A broad barrage of gunfire in response to reported and unconfirmed sniper fire is never warranted.³²⁹

The grand jury's position, "When people . . . engage in civil disorders and riots, they must expect to be injured or killed when law enforcement officers are required to reestablish order," was strongly condemned by the President's Commission.³³⁰ To the grand jury, the commission responded,

That position, which the grand jury drew almost verbatim from grand jury charges by Federal District Judge Harold Cox and State Circuit Judge Russell Moore, may reflect the views of many Americans today. It is a view which this Commission urges Americans to reject.

The Commission categorically rejects rhetorical statements that students must "expect" injury or death during civil disorders. Such statements make no distinction between legitimate dissent and violent protest. It is the duty of public officials to protect human life and to safeguard peaceful, orderly, and lawful protest. When disorderly protest exists, it is their duty to deal with it firmly, justly, and with the minimum force

³²⁵ Spofford, *Lynch Street*, 97; "Our History."

³²⁶ Scranton et al., *President's Commission*, 436-40.

³²⁷ Spofford, *Lynch Street*, 74, 127, 166.

³²⁸ Scranton et al., *President's Commission*, 437-40; 443-44.

³²⁹ *Ibid.*, 450.

³³⁰ *Ibid.*, 444-54, 458.

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necessary; lethal force should be used only to protect the lives of officers or citizens and only when the danger to innocent persons is not increased by the use of such force.³³¹

This public avowal of First Amendment rights by the President's Commission regarding Jackson State would be echoed over the years by the May 4 families. In a formal statement at the close of their ten-year legal struggle, the parents of the students slain at Kent State affirmed that one of their important objectives had been realized: "To assert that the human rights of American citizens, particularly those citizens in dissent of governmental policies, must be effected and protected." They, including Martin Scheuer, a Holocaust survivor, added, "We have learned through a tragic event that loyalty to our nation and its principles sometimes requires resistance to our government and its policies—a lesson many young people, including the children of some of us, had learned earlier."³³² The mother of Jeffrey Miller said during the 1988 commemoration at Kent State, "The myth of a benign America where dissent was broadly tolerated was one casualty of the shootings at Kent State."³³³ The second edition of *Kent and Jackson State: 1970–1990* (1995) states that each contributor to the anthology "stands firmly on the side of the students in this controversy, and condemns the actions of the police and military authorities, as well as the higher political authorities, who sanctioned the violent suppression of student dissent."³³⁴

The firing of weapons against students at Jackson State lasted twice as long as at Kent State, while the number of students protesting at the time, approximately two to three hundred, was much smaller. As Spofford recounts, the immediate aftermath included sit-ins to prevent the removal of evidence from Alexander Hall by repairmen; a march by five hundred city school children on the governor's office; a one-hundred-mile civil rights march to Atlanta ("with a sign: 2 Killed in Jackson, 4 Killed in Kent, 6 Killed in Augusta"); a boycott of white-owned businesses; closing of public schools in New York City to honor the slain Jackson State students; campus demonstrations at other universities; and raising money at other campuses, including Kent State, for Jackson State scholarships and memorials.³³⁵ Spofford sees these reactions as part of the progression of the National Student Strike that erupted after the shootings at Kent State.

There are some indications that the Jackson State killings were responded to more attentively by the Nixon administration than those at Kent State, possibly because of potential connections to a disaffected black community. Jackson was visited by the US attorney general, who soon after requested a special federal grand jury when the highway patrol refused to provide interviews or turn over weapons for testing to the FBI. President Nixon convened a roundtable of black college presidents to discuss student unrest and created his President's Commission on Campus Unrest. Nixon sent a telegram to and phoned the mother of James Earle Green. A chartered plane carried a delegation from Washington to Green's funeral that included members of Congress, the NAACP, the US Civil Rights Commission, and the press, along with two Kent State students. Nixon, aware of criticism for his "cool" response to the Kent State shootings now "released a statement to the press that he and Mrs. Nixon were 'deeply saddened by the death of two students at Jackson State College.'"³³⁶ His cold statement about the Kent State killings did resound, however, when he called the president of Jackson State to ask, "What are we going to do . . . to get more respect for the police from our young people."³³⁷

The legal aftermath to the Jackson State killings was comparable to that following the killings at Kent State. The federal grand jury, instructed by a biased judge, failed to indict any of the law enforcement officers who

³³¹ *Ibid.*, 458–59.

³³² "Statement by the Parents," 53, 55.

³³³ Elaine Holstein, "Anniversary," 48.

³³⁴ Tal, "Introduction to the Second Edition," 9.

³³⁵ Spofford, *Lynch Street*, 115–17, 136–37, 134.

³³⁶ *Ibid.*, 115–17, 132, 142–43, 154–56.

³³⁷ Langguth, *Our Vietnam*, 570.

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fired their weapons at Jackson State. The judge for the subsequent county grand jury delivered biased remarks similar to those of the federal grand jury judge, and as a result the county grand jury indicted one young black man for arson and inciting riot. These charges would be dropped for lack of evidence. Wounded students and parents of the slain students filed suit in the US District Court for the Southern District of Mississippi against the state, the city, five city police who admitted firing, the commanding highway patrol officer during the shootings, Lloyd Jones, and the forty-two patrolmen under his direction.³³⁸ After a trial lasting from February 28 to March 22, 1972, the jury declared that it found “for all of the defendants.” The legal aftermath of the Kent State shootings lasted ten years and the Jackson State legal issues lasted twelve years during which time the doctrine of sovereign immunity was upheld for the Jackson State suit, although it had been reinterpreted in *Scheuer v. Rhodes* which allowed the Kent State suit to proceed. The Jackson State case was closed with no one being found responsible for the killings.³³⁹

As at Kent State, students at Jackson State did not want to “take the scars away” by allowing the state or university to make alterations to the site.³⁴⁰ These efforts at memorialization contrast with administrative attempts to put these events in the past for the sake of image and enrollment. Lynch Street, which in 1970 bisected the campus, is now a pedestrian mall and there has been considerable post-1970 university construction in the historic area.³⁴¹

May 4 and Legal Precedent

In direct response to May 4, on September 16, 1970, the Ohio General assembly passed measures that equaled a restriction on rallies and protests. House Bill 1219 was designed to reduce the probability of campus disruption and violence by establishing hearing procedures for persons arrested on campus for any alleged violations and by making suspension mandatory for students, faculty, and staff arrested, and providing for their dismissal upon conviction. H. B. 1219 also provided for expedited trials for persons accused of such offenses.³⁴²

At the national level, events of May 1970 were especially important as civil rights cases in the history of American jurisprudence. Litigation resulting from May 4 extended for a full decade after the shootings. During that decade, there were ten major investigations and trials. At the end of that time, however, “not a single person had been found legally responsible for any of the events of May 4, 1970.”³⁴³ Investigations were conducted by the Ohio State Highway Patrol, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the President’s Commission on Campus Unrest. The case stimulated an unprecedented mix of both criminal and civil cases at both the federal and state levels. Criminal cases took the form of a state grand jury, a state criminal trial, a federal grand jury, and a federal criminal trial. The first two trials—of the Kent 25 (students, youths, and one faculty member) and of the eight guardsmen—received national and international attention. Charges against the Kent 25 were dropped. The second case came to court despite the announcement in 1971 by Nixon’s attorney general John Mitchell that there would be no federal grand jury investigation, citing insufficient evidence. Despite this attempt to block an investigation, new attorney general Elliot Richardson proceeded with an inquiry following the revelations of Watergate and an *eyes only* memo from Nixon to the Justice Department forbidding a grand jury. Richardson perceived the “intense concern” and “persistence of private citizens” as a quest not for “punishment,” but for the “truth.” Eight guardsmen were indicted. The case was dismissed by the judge before the jury could deliberate; the trial did not lead to conviction.³⁴⁴

³³⁸ Spofford, *Lynch Street*, 155–56.

³³⁹ *Ibid.*, 174–76.

³⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 134–38, 139, 142.

³⁴¹ Spofford, *Lynch Street*, 176–77.

³⁴² Mayer, *Commission on KSU*, 1:32.

³⁴³ Hensley, Preface, ix.

³⁴⁴ Hensley, “May 4th Trials,” 71–76.

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The last chapter in the legal aftermath of May 4 took the form of a civil suit brought against James Rhodes, the sitting governor of Ohio, for damages caused by wrongful deaths, assault and battery, and the violations of civil rights. This case was precedent setting in American jurisprudence and resulted in a landmark decision by the United States Supreme Court.³⁴⁵ In *Scheuer v. Rhodes*, the Supreme Court ruled that the executive branch of government did not enjoy absolute immunity for its actions and that while immunity could be used as a defense in a trial, it could not be used to block a trial from being held.³⁴⁶ Then followed one of the longest, most complicated trials in US history, *Krause v. Rhodes*. Most federal civil trials typically last two to three days. The 1975 federal civil trial, in which the families brought suit against fifty-three defendants on thirteen counts, lasted fifteen weeks; contained testimony of 101 witnesses; and generated twelve thousand pages of transcript that necessitated seventy-six pages of instructions to the jury, which had to decide on five hundred individual verdicts.³⁴⁷ While none of the defendants was found liable, a successful appeal in 1977 led to a second trial in 1979, which ended in a settlement of \$675,000 for injuries the students had received and a statement of regret by the indicted guardsmen and governor.³⁴⁸ For many, the ambiguous language of the statement left open the wounds of May 4.

During the thirtieth commemoration of the shootings, Kathleen Sullivan, dean of the Stanford University Law School, spoke to the broken promise represented by the shootings at Kent State, the expectation that freedom of speech will be protected:

If the government is prepared to deploy legitimate force to provide genuinely equal protection of the law, then expression of views that are hostile to subparts of the population pose no ultimate physical menace. . . .

On the other hand, we often suppose that we enjoy social order precisely because we have freedom of expression. . . .

Against the backdrop of this contemporary conventional wisdom, the shootings of student anti-war demonstrators by National Guardsmen at Kent State on May 4, 1970, appear anomalous: freedom of expression understood not as an aspect of public order but rather as a threat to public order, and enough of a threat to warrant the use of martial force.³⁴⁹

Sullivan places May 4, 1970, into an “undercurrent of free speech antihistory” that includes the Civil War and the civil rights movement in its timeline and asks, “How might these incidents . . . be reconciled with our canonical tradition that the First Amendment confers the highest protection upon dissident political expression?”³⁵⁰

Impact on the National Guard

While no member of the Ohio National Guard was convicted or found liable for his actions at Kent State on May 4, 1970, the events of that day were important in guiding subsequent armament and tactics of the National Guard. In September 1970, the President’s Commission condemned the tactics used at Kent State:

³⁴⁵ Kelner and Munves, *Kent State Coverup*, 18.

³⁴⁶ Bills, “Introduction,” 37; Rosen, “Legal Battle,” 233.

³⁴⁷ Hensley, “May 4th Trials,” 77.

³⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 81.

³⁴⁹ Sullivan, “Freedom of Expression,” 1–2.

³⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 4.

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The indiscriminate firing of rifles into a crowd of students and the deaths that followed were unnecessary, unwarranted, and inexcusable.

The National Guardsmen on the Kent State campus were armed with loaded M-1 rifles, high-velocity weapons with a horizontal range of almost two miles. As they confronted the students, all that stood between a guardsman and firing was the flick of a thumb on the safety mechanism, and the pull of an index finger on the trigger. . . .

The general issuance of loaded weapons to law enforcement officers engaged in controlling disorders is never justified except in the case of armed resistance that trained sniper teams are unable to handle. This was not the case at Kent State, yet each guardsman carried a loaded M-1 rifle. . . .

Even if the guardsmen faced danger, it was not a danger that called for lethal force. The 61 shots by 28 guardsmen certainly cannot be justified. . . . The Kent State tragedy must mark the last time that, as a matter of course, loaded rifles are issued to guardsmen confronting student demonstrators.³⁵¹

In response, Adjutant General Sylvester Del Corso, the highest-ranking officer of the Ohio National Guard, began to address his approach to civil disturbance in October 1970:

“We are planning to use some short range, non lethal weapons such as multiple batons that fire wooden pellets and similar weapons that will sting at close range,” said Del Corso after criticism of the guard last week by the President’s Commission on Campus Unrest.³⁵²

Del Corso asserted about the Guard’s reformed approach:

“But we will not have a double standard,” he said. “We all still have some rifles. We’re going to be prepared in case someone starts shooting at us. “As far as we are concerned, there is no difference between a disturbance on campus and one in the city streets.”³⁵³

By the end of the year, Del Corso’s policy came into compliance with US Army standards: “In December 1970, after attending a review of Guard civil-disturbance policies in Washington, Del Corso abandoned the routine gun-loading policy and instituted a new set of riot control drills that emphasized the use of clubs.”³⁵⁴ With the new year in 1971, John Gilligan replaced James Rhodes as Ohio governor, Generals Del Corso and Canterbury were retired, and Del Corso’s live ammunition policy was immediately revised. Other states followed suit. That same year, the US Department of Defense announced that written commitments had been received from forty-seven of the fifty states to abide by the Army field manual guidelines, which had not been observed at Kent State.³⁵⁵

³⁵¹ Scranton et al., *President’s Commission*, 289–90.

³⁵² “National Guard to Carry Non-Lethal Weapons.”

³⁵³ Ibid.

³⁵⁴ Kelner and Munves, *Kent State Coverup*, 144.

³⁵⁵ Davies, *Truth About Kent State*, 161, 169.

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The Arc of the Student Protest Movement

The pattern of ancient and historic drama has long been modeled as a pyramid, with *rising action* running up the left-hand side, a *climax* or *turning point* plotted at the apex, *falling action* running down the right-hand side, and the leveling out labeled the *denouement*—the *resolution*. The struggle for social change and protest against the Vietnam War were the rising action of the 1960s, reaching a climax on May 4, 1970. The period of falling action was significant. A turn in public opinion about the war resulted, along with one of the most notable mass demonstrations in US history, the first and only national student strike. Demonstrations against the war continued, as well, with a “flurry” of activity in the spring of 1971. In February, a number of protests took place around the country in response to US involvement in the invasion of Laos.³⁵⁶ Half a million people took part in a Washington, D.C., rally in April.³⁵⁷ During the May Day Protests in D.C., over eight hundred veterans threw their medals and ribbons on the Capitol steps and 13,400 people were arrested May 3–6.³⁵⁸ Such mass antiwar demonstrations did begin to wane, however, even as antiwar opinion continued to grow, as Todd Gitlin examines in his chapter titled “Fadeout.” Among the complex of contributing factors within this falling action, as Gitlin sees it, was the lack of a “national organization to keep the student movement boiling, to channel antiwar energy into common action.”³⁵⁹ The *denouement* of the student protest movement came with the end to the longest war in US history to that point. By 1972, US troop withdrawals from Vietnam were significant and peace negotiations had intensified. In January 1973, when Nixon announced the effective end of US involvement, he did so in response to a mandate unequalled in modern times.³⁶⁰ The last US soldier killed in Vietnam occurred in 1975. In addition, amid growing scandals about his administration’s wrongdoings and cover-ups, and facing certain impeachment in the House of Representatives and not enough support in the Senate to avoid removal, Nixon resigned from office in 1974.

Tom Hayden and Todd Gitlin reflect on the antiwar movement’s *denouement*, its *resolution*. Hayden asks, “What, then, did anyone gain from the Vietnam experience?” He answers:

If anything truly begins to justify the Vietnam experience, it is that US foreign policy has been altered. . . .

However, a new foreign policy consensus remains to be formulated. “No more Vietnams” is a healthy reaction to the past, but not a clear policy blueprint for the future. Perhaps we are coming to a time when a new US consensus can be projected in foreign affairs; if so, it will have to be a democratic consensus, not an elite one.

That is perhaps the key legacy of Vietnam: the new and hard-won potential of Americans to think twice before accepting our leaders’ words.³⁶¹

After his painful examination of the end of the movement, Gitlin, like Hayden, sounds a hopeful note:

The changes wrought by the Sixties, however beleaguered, averted some of the worst abuses of power, and made life more decent for millions. The movement in its best moments and broadest definition made philosophical breakthroughs which are still working themselves out: the idea of a politics in which difference (race, gender, nation,

³⁵⁶ Isserman and Kazin, *America Divided*, 279.

³⁵⁷ Gitlin, *Sixties*, 411.

³⁵⁸ Morris, “May Day!”

³⁵⁹ *Sixties*, 409–19, 417.

³⁶⁰ Barringer, “Anti-War Movement,” 1998.

³⁶¹ *Rebel*, 227.

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sexuality) does not imply deference; the idea of a single globe and the limits that have to be set on human power. However embattled, however in need of practical policy, these ideas sketch out a living political vision.³⁶²

The last words Gitlin offers are those of first-century Rabbi Tarfon: “It was not granted to you to complete the task . . . and yet you may not give up.”³⁶³

Ancient theater provided citizens opportunity to recognize and learn from the pattern of action played out on the stage. So too, the May 4 Kent State shootings site is the most tangible reminder—aside from the Vietnam Veterans Memorial—of America’s internal struggle over an unpopular foreign war and one of the nation’s best places to understand the student protest movement of the Vietnam era.

May 4 Site, Move the Gym, and the Movement

On November 19, 1975, a *Daily Kent Stater* article covering Kent State University’s decision to build an annex to its Memorial Gymnasium commented that the annex would be “about twice the size” of the existing gym. The footprint of the annex became better understood after the *Kent–Ravenna Record–Courier* in July 1976 published a diagram of the proposed building and its situation within the May 4, 1970, shootings site and when the summer *Stater* published a photograph of the model of the building. On October 5, 1976, the *Stater* published the first letter to the editor opposing construction and emphasizing its negative impact on the legal actions currently underway by the shooting victims’ families. The author of the letter, Nancy Grim, observed: “The disruption of this area could be serious for the continuing legal actions [stemming from May 4]. Many people change their minds about the causes and implications of the shootings when they experience the setting.” During the following commemoration, May 4, 1977, the newly formed May 4th Coalition, which would lead protest against the gym annex, argued that the site’s preservation was essential in order to carry forward the lesson of the Kent State shootings for future generations and that it “would be one more element in a series of cover-ups of the ‘truth’ about May 4.” The coalition rallied around the call to “Move the gym!”³⁶⁴

Tent City and the University Administration

As Thomas Hensley³⁶⁵ describes, student reaction began to build on November 3 and 4, 1976, when the *Daily Kent Stater* student newspaper “indicated that the proposed facility could cover part of the area where the May 4th confrontation occurred” and announced that the university’s trustees would discuss the plan on November 11. At the trustees meeting, students presented six concerns that centered on the historic nature of the site and the need to pursue an alternative; however, the trustees approved the building location and in the same meeting accepted the resignation of university president Glenn Olds. As an unusual result, the trustees would interact directly with the major student protest to follow. Hensley views the 1977–78 protest as “the genesis of a new student movement, which not only came to dominate life on the Kent State campus but also spread across the nation, involving students from dozens of other campuses and eventually many nonstudent radicals as well. . . .

³⁶² *Sixties*, 436.

³⁶³ *Ibid.*, 438.

³⁶⁴ Bills “Introduction,” 40, 43. A Kent State student government representative, Grim helped to found the May 4 Task Force. She was not a practicing member of the group. She actively participated in the May 4th Strike Committee, organized spring 1976, and played a key role in setting up organization of the May 4th Coalition following the 1977 May 4 commemoration, Grim, “Tent City,” 221–22; Hensley, “Struggle to Move the Gym,” 147.

³⁶⁵ Thomas R. Hensley, now professor emeritus of political science, Kent State University, personally observed the major events in the protest timeline, collected newspaper accounts and “countless leaflets” and university interdepartmental memos, examined numerous court documents and minutes of Kent State Board of Trustees meetings, recorded interviews with key figures in the drama, and attended key events, Hensley, “Struggle to Move the Gym, 140–41.

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While the protest had its basis in local issues, some members of the coalition felt that something much larger was occurring.³⁶⁶

Central to the gym annex controversy was the definition of the boundaries of the May 4, 1970, shootings site. The university administration defined the site to be only where the students had actually fallen from National Guard gunfire, and the proposed annex was not supposed to impact that location. The May 4th Coalition, though, defined the boundaries to include the entire area where the events of May 4, 1970, unfolded, including where the guardsmen had assembled, their marching route, and their firing location, as well as where the student protestors assembled, regrouped, and were shot.³⁶⁷ Some of that acreage was clearly going to be affected by the construction of the gym annex.

The protest built as the May 4, 1977, commemoration approached. Members of both the May 4th Task Force, which organized the annual commemoration, and the *Daily Kent Stater* spoke out against the insensitivity of the administration toward May 4 matters and the scheduling of a trustees meeting on the afternoon of the commemoration. Students would occupy the building in which the trustees met that day, until 1:00 a.m., May 5. During their protest, students formed the May 4th Coalition, then drafted eight demands:

- *Justice!* (The university should acknowledge the injustice of the shootings.)
- *Move the Gym!*
- *Keep the Center for Peaceful Change!* (founded as a living memorial to May 4th)
- *No “business as usual” on May 4!*
- *Name the buildings!* (for the four who died)
- *Amnesty for May 4, 1977!* (anyone who participated in the commemoration)
- *Support the United Faculty Professional Association* (then in negotiations with KSU)
- *No reprisals for the sit-in!*³⁶⁸

“Coalition members themselves took great pride in the unique qualities of their organization, and many saw their ‘constructive anarchism’ or ‘ultimate participatory democracy’ as a potential landmark development in the history of social movements.” Protestors were aware of the extensive media coverage at the local level, which was picked up in turn at the national level. Some coalition members felt that the earlier student Vietnam-era protest movement had waned, but was now “reincarnated at Kent State.” National figures, including Vietnam veteran Ron Kovic and black activist Stokely Carmichael, concurred.³⁶⁹

The demonstrations at Kent State May 1–4, 1970, had not been led by a core group of activists, but were of a looser, counterculture nature and, for the most part, participated in by large numbers of students unaffiliated with particular groups. This was especially true on the day of the shootings. Conversely, the May 4th Coalition, as Hensley recounts, immediately developed an organizational structure, featuring in addition to its platform a steering committee, daily meetings, negotiations, and planned activities. With a substantial show of student support, the coalition met with the president and trustees on May 12, 1977. The university agreed to four of the coalition demands; it sent for committee review the request to name buildings and dedicate each May 4 to remembrance and education; and it deferred denouncing the shootings as unjust because of ongoing litigation renouncing the building of the annex. The university felt that it made a reasonable and responsible business and administrative decision regarding building the annex, one that would not impinge either on the legal aftermath of the shootings or the particular places where students fell. Having previously decided that its demands were

³⁶⁶ “Struggle to Move the Gym,” 145, 142, 147.

³⁶⁷ Bills, “Introduction,” 43.

³⁶⁸ Hensley, “Struggle to Move the Gym,” 145–147.

³⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 142, 148.

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nonnegotiable, coalition members left the meeting, marched past the dorms (where a few others joined in), went to the proposed construction site, and spontaneously founded Tent City. The sixty people who slept on the hill that first night vowed to remain “until the demand to ‘move the gym’ was met.”³⁷⁰

“The protestors were a mix of older and newer activists, including participants in or observers of the May 4 rally of 1970: Ken Hammond, Bill Arthrell, Dean Kahler, Alan Canfora, Roseann (Chic) Canfora, Miriam Jackson, Tom Grace, and others.”³⁷¹ During the two months that Tent City stood, the May 4th Coalition was joined by additional student protestors from Kent State and other universities. Other political groups joined the protest as well, including representatives from the communist Revolutionary Student Brigade (RSB).³⁷² Tent City became both a “focal point of Coalition political activity as well as a social community.”³⁷³ To avoid being dismantled by the university, the community developed rules such as no alcohol and no drugs. Meals were communal and primarily vegetarian; tents were moved regularly to preserve the grass; and littering was avoided. “Participation in it became a ‘way of life,’ as had draft resistance groups during the 1960s.” “Members, like their 60s predecessors, lived ‘in opposition to the majority culture . . . moving toward an alternative consciousness and community.”³⁷⁴

The coalition pursued multiple tactics to support its cause, which was to block university attempts to “bury the history of May 4,” by “literally bury[ing] the site of the shootings under a sprawling building.”³⁷⁵ Of strategic importance, the coalition purposely sought to keep the attention of the media on the protest, seeking thereby to create anxiety that the situation might escalate, which would in turn cause the administration to relent.³⁷⁶ Coalition members tirelessly lobbied for support, by regularly explaining the organization’s position to students and faculty in person and through leaflets; by telling construction contractors and laborers directly that it was not opposed to the gym annex being built elsewhere; by researching the genesis of the facility; through benefit concerts and rallies with notable speakers; by building solidarity through linking Kent and Jackson State and supporting Black United Student demands; through a letter-writing campaign; by picketing state politicians; and by trying to find grounds for a court injunction against construction. Concomitantly, the university maintained its position that it had made a reasonable decision; kept a low profile; hoped that the protest would fizzle out; and issued a fact sheet to the media to explain its position. Neither the president nor the trustees officially met with the Coalition during the two months of Tent City to try to resolve differences. Several trustees did talk with protestors at Tent City or offered ideas about how to resolve the crisis. Dean of Student Affairs Richard Bredemeier and University Architect Ted Curtis also met with coalition members several times. Trustees David Dix and Joyce Quirk understood the point of view of the students. At the June 9 trustees meeting, Dix stated, “We have proven ourselves insensitive . . . but we cannot ignore the worst thing that ever happened to the Kent community and the University.” Quirk added, “The possibility of considering alternatives for this site might indeed be costly but in the long run the historical and aesthetic losses in my estimation might prove even higher.” Neither could effect change with the president or other trustees.³⁷⁷

Shortly before the arrests of the Tent City protestors, Trustee James Fleming observed that “their protest has been very effective.”³⁷⁸ The coalition’s mission was clear, to educate the university about what it should see as its mission:

³⁷⁰ Ibid., 148–49.

³⁷¹ Bills, “Introduction,” 43.

³⁷² Jackson, “Brothers and Sisters on the Land,” 103.

³⁷³ Bills, “Introduction,” 43.

³⁷⁴ Jackson, “Brothers and Sisters on the Land,” 102.

³⁷⁵ May 4th Coalition, position paper, quoted in Hensley, “Struggle to Move the Gym, 150.

³⁷⁶ Hensley, “Struggle to Move the Gym,” 150.

³⁷⁷ Ibid., 150–51, 149, 152.

³⁷⁸ Ibid., 149.

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“The antiwar movement of the late 1960’s and early 1970’s was the largest student movement this country has seen, a major part of American history. Kent State was a major turning point of the movement . . . a major turning point of the struggle against the war in Vietnam. It is an outrageous abridgement of the right to free and public expression. . . . Kent State is obligated to preserve this site, as Boston must preserve the site of the Boston Massacre.

The destruction of this area would be a confirmation of the bloody suppression of free expression on May 4, 1970. The preservation of this site is essential to carry the lessons of ‘Kent State’ to future generations.”³⁷⁹

As was the case during the May 1970 protests, the Kent Campus became the focus of state and national attention as the clock ticked down. Hensley reports that State Representative John Begala brokered an arrangement with Ohio Lieutenant Governor Richard Celeste, Senate Majority Leader Oliver Ocasek, Senator Marcus Roberto, and Speaker of the House Vernal Riffe to provide funding to rotate the position of the gym, if the trustees would pass a resolution requesting the funding. Although the trustees felt that circumstances would not permit them to pass such a resolution, Begala felt that the obstacles the trustees perceived could have been overcome.³⁸⁰ Begala also supported the resolution introduced on July 6, 1977, by State Representative Harry J. Lehman, who was “upset at the absence of any memorial to the four students killed at Kent State University and fearful of renewed violence there.”³⁸¹ Quirk and Trustee Michael Johnston, still feeling a resolution might be passed, asked Dennis Carey, a faculty member in the Center for Peaceful Change, to take the plan to rotate the annex to the coalition. Rejecting the plan, Tent City protestors instead “sen[t] out an appeal throughout the nation for all supporters to come to Blanket Hill where protestors would lock arms and legs to resist removal or arrest in a nonviolent manner.” Joyce Quirk, still trying for a resolution, was able to reach President Jimmy Carter’s advisor Midge Costanza, resulting in Quirk’s proposal to the university administration and protestors that they seek nonbinding federal mediation. Neither side made the request.³⁸²

Over the course of the protest, the coalition did attract the media attention coverage it sought as a political strategy. As with coverage of the shootings, reactions were strong on both sides. On May 28, 1977, the Cleveland *Plain Dealer* published an editorial titled “Blanket Hill’s Vista Should Not Be Desecrated.” Copy editor George Markell wrote: “To another generation it’s like putting a Howard Johnson’s on Normandy Beach. A desecration. . . . Should the battlefield at Gettysburg be excavated to build a bowling alley?” He went on to say, “When he is older, I’d like to walk on this spot with my son, pointing out these landmarks that remain from May 4, 1970. It is important to me that someday he understand what happened here, even if he can never comprehend why.” On June 2, 1977, an editorial in the Columbus, IN, *Republic* dismissed annual commemorations at Kent State for their featuring speakers who “customarily extoll the virtues of socialism and condemn capitalism.” “That alone would be enough to keep alive the spirit of ‘revolution,’ the *Republic* noted.³⁸³ In a Dayton *Journal Herald* report on June 3, 1977, coalition members invited to Wright State University by the local chapter of the Revolutionary Student Brigade asserted when interviewed by the press: “‘This is a battlefield, like Gettysburg or Boston Commons. . . . It shouldn’t be desecrated’” and “‘What we’ve seen in the last half year is a rebirth of the student movement.’” Kent State alum Greg Rambo did concede, though, that while current issues were just as important as those during the Vietnam War, the majority of students seemed more concerned about getting jobs than “protesting for a cause.”³⁸⁴ The June 4, 1977,

³⁷⁹ May 4th Coalition, position paper, June 23, 1977, quoted in Hensley, “Struggle to Move the Gym,” 150.

³⁸⁰ Hensley, “Struggle to Move the Gym,” 152–53.

³⁸¹ “Memorial is Asked at KSU Slaying Site.”

³⁸² Hensley, “Struggle to Move the Gym,” 152–53.

³⁸³ “Kent State Revisited.”

³⁸⁴ “Kent Students Want ‘Battlefield’ Commemorated.”

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Cleveland Press solemnly supported the protest: “Kent became a symbol of a war that never should have been fought. And maybe Kent was the turning point in opinion about that war. The Kent protesters do not want a building that would defile the memory of the dead, nor do we. And we believe a compromise can be reached.”³⁸⁵ On July 8, 1977, *Cleveland Plain Dealer* analyst Meg Algren stressed the commitment of Tent City protestors to nonviolence and the absence at the site of “hardened revolutionaries” or any “organized effort to stir up trouble.”³⁸⁶ *Plain Dealer* politics writer Joseph D. Rice concluded “KSU Lesson Not Learned” on July 14 with: “What is needed now is a recognition by university administrators of the significance of what happened May 4, 1970, and a determination to build for the future by avoiding the mistakes of the past.” July 14, 1977, also had the *Chicago Tribune* concluding its editorial “Kent State Again” with: “The May 4 Coalition has a right to ask the Kent State trustees to keep the scene of the deplorable events of May 4, 1970, an open space in perpetuity, but everyone should recognize the trustees’ right either to accept or reject the suggestion.” The *Chicago Daily News* also supported the administration: “How does empty land honor the sacrifice of the dead? We are inclined to side with Kent State President Glenn Olds, who believes the best way to preserve their memory ‘is not in a physical entity, but in the living memorial built into the character of the school, such as [the university] did with the Center for Peaceful Change.”³⁸⁷ Conversely, the day after the arrests, *The Boston Globe* ran its editorial, “Ohio’s Hallowed Ground,” which opened with: “There is a grassy knoll in Ohio on the campus of Kent State University that is hallowed ground to many Americans, even to those who have never seen it” and went on to say “it is soil to which we should all return . . . to recollect the consequences of official contempt of American guarantees of life and liberty.” The editorial concluded: “Kent State officials should think about the national significance of the knoll that cradled an American tragedy and mark it with an appropriate memorial, not a gymnasium.” *The Boston Globe* published a letter to the editor on July 21, 1977, expressing thanks “that the ilk of Kent State President Glenn Olds and the university trustees have not set historic landmark policy in the greater Boston area,” as “Lexington Green, where citizens and soldiers also once opposed each other, would be a dismal sight as a shopping mall, parking lot or gymnasium.”³⁸⁸ The *New York Times* reported on July 17, 1977: Demonstrators “maintain that the construction would ‘desecrate’ what should be a national monument.”³⁸⁹ *Time* magazine for July 18, 1977, opened an article with: “An old wound in American society has been painfully reopened.”³⁹⁰ That same day, *The Chronicle of Higher Education* made clear the position of each side and the nonviolence on both sides during the arrests.³⁹¹ On October 2, 1977, the *New York Times* editorial page offered in “Remembering Kent State”: “The memory of Kent State represents a powerful link for students to the fabled era of campus activism. But unlike the incursions into Cambodia—an issue of urgent concern to the country—the 1977 activity shows signs of deteriorating into confrontation for its own sake. It is reminiscent of those campus demonstrations which were designed not to achieve specific objectives but to exploit a popular cause and so to ‘radicalize’ students.”

Protestors resided in Tent City “until July 12, 1977, when 193 people occupying Blanket Hill were arrested.”³⁹² Portage County sheriff’s deputies, carrying clubs but no other weapons, ringed the site.³⁹³ An order to disperse was read; then unarmed members of the Kent State campus police cleared the hill, carrying off many of the protestors. Among the first arrested were the parents of coalition members Chic and Alan Canfora and the parents of Sandy Scheuer. Rev. John Adams³⁹⁴ was also among the first arrested.³⁹⁵ Protestors reoccupied the

³⁸⁵ “Kent’s Newest Dilemma.”

³⁸⁶ “Tent City Fears Confrontation.”

³⁸⁷ “Remembering: 10 Summers Ago . . . And Seven Years Ago.”

³⁸⁸ Harris, “Gym on Lexington Green?”

³⁸⁹ Herron and Denenberg, “This Time, Calm at Kent State.”

³⁹⁰ “Still More Wounds at Kent State,” 14.

³⁹¹ Phillips, “Kent State Protest Ends in 194 Arrests.”

³⁹² Hensley, “Struggle to Move the Gym,” 149.

³⁹³ Phillips, “Kent State Protest Ends in 194 Arrests.”

³⁹⁴ Adams was a minister in the United Methodist Church. In 1971, he published Peter Davies’ findings about the shootings, “to

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site, which had been roped off after the arrests, during a national rally on July 22. Arrest warrants were issued for twenty-seven of these protestors, and a six-foot-high chain link fence was erected to protect the construction site.³⁹⁶ The night of July 28, sixty-one who again had reoccupied the site were arrested, followed the next day by the arrest of eight others—among them four Cleveland area clergymen.³⁹⁷ On September 11, 1977, protestors used wire cutters to break down the fence and the site was again occupied by about 125 protestors, this time with no arrests.³⁹⁸ Construction began on September 19, 1977.

At the same time, May 4th Coalition members continued to pursue their goal through a multipronged approach. The legal system represented another route. On July 29, 1977, in a suit filed by William Kunstler on behalf of the May 4th Coalition, US District Court Judge Thomas Lambros issued a temporary restraining order against any construction. In granting the order, Judge Lambros cited a pending National Historic Landmark study of the May 4 site (see below). After some negotiation between the university and the coalition, including the proposal to rotate the annex slightly away from Blanket Hill, Judge Lambros suspended negotiations on August 8, 1977, then ruled in favor of the university administration on August 17, 1977. Coalition attorneys obtained a restraining order from US Supreme Court Justice William Brennan, but this was removed on September 8, 1977. Construction of the gym annex began on September 12, 1977.³⁹⁹

The May 4th Coalition also tried to block construction of the gym annex by taking their cause to Washington, D.C., where White House advisor Midge Costanza became involved a second time. Costanza arranged for meetings on July 19 and 20, one for the students and the other for the Kent State trustees.⁴⁰⁰ The roster of attendees included the following: coalition members Alan Canfora, Chic Canfora, Dean Kahler, and others; John Adams; lawyer for the coalition David Engdahl; Kent State administrators Michael Schwartz, who was appointed interim president on July 15, and George Janik, chair of the board of trustees; William J. Murtagh of the National Historic Landmark Office; US Representative John Seiberling; and US Senators Howard Metzenbaum and John Glenn.⁴⁰¹ Costanza noted after the two-and-a-half-hour meeting that “neither President Carter nor the White House could solve the problem the coalition brought to us yesterday, but we encourage them to keep working toward a solution.” Seiberling and Metzenbaum then requested that the National Park Service conduct an evaluation of the site of the May 4, 1970, shootings for National Historic Landmark status.⁴⁰² The request was picked up nationwide by the news media, which had been following the Move the Gym protest. Future Pulitzer Prize-winning columnist Mary McGrory praised the involvement of the White House, Metzenbaum, and Secretary of the Interior Cecil Andrus for trying to overcome the deadlock by pursuing Landmark status for the site, commenting, “The whole landscape that was the scene of the greatest domestic tragedy of the Vietnam war could be preserved as it is for future generations.” McGrory concluded her article with: “All the situation ever needed was a little tact. It seems appropriate that the federal government, which caused the trouble in the first place, should at last, be providing it.”⁴⁰³ The column was picked up by newspapers across the country, from Vermont to Florida, Connecticut to Oregon. The expanse of media coverage of the Landmark effort resulted in hundreds of letters against such status from across the country. Many of these letters, on file at Ohio’s State Historic Preservation Office in Columbus, probably represent the single most

prod the Justice Department into convening a federal grand jury,” which became *The Truth About Kent State: Challenge for the American Conscience*, Kelner & Munves, *Kent State* Coverup, 20, note to page 20.

³⁹⁵ Bills, “Introduction,” 45.

³⁹⁶ “Chronology of HPER Facility Planning and May 4 Coalition,” Mike and Kendra’s Web site.

³⁹⁷ Hensley, “Struggle to Move the Gym,” 157.

³⁹⁸ “Chronology of HPER Facility Planning and May 4 Coalition,” Mike and Kendra’s Web site.

³⁹⁹ Bills, “Introduction,” 46.

⁴⁰⁰ McGrory, “A Tactful Solution to Kent State Flap?”

⁴⁰¹ “Tent City/Gym Annex Protest Chronology.”

⁴⁰² Bills, “Introduction,” 58.

⁴⁰³ “A Tactful Solution to Kent State Flap?”

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concerted negative response to any National Historic Landmark evaluation in Ohio history. The general tenor of many was that such a designation would dishonor the tens of thousands of Americans who died in Vietnam. Also included in the files is an unsigned note from an Ohio Historic Preservation Office staff member dated July 18, 1977, indicating that Assistant Attorney General Roy Martin had called to state that Governor Rhodes actively opposed this nomination, but to keep his name out of it if possible. The governor's office "made it clear that the nomination should not leave Ohio."⁴⁰⁴ On the other hand, Judge Thomas Lambros, who had issued the temporary restraining order against any construction of the gym because of the pending National Historic Landmark study, compared Blanket Hill to Pearl Harbor and the Alamo. He added, "Those places become historic spots in and of themselves, regardless of administrative decrees."⁴⁰⁵

The Landmark study was initiated in 1977 after Secretary of the Interior Cecil Andrus determined that it could go forward without the event having reached the fifty-year mark.⁴⁰⁶ The study began with an on-site evaluation by historian James Sheire of the Historic Sites Survey Division. On January 1, 1978, parents of the slain students, the nine wounded students, and parents of seven of the wounded students wrote a letter of support for Landmark status to Secretary Andrus.⁴⁰⁷ Sheire's report of January 1978, however, concluded that the shootings had no lasting political effect, that the social impact was too difficult to measure, and that the only enduring significance might be of a symbolic nature.⁴⁰⁸ Regarding the political effect, Sheire argued that the May 4 shootings had some effects on Nixon's "tactics," but not on his "basic object of American policy, peace with honor." Further, despite Gallup Poll evidence of increased opposition to the war after the shootings, the shootings were not "significant" in bringing about lasting *new* opposition. Regarding social significance, "As of 1977 it [was], too soon after the events to assess the historical meaning or significance of the student movement of the 1960's," or Kent State's "effect" on the movement. The Cambodian invasion and shootings, however, may have been "symbolic" of the "moment" when "Americans were most divided during the period of the war," comparable to the Boston Massacre and other historic moments. Finally, "one indication that Kent State may become a lasting symbol," Sheire said, was the vehement reaction of many Americans to the attempts of the May 4th Coalition to preserve the site through occupation and obstruction: "seven years after the event the silent majority and the antiwar movement once again confronted each other."⁴⁰⁹

Upset, the students and families submitted an appeal to Andrus, dated April 10, 1978, which was composed by Peter Davies, with assistance from Elaine Holstein, mother of Jeffrey Miller, and Chic Canfora. Taking issue with Sheire's interpretations, they argued a long list of points. Among these, they asserted that the shootings at Kent State

- led Nixon to withdraw troops from Cambodia earlier than he intended, saving other young lives,
- were the subject of "numerous" books,
- were extensively investigated, including at the federal level,
- were the subject of three grand juries and three trials,
- resulted in a landmark "civil rights and law enforcement negligence case,"
- marked the first time demonstrators were shot "in broad daylight" since the beginning of the antiwar movement,
- were out of compliance with US Army regulations for responding to civil disturbances,
- were poorly documented by the Ohio National Guard in the immediate aftermath,

⁴⁰⁴ Franco Ruffini, personal communication to Mark Seeman, April 2009.

⁴⁰⁵ Associated Press, Cleveland, "KSU Compared to Pearl Harbor."

⁴⁰⁶ DiPaolo, "Lose 2nd Round in Landmark Proposal."

⁴⁰⁷ Letter to Cecil D. Andrus, from Arthur and Doris Krause et al.

⁴⁰⁸ Bills, "Introduction," 58.

⁴⁰⁹ Sheire, "Kent State May 4, 1970 Site," 21, 20, 27, 30-32, 35-36.

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- happened in a state where the governor called out the Guard more often than the other forty-nine states combined,
- took place in a deeply divided country, led by officials who used harsh rhetoric to characterize student dissent,
- evoked deep “passions” still intense eight years later and which will remain intense for many years,
- triggered interpersonal and community divisions and substantial counterprotests,
- spurred jingoism
- deeply affected the nation, as reflected in coverage by media such as *Time* magazine,
- and were “as important to our modern history as what happened at Boston on March 5, 1770, is to our Revolutionary history.”⁴¹⁰

The appeal concluded its list of reasons with the following plea:

The current Kent State Board of Trustees, and the University President, Dr. Brage Golding, have demonstrated an insensitivity to our grief and desires for justice that knows no bounds. Despite demonstrations and pleas of last summer, they have used the bulldozers to plough ahead regardless, and we can find no comfort whatsoever in their assurances that there will be no further desecration of the area where our children were killed and wounded.⁴¹¹

In March 1978, two Department of the Interior consulting committees determined that the case had not yet been made for national significance of the site and that not enough time had passed for proper perspective.⁴¹² During a third round of review in April, the National Park System Advisory Board also found that national significance for the site had not been established.⁴¹³ A letter of May 12, 1978, from Cecil Andrus to Howard Metzenbaum indicates:

The Board’s recommendation was that national significance for the Kent State May 4, 1970 Site has not been established and, therefore, the site does not qualify for designation as a national historic landmark. . . . The essence of establishing historical significance is perspective. Since this changes with the passing of time, specific events can be evaluated to determine their full impact on the broad sweep of American history only after the passage of sufficient length of time to achieve proper perspective. The consensus of those responsible for review was that there has not yet been time enough to reach a judgment on the national significance of this site.⁴¹⁴

The decision to build the gym annex represented more than a construction project. May 4th Coalition member Ken Hammond, an activist throughout his time at Kent State, commented, “‘It’s a contest over images. It’s a contest over who controls what we think, who controls our history. It’s a fight to gain back our roots, and our own understanding of ourselves and our past.’” When Joan Baez appeared at a May 4th Coalition rally on August 20, 1977, she noted, “‘There’s the idea that they’re putting a gym over the Vietnam War. I do believe that’s what is happening.’”⁴¹⁵ Evidence from another direction came when President Michael Schwartz went to Columbus to talk about the controversy with the powerful speaker of the Ohio House of Representatives, Vern

⁴¹⁰ “Appeal to the Secretary of the US Department of the Interior.”

⁴¹¹ Ibid.

⁴¹² DiPaolo, “Lose 2nd Round in Landmark Proposal.”

⁴¹³ DiPaolo, “It’s All Over for Landmark Appeal.”

⁴¹⁴ Andrus, Letter to Howard Metzenbaum.

⁴¹⁵ Bills, “Introduction,” 47, 52.

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Riffe, who told him: “If you don’t build the Gym Annex where it’s supposed to go, you’ll never get another building on campus. Is that clear?”⁴¹⁶ Senator Metzenbaum and Representative Seiberling’s request to review the site of the May 4 shootings as a National Historic Landmark also can be seen in this same light.

The Construction of Memory and History of the Kent State Shootings

Determining *significance*—as understood by historians, preservationists, and others interested in recognizing the importance of past events—generally draws on a perspective that develops over time. The meaning of an event often depends on its context among other events, its impact on society in the decades since the original incident, and the extent of commemorative activity it generates in the present. Noting that “many sites of violence are shaped to commemorate significant moments in the national past,” Kenneth Foote observes that such “commemoration cannot occur unless there is a past worth commemorating.” The process involved in giving meaning to the site of an event often involves its subsequent memorial treatment—via ritual activities, landscape preservation, and the construction of monuments—as a special place worthy of continued commemorative attention. The places associated with ongoing struggles, such as American independence, civil rights, labor equality, or the end of an unjust war, “may, over time, be sanctified to mark the course of such a struggle, but usually only after a movement has attained a portion of its goals.”⁴¹⁷ At this time in 2016, more than forty-six years beyond the shootings, those milestones have been reached and surpassed. As well as the measurable impact on national politics and policy examined above, commemoration of the event and the construction of memory of May 4 as a symbol began almost immediately after the shootings and continue to the present day. Documents and artifacts preserving the history of the event have been extensively archived. These resources have served as the foundation of permanent exhibits within the May 4 site that provide the public access to the history so that they may understand both the particular story and its context within larger patterns of US history. Response to events at Kent State also has become deeply embedded in US culture from the Vietnam era to the present. An understanding of at least some of these efforts is relevant to the construction of a social context for the May 4 shootings and its perceived significance to the national student protest movement.

May 4 Memorialization

The first program memorializing the May 4 shootings was held on the Kent State campus on May 4, 1971. A candlelight march and vigil was an important part of the program and has remained so for subsequent commemorative events.⁴¹⁸ Every year on the evening of May 3, a candlelight procession starts on the Commons at the Victory Bell and traces the perimeter of the campus. The march acts to enclose and sanctify the historic property. It ends at the B’nai B’rith Hillel marker in the Prentice Hall Parking Lot, into which the Guard fired. The Hillel marker was the first object installed within the site to memorialize victims of the shootings. At the marker, participants may say Kaddish and the Lord’s Prayer or engage in silent reflection and leave their lit candles in remembrance. Then begins a candlelight vigil organized by the May 4 Task Force. Those standing vigil take their place in turns within one of the four named spaces set off by lighted bollards (dedicated in the fall of 1999) where Allison Krause, Jeffrey Miller, Sandra Scheuer, and William Schroeder were fatally wounded and fell. The annual vigil lasts until 12:24 p.m. on May 4, the time that the Guard fired their rifles in 1970. The last four standing vigil proceed with their lanterns to the Commons for the commemoration speakers program. As described, the annual commemoration ceremony makes use of both contributing and noncontributing resources as focal points of remembrance. In addition to the Hillel marker and the marked places for each of the four martyrs, these include the Victory Bell, the Pagoda, and *Solar Totem #1*. The memorial dedicated during the twentieth commemoration in 1990 also serves as a place for quiet reflection.

⁴¹⁶ Young, “Tent City and the Decades of our Discontent.”

⁴¹⁷ Foote, *Shadowed Ground*, 28–31.

⁴¹⁸ Bills, “Preface,” 32–33.

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The Rev. Jesse Jackson, then director of Operation Breadbasket, was the keynote speaker of the first May 4 commemoration program, which was organized by the university administration. In his address, he linked Orangeburg, Kent State, and Jackson State, and exhorted the crowd to take action toward truth and action: “Charles Evers carried out the resurrection of his brother, Medgar, killed in the early ’60s, and people must now carry out the resurrections of those killed here and at South Carolina State and Jackson State.”⁴¹⁹ During the planning, institutional programming received pushback from the May Day Coalition, formed in February 1971, and its subgroup the Liberation Caucus. The coalition was a “mass organization,” with three to four hundred attending each meeting. The coalition and caucus pushed for alternate programming with freer opportunity than the university program promised to discuss the nature of the killings and need for attention to issues including sustaining the antiwar movement. One result of their actions may have been pop poet Rod McKuen’s pulling out of the program at the last minute.⁴²⁰ Other speakers included activists Dick Gregory and Julian Bond and James Ahern, former New Haven, CT, police chief and former member of the President’s Commission on Campus Unrest. Ahern told the Kent State audience:

“Those who thought they could buy off segments of the American public by giving them students as a target of hatred, and by correlating demonstrations with violence and students with anarchism have failed. . . .

We mark here the anniversary of four senseless, needless deaths. They, and their brothers at Jackson State and Orangeburg, were killed by the conscious, deliberate acts of other men.

The Commission on Campus Unrest, of which I was a member, recognized that too many Americans had begun to justify violence as a means of effecting change or safeguarding traditions, that too many of us had forgotten the values and sense of shared humanity that traditionally had united us. . . . We told the President that nothing is more important than an end to the war in Indochina. . . . That disaffected students see the war as a symbol of moral crisis in the nation which deprives even law of its legitimacy. And his response to this has been to sponsor an invasion of Laos and continue the slaughter. But most disheartening has been the lack of moral leadership . . . [and] decisions [that] tend to divide rather than unify the American people.”⁴²¹

Ahern’s words captured the honesty of confronting the truth of the killings at Kent State as well as their link to and the realities of the greater political and social spheres. Such an approach continues to characterize the annual commemoration.

In 1972 and 1973, the university program was organized by the Center for Peaceful Change (CPC). The Center for Peaceful Change, now the Center for Applied Conflict Management, was founded in 1971 by the Kent State Board of Trustees as a *living memorial* to the slain students. It provides a national leadership role and public service in promoting nonviolence and other democratic values. The May 4 Task Force (M4TF), a university-chartered and -funded student organization—founded in October 1975 by Kent State students and victims of the May 4 shootings Alan Canfora, Robby Stamps, and Dean Kahler—has planned and conducted the annual May 4 commemoration program for the evening of May 3 and the day of May 4 since 1976. Following the panel program on May 3, events move outdoors to the historic site. Each year’s commemoration, organized around an

⁴¹⁹ “Jackson Leads Crowd in ‘Battlecry for Peace.’”

⁴²⁰ Liberation Caucus, May Day Coalition, “May Day Coalition: ‘To Educate, Commemorate, Not Confront.’”; “McKuen Out.”

⁴²¹ Nichols, “Ahern, Brewster Speak at Memorial Services.”

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original motto, honors the memory of those killed and wounded both at Jackson State and Kent State.⁴²² The Task Force created its first theme—*The Truth Demands Justice*—in 1976, a time when justice and truth were being pursued by the May 4 families through the court system. Each year since then, each annually created M4TF theme aims to promote understanding of the important issues in the May 4 history, appears on new posters, buttons, and T-shirts, and guides the content of each Task Force commemoration program. “In addition to an annual focus upon May 4, 1970-related issues,” the Task Force “welcome[s] and expect timely commentary linking 1970 with modern issues each year.” Further, the Task Force strives to “respect all First Amendment rights guaranteed by the US Constitution especially Freedom of Speech because that was the central violation of student rights at KSU on May 4, 1970.”⁴²³

Every year since the shootings, Kent State has commemorated May 4, 1970. Over the decades, university-organized events have combined with the May 4 Task Force’s annual on-site commemoration to establish a long tradition of “social remembering” and “analytical history” making about May 4.⁴²⁴ Notable commemoration speakers have included: US Senators George McGovern and Howard Metzenbaum; US Congress members Bella Abzug (women’s rights activist), John Lewis (civil rights activist), and Tim Ryan; activists Julian Bond, Dick Gregory, Tom Hayden, Jesse Jackson, Ron Kovic, Russell Means, and Cindy Sheehan; photographer John Filo; journalists Juan Williams and Gwen Ifill; philosopher and linguist Noam Chomsky; filmmaker Oliver Stone; Governor Richard Celeste; attorney William Kunstler; musical artists Joan Baez, Gerry Casale, Country Joe McDonald, Crosby, Stills & Nash, and Peter, Paul, and Mary; and many more.

During the dedication of the May 4 Memorial on the twentieth commemoration, for the first time a public official, Governor Richard Celeste, apologized to “‘Dean Kahler, and all of those who suffered 20 years ago’ and to the four dead:

“To Allison Krause, your family and friends, I am sorry.

“To Jeffrey Miller, your family and friends, I am sorry.

“To William Schroeder, your family and friends, I am sorry.

“To Sandra Scheuer, your family and friends, I am sorry.”⁴²⁵

Poignant as they were delivered to four thousand in a heavy rain, the phrases echoed the traditional Jewish Prayer of Remembrance:

At the rising of the sun and its going down
we remember them.

At the blowing of wind and in the chill of the winter
we remember them.

At the opening of the buds and in the rebirth of spring
we remember them. . . .

⁴²² Bills, “Preface,” 33–35.

⁴²³ “May 4 Task Force Homepage.”

⁴²⁴ Lewis, “Social Remembering,” 177.

⁴²⁵ Lawless, “Rain, Tears.”

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As long as we live, they too will live, for they are now a part of us
as we remember them.

During the memorial dedication, Celeste shared his reaction when he heard about the shootings: “We had turned our weapons on our own children. . . . A distant war to save democracy had come home to threaten democracy.” Program speaker Senator George McGovern added, “The Vietnam War was the most ‘disastrous blunder’ in US foreign policy history.” He “called for a resolution of differences with Vietnam” and noted, “the killing has stopped, but we have not come to terms with the tragedy of the war.”⁴²⁶ The memorial dedication included the planting of 57,185 daffodils on the monument hillside to remember the US war deaths in Vietnam.

Organizing its twentieth commemoration program around the theme *Truth, Justice & Freedom . . . Yesterday, Today & Tomorrow*, the May 4 Task Force program for 1990 embodied both an honoring of the dead and wounded and the spirit of continuing protest and activism that continues today. On May 3, the Task Force staged *Kent State: A Requiem*, a fact-based play about the shootings through the eyes of the mother of Bill Schroeder, killed on May 4. For the noon program, commemorating those lost on May 4 were Allison Krause’s sister, Laurel Krause, and Gene Young, witness to the Jackson State shootings, Speakers also included SDS and Vietnam Veterans Against the War activists and a current activist from Tiananmen Square. Task Force members held a silent protest with two hundred participants at the memorial dedication, during which they displayed signs saying “Whose May 4th is it anyway?” and “Don’t minimize student death.” The latter expressed the group’s commentary on the dimensions of the built memorial compared to its scope in the design.⁴²⁷ The memorial was designed by Bruno Ast in response to a national competition opened in 1985. The memorial’s plaza, inscribed with *Inquire, Learn, Reflect*, ends in a “jagged, abstract border symbolic of disruptions and the conflict of ideas,” which also “suggests the tearing of the fabric of society.” Another main feature is comprised of four “pylons” oriented horizontally that decrease in size as they progress away from the plaza. “The pylons stand as mute sentinels to the force of violence and the memory of the four students killed.”⁴²⁸

For the thirtieth commemoration, the university planned an extensive program under the theme *Experiencing Democracy: Inquire, Learn, Reflect* and sponsored a national symposium on the topic “The Boundaries of Freedom of Expression and Order in American Democracy.” The conference represented the first Symposium on Democracy, dedicated to scholarship that seeks to prevent violence and promote democratic values and civil discourse. It was instituted as a second living memorial to honor the memory of the four students who lost their lives on May 4, Allison Krause, Jeffrey Miller, Sandra Scheuer, and William Schroeder. Democracy Symposium presenters have included prominent scholars and public figures, among them Kathleen Sullivan, dean of the Stanford Law School; *New York Times* columnist Anthony Lewis; Admiral James M. Loy, deputy secretary of the US Department of Homeland Security; activist Tom Hayden; Yale historian Jay Winter; Pulitzer Prize winner David Halberstam; political analyst Juan Williams; Jehmu Greene, then president of the Rock the Vote Foundation; journalist Hodding Carter III; and documentary filmmakers Edward Gray, Ken Burns, John Scheinfeld, and Chris Triffo. The thirtieth commemoration featured more than thirty other scholarly and cultural events, including an original Dance Alloy production performed within the site. Other events were lectures by Mahatma Gandhi’s grandson, Arun Gandhi, co-founder and director of the M. K. Gandhi Institute for Nonviolence, and civil rights activist Staughton Lynd; and a panel discussion on May 4 and Jackson State, sponsored by the Student Anti-Racist Action organization.

⁴²⁶ Ibid.

⁴²⁷ Ibid.

⁴²⁸ “May 4 Site and Memorial.”

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The May 4 Task Force organized its observance of the thirtieth commemoration in accordance with the theme: *Peace . . . Learn it. Live it. Teach it.* and a design featuring a recumbent military rifle with a stemmed flower rising out of it. These images alluded to both a famous photo taken during a sixties protest at the Pentagon showing a young man putting a flower in a soldier's rifle barrel and Allison's equally famously doing the same on May 2, 1970, saying to the officer who had removed it, "What's the matter with peace? Flowers are better than bullets." During the noon program, Barry Levine, Allison's boyfriend in 1970, read "Who Killed Allison? Why? What Had She Done?" his searing poem in the spirit of Bob Dylan, a favorite of Allison's. In it the character of President Nixon answers the title questions with:

Not me says Tricky Dick
 I listened to my advisors, take your pick
 Haldeman, Ehrlichman, Mitchell and Dean
 Agnew, and Colson, they all knew the scene
 Those college kids were bums—they needed a lesson
 So I put out the word around this great land
 To stop those damn hoodlums any way that you can⁴²⁹

The Task Force noon program also featured the airing of a taped speech by controversial figure Mumia Abu-Jamal, whose conviction for the death of a police officer has raised questions for some and who has published extensively on the treatment of prisoners. Other featured speakers included environmentalist Julia Hill Butterfly and Ramona Africa, the only surviving adult of a home firebombing by police in Philadelphia. Representing Jackson State were student shooting witness Gene Young and family members of slain students James Green and Philip Gibbs.⁴³⁰

A highlight of the fortieth May 4 commemoration was a ceremony recognizing the placement of the Kent State May 4 Shootings site on the National Register of Historic Places and the May 4 Walking Tour (the latter described below). Kent State participated via teleconference in Jackson State's own fortieth commemoration program. As the Symposium on Democracy speaker, Congressman John Lewis made clear to the audience the place of the shootings at Kent State within the long, and still necessary, struggle for civil rights:

Another generation of young people. Another generation of students and teachers. Another generation of men and women black and white had the courage, had the capacity, had the ability to get in the way. They put aside the comfort of their own lives, and they got involved in the circumstances of others. Allison, William, Jeffrey, and Sandra. And nine other students who were also wounded put aside the comfort of their own lives to get involved in the circumstances of others. They did not have friends or family in Cambodia. But they heard the call. They heard the voice. They heard the trumpets sound. And they responded. They heard the call of Martin Luther King Jr. and others who had spoken out against the war in Vietnam. They had seen the value that nonviolent peaceful protest can bring change in America. So they decided to get in trouble. They decided to get in the way. It was good trouble. Necessary trouble. But it was dangerous, very dangerous to speak truth to power in those days.

Florence Schroeder, mother of William Schroeder and a strong voice on the pursuit of truth and justice throughout the four decades since the shootings spoke during the May 4 Task Force noon program. She offered a message of hope:

⁴²⁹ Mike and Kendra's May 4, 1970 Web Site.

⁴³⁰ "A Learning Legacy."; "Mumia Abu-Jamal."

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I believe that our efforts to prevent another Kent State-type tragedy have been rewarded with a new resolve for peace on earth and good will. Bill was a poet and one of his last poems included the line: "Learning from the past is of prime consideration." I pray that we have all learned that lesson.

For the dedication, the future Kent State University May 4 Visitors Center printed a T-shirt with a quote from Allison Krause: "History must be made relevant to the present to make it useful." The student design also featured nine white doves arranged on a musical staff to represent the opening of the refrain in Crosby, Stills & Nash's "Ohio", a song written by Neil Young in 1970, and four white doves flying away. Designed by the same student, the M4TF T-shirt displayed its slogan, *Roots of Resistance: Continuing the Struggle*, and a design featuring four hands—three offering gestures emblematic of the sixties and the fourth a pair of open hands releasing a white dove. White doves were released during the noon ceremony.

An important component of the forty-third commemoration was the dedication of the May 4 Visitors Center. Events included a panel discussion moderated by Gwen Ifill that featured scholars and the lead creative designer involved in the seven-year process to create the museum. Oliver Stone delivered a keynote address in which he shared his thoughts on May 4 and "History and Memory in Film" based on his films that depict sixties-era events. Visitors to the center received a commemorative pin printed with four white doves flying into the distance and the motto *Be the change*, Gandhi's call to action, which appears on the final wall of the May 4 Visitors Center museum. The May 4 Task Force employed the theme *Come Together*, and its design featured a large peace sign superimposed with a pair of butterflies reaching down for the nectar in daffodils, at Kent State a flower of remembrance. In a program focusing on student activism then and now, featured speakers included William Ayers, Tom Hayden, and millennial advocate David Burstein. The Task Force also screened Daniel Miller's documentary *Fire in the Heartland*, the most thorough film treatment of political activism at Kent State from Black United Students and SDS through the May 4 shootings.

For the forty-fifth May 4 commemoration, the May 4 Visitors Center sponsored several programs over the course of the spring semester. The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum's Lauren Onkey, then vice president of education and public programs, examined Motown's response to the Vietnam War in "What's Going On: Marvin Gaye, Vietnam, and the Rise of Political Soul." The Wick Poetry Center offered a public workshop titled "Overcoming Trauma through Creative Writing," and advocate for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender rights Judy Shepard spoke on the legacy of her son Matthew Shepard. The May 4 Visitors Center and the May 4 Task Force co-hosted a screening of *Dick Cavett's Vietnam*, which features the May 4 shootings as one of the critical events of the Vietnam era. Keynote speaker for the Task Force's noon program on May 4 was activist Dick Gregory. Newly inaugurated Kent State president Beverly Warren delivered the first address during the noon program by a Kent State president since the annual commemorations began. The Task Force's forty-fifth commemoration theme—*The Persistence of Memory*—appeared on the front side of its T-shirt, with the phrase set between graphic representations of two of the parking lot bollards. The back of the shirt featured two white daffodils, emblematic of both the Vietnam War and May 4, with the stems intertwined.

As illustrated here, Kent State has a rich and vigorous tradition both of commemoration and of providing a forum to consider the significant and complex issues that are embedded in events like May 4 and continue to arise in democratic societies. This long tradition is yet another indication of the significance of the events that happened *in this place*.

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Accessing and Archiving the History of May 4

In 1978, in response to recommendations about recognizing the significance of May 4 following the Move the Gym protest, the university began to publish statements in the undergraduate and graduate catalog noting May 4, 1970, as a “‘pivotal moment’ in the institution’s history,” along with a brochure with the facts of the event prepared by faculty members Glenn Frank, Thomas Hensley, and Jerry Lewis.⁴³¹ Institutionalizing the history of May 4, by preserving the facts of the event and making them readily accessible to the campus and the public, became of even greater concern as the decades went by. Thus in September 2009, the Board of Trustees passed a three-part resolution of support for nominating the site for placement on the National Register of Historic Places, for the creation of an educational walking tour of the site, and for a museum recounting the history of May 4 in the context of the times. The museum would be located within the site—in the place where events happened—so that they could be best understood. The goal of all three parts of the resolution was to further the opportunity for *historical* understanding of the May 4 events, as an additional complement to the ongoing *social remembering* of the event. In his essay “Social Remembering and Kent State,” Jerry Lewis cites the terms *social remembering* and *history* (or *analytical history*) as employed by James Wertsch. The social remembering of May 4 is reflected in the long tradition of honoring those who were killed and wounded, at both Kent and Jackson State, as described above. Certainly, many elements of the commemorative programs and dedications are *analytical history* as well. Creation of the May 4 Walking Tour and the May 4 Visitors Center intentionally sought to follow a history model. Wertsch says that history is “objective” and “distanced from any particular perspective”; it “recognizes ambiguities”; it views “disagreement, change, and controversy as part of ongoing historical interpretation”; and it uses the “museum as a forum.”⁴³²

The May 4 Visitors Center museum is located in Taylor Hall in the heart of the 17.4-acre May 4 shootings site. Its permanent exhibit is comprised of three galleries. So that visitors can better understand the shootings, gallery one presents the context of the sixties in three subthemes: the struggle for social justice, the generation gap, and the Vietnam War. Gallery two discusses the shooting event itself with an original documentary, *Kent State: A Turning Point*, which shows through archival footage and still photographs moment by moment what happened on May 4. In gallery three, visitors understand that the reaction to the shootings was far reaching. Gallery three also illustrates the impact of the May 4 shootings, from Nixon’s decision to quickly withdraw troops from Cambodia to protests of today that show the importance of protecting First Amendment rights.

The May 4 Walking Tour extends the content of the indoor museum throughout the 17.4 acres of the site. The tour positions visitors to walk in the steps of history while accessing the best available facts of this pivotal event, made more understandable by the site itself. Content of the markers promotes understanding and appreciation of the patterns of US history, including these elements:

- intense social and political divides of the Vietnam era,
- practices of responding to civil disturbances,
- how tragic violence is not necessarily *inevitable*,
- the First Amendment in action,
- the importance of sound decision making from the executive to civil levels,
- risks of saying no to power,
- need for respect of diverse opinions and civil discourse, and
- protecting First Amendment rights by continuing to practice those rights.

⁴³¹ Bills, “Introduction,” 55–57.

⁴³² Lewis, “Social Remembering,” 177.

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The May 4 Walking Tour and the May 4 Visitors Center were created through a seven-year process from concept through fabrication that featured extensive consultation with and input from many hundreds of members of the Kent State and the city of Kent communities and dozens of scholars both from within the university and from institutions around the country.

Invaluable to the creation of the May 4 Walking Tour and May 4 Visitors Center are two substantial archival collections that in perpetuity will continue to ground ongoing research into the history of May 4. In Kent State University Libraries' Special Collections and Archives, there are three hundred cubic feet of boxed materials related to the May 4 shootings and their aftermath, the largest collection of primary sources pertaining to the event. First-person narratives and personal reactions to May 4 continue to be collected by the archives and by the Kent Historical Society from all manner of individuals and expressing all viewpoints.

The second major archival collection for May 4 research resides at Yale University. Yale University Library Manuscripts & Archives holds the ACLU of Ohio Kent State Project Records and an extensive Kent State Collection, which it describes in this way:

The collection consists of correspondence, manuscripts drafts, legal papers, clippings, issues of the Daily Kent Stater, interview transcripts, photographs and other material collected by Peter Davies, Paul Kean, Bill Gordon, James Munves and others concerning the disturbance at Kent State University and the shooting of Kent State students by members of the Ohio National Guard on May 4, 1970. The collection also includes a model of the Kent State campus.

Yale's Kent State Collection also features the papers of the attorneys for the victims' families who were plaintiffs in a federal civil trial in 1975. The collection contains the audio tape, a copy of a recording by former Kent State student Terry Strubbe that many accept as providing evidence of an order to fire by the Ohio National Guard on May 4.⁴³³

Social Response and Impact

Media Treatments of May 4

The May 4, 1970, shootings at Kent State University have been widely discussed and analyzed in a variety of media. There have been thirty books written on May 4 issues, in the categories of analysis, chronology, personal accounts, and fiction. The first book published on the event, *The Report of the President's Commission on Campus Unrest*, remains one of the most important for understanding facts and chronology and seeing the event in its social and political context. The report, which appeared in September 1970, was important as well to the many who were deeply affected by the shootings for its affirmation that the Kent State shootings were "unnecessary, unwarranted, and inexcusable." As importantly, the commission denounced the excessive use of force against student demonstrators at Jackson State and upheld the principle of the right of citizens to dissent.⁴³⁴ Two other early books still important to research today are Peter Davies' *The Truth About Kent State* (1973) and Joseph Kelner and James Munves' *The Kent State Coverup* (1980). Davies' book made the case through photographic exhibits that there was enough evidence to convene a federal grand jury. Kelner and Munves' book chronicles how that evidence and other arguments were used in the landmark federal civil trial in 1975. *Kent State & May 4th: A Social Science Perspective*, now in its third revised edition (2010), continues to

⁴³³ "Finding Aid Database"; "Guide to the Kent State Collection"; "Accession 1989"; Kaplan, "Library's Recording May Clarify Kent State's Killing."

⁴³⁴ Scranton et al., *President's Commission*, 289, 458–59.

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provide valuable insight into the legal aftermath and commemoration of May 4, as well as analyzing the 1977–78 protest to preserve the site. Two books deriving from the Symposium on Democracy that each offer a range of critical perspectives are *The Boundaries of Freedom of Expression & Order in American Democracy* (2001) edited by Thomas R. Hensley and *Democratic Narrative, History & Memory* (2012) edited by Carole A. Barbato and Laura L. Davis. *This We Know: A Chronology of the Shootings at Kent State* (2012) by Carole A. Barbato, Laura L. Davis, and Mark F. Seeman updates the chronology of the protests at Kent State, offers commentary on impact and meaning, and suggests further reading and viewing.

Another window into the events of May 4, 1970, and the culture that has developed around it are the documentaries about that day, its context, and its aftermath. There have been eleven documentaries made primarily for television, one made for radio, an unreleased feature film-length documentary—*Fire in the Heartland* by Daniel Miller—original documentaries for the May 4 Walking Tour and for the May 4 Visitors Center, and numerous other documentaries made by students and others. *Kent State: A Turning Point* (2012), the documentary screened in the May 4 Visitors Center received two national awards in 2013 from CINE (Council on International Non-Theatrical Events). Chris Triffo's *Kent State: The Day the War Came Home* (2000, re-released as *Thirteen Seconds*) won an Emmy for best documentary. James Goldstone produced an Emmy Award-winning television docudrama in 1981. Documentary filmmakers continue to focus the place of May 4 in US history. On April 27, 2015, PBS premiered *Dick Cavett's Vietnam*, which takes a substantial look at the shootings at Kent State, in the context of other key controversial moments in the Vietnam era, as illustrated in this review:

“Kent State,” which moves back and forth between Cambodia and the US to create a kind of dialogue between the war abroad and the war at home, is less an attempt to present every fact than to let you taste the urgency of the moment, to evoke a sense of colliding social tides and a country in division and disarray. Kent State is seen as a culmination of this conflict, and the beginning of the end of the antiwar movement.

It's a measure of those times that a woman, asked about the Kent State shooting, responds in front of a television camera, “I'm sorry they didn't kill more.” More than half the respondents to one poll blamed the students for the attack; only 11% blamed the people with the guns.⁴³⁵

On April 28, 2015, *Kent State: The Day the '60s Died* by Room 608 premiered on PBS, which offers this description:

This will be history as told by the people who were there: students and guardsmen involved in the shootings at Kent State, young soldiers fighting in the Cambodian jungle, construction workers battling anti-war demonstrators on Wall Street, survivors of the police shootings at Jackson State College, staff of the Nixon administration trying to manage a war in Indochina amidst an uprising at home.

During May 1970, frustration and anger split American society apart, and we still live in the aftermath of that rift.⁴³⁶

PBS promoted both documentaries as features in a week of special programming remembering the Vietnam War, in recognition of the fortieth anniversary of the end of the war with the evacuation of the US Embassy in

⁴³⁵ Lloyd, “Last Days in Vietnam.”

⁴³⁶ “Day the '60s Died.”

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Saigon. The promotion also looked forward to the expected release in 2017 of Ken Burns and Lynn Novick's *The Vietnam War*.⁴³⁷ As mentioned above, Ken Burns commented during his viewing of the May 4 Visitors Center that because of his experience of the exhibit, he would rethink his approach concerning the place of Kent State in the story of the war. His production team followed up by seeking information about specific research sources regarding the May 4 protests and shootings.

In addition to treatment by more than two dozen books and a dozen documentaries, there have been countless newspaper and magazine articles and features on May 4, 1970. Important works in 1970 included the *Akron Beacon Journal*'s special report on Kent State, which won the Pulitzer Prize for "Local, General or Spot News Reporting" in 1971. That same year, student John Filo won a Pulitzer for his photo indelibly etched on contemporary memory, which captures a kneeling young woman calling out over the body of Jeffrey Miller. Further measure of continuing interest in the legacy of Kent State is the online, print, and broadcast coverage by at least ninety media outlets of the opening of the May 4 Visitors Center. Many of these outlets, from all over the country, covered the story multiple times. One highlight was a feature by *The Wall Street Journal*, with a print version and a multimedia, interactive online treatment.⁴³⁸ In another story, interviewed about her experience visiting the museum, Gwen Ifill commented on how the May 4 shootings helped change Americans' minds about the war: "It was surprising to people and that's why people spent so much time searching for evidence of, you know radicals and communists and infiltration because they couldn't believe that this was happening here. And because of that, that was more proof than ever that the tide was turning on public attitudes toward the war."⁴³⁹ In response to another reporter, Oliver Stone, who like Gwen Ifill participated in the dedication of the May 4 Visitors Center, reflected: "Kent State is an example of our right to dissent. To make a statement about the morality of the war and the draft. It's about our democracy. I'm old enough now to be totally disillusioned. I mean, the Vietnam syndrome is buried in the sands of Kuwait and Iraq. This is an honor. It's making an effort to remember what happened."⁴⁴⁰

Artists' Treatments of May 4

Artists from around the world have responded to the shootings at Kent State. The best-known artistic interpretation of the Kent State shootings is the protest song and counterculture anthem, *Ohio* written and composed by Neil Young in May of 1970 in reaction to the Kent State shootings. It was performed by Crosby, Stills & Nash at the May 4 commemoration in 1997. The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum lists *Ohio* as one of the "Songs That Shaped Rock and Roll."⁴⁴¹ It was accepted into the Grammy Hall of Fame in 2008. Dave Brubeck's oratorio *Truth is Fallen*, which was released on LP in 1972, also had as its subject the May 4 shootings at Kent State. Kent State University professor emeritus of Pan-African Studies Halim El Dabh, an internationally recognized composer, wrote *Opera Flies* in 1971, as his statement on the Kent State tragedy. The best-known poem associated with the Kent State shootings is Yevgeny Yevtushenko's response to Allison's Krause's declaration "flowers are better than bullets" in his own "Bullets and Flowers," originally published May 1970 in *Pravda*, the official newspaper of the Communist Party in the former Soviet Union. During the twentieth commemoration of the shootings, more than three hundred poets from around the nation gathered at Kent State to share works that spoke to the events at Kent State and Jackson State. Of the published volume (*A Gathering of Poets*) that followed—the royalties for which go to Center for Peaceful Change and the Gibbs–Green Memorial Scholarship Fund at Jackson State—*Library Journal* wrote: "This book is a uniquely successful blending of social rage and literary art. . . . A significant, well-edited collection of historical and

⁴³⁷ "PBS Remembers the Vietnam War."

⁴³⁸ Porter, "Four Decades Later."

⁴³⁹ Ramirez, "KSU: Director Oliver Stone Helps Commemorate."

⁴⁴⁰ Michael Heaton, "Director Oliver Stone."

⁴⁴¹ Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

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literary value, this book will help readers come to terms with the Vietnam War (years).⁴⁴² In 1995, Sandra Perlman's play *Nightwalking: Voices from Kent State* debuted at the Terrapin Theater in Chicago. Professor J. Gregory Payne of Emerson College first premiered his play *Kent State: A Requiem* on the occasion of the donation of Kent State-related archival material to Yale University in 1976. The play has been toured nationally four times, performed at eighty different colleges and universities, and featured on the news and in special programming on NBC, ABC, and CBS. The novel *Hippies* (now an e-book) by Peter Jedick, a student at Kent State at the time, brings the era alive for many. Henry Halem, professor emeritus of art and President's Medalist at Kent State University, created a number of works in response to May 4. This body includes a series of stoneware masks that represent each member of a Special State Grand Jury convened locally that issued secret indictments in October 1970 for the demonstrations of May 1–4 against twenty-five students, nonstudents, and one professor, while exonerating the Guard and blaming the university administration and its faculty. In 2008, The Ohio Historical Society assembled an exhibit titled *The Kent State Shootings* featuring artifacts, photographs, and documents from the Society's collections as well as a gas mask, pistol, and rifle carried by Ohio National Guardsmen, and Alan Canfora's denim jacket with a bullet hole in the wrist.⁴⁴³ EA Meuser is one of many hundreds of artists who has created work on canvas and paper giving expression to the May 4 history. She continues to work on her series "In America's Wake" in monotype and painting, begun in 2008 and installed in the space in 2010 and 2011 for the future May 4 Visitors Center. The pieces reflect her "sentiments about life, motherhood and war."⁴⁴⁴ They contain moving interpretations of features of the historic landscape, such as Lilac Lane, combined with a treatment of figures that suggest timeless narratives of human experience.

Sculpture provides some of the more interesting artistic and powerful responses to the Kent State shootings. *Bridge Over Troubled Waters*, a fourteen-foot-high, abstract COR-TEN steel construction by Donald Drumm, which bears the inscription "In memory of the Kent Four and the Jackson Two," was installed at Bowling Green University in 1970. In 1978, the Mildred Andrews Fund commissioned for Kent State University a bronze sculpture by George Segal to commemorate the shootings. The university deemed the finished sculpture, titled *Abraham and Isaac: In Memory of May 4, 1970, Kent State University*, as inappropriate and declined the offer. The sculpture depicts the critical moment of the patriarch Abraham about to fulfill a divine obligation to slay his son, "an allusion to the moral dilemma inherent in the treatment of students by the state in Kent."⁴⁴⁵ *Abraham and Isaac* is now a permanent part of Princeton University's modern sculpture garden. The *May 4 Memorial* designed by Bruno Ast and the *Kent Four* sculpture by Alastair Granville-Jackson are both installed within the historic site. Two pre-existing sculptures on the Kent State campus took on additional meaning the day of the shooting. In January 1970, leading artist in the Earth Art movement Robert Smithson had participated in a student arts festival and created *Partially Buried Woodshed*. Meant to demonstrate "human arrangements of material objects as they face the challenges of natural systems and the mysteries of time,"⁴⁴⁶ the sculpture immediately gained an additional layer of meaning that summer when marked with the graffiti message MAY 4 KENT 70. According to John O'Hara, "the work had become an uncanny symbol of deteriorations in May 4 history and memory, and particularly so when the artwork was slated for destruction during campus expansion plans in 1974."⁴⁴⁷ The remains of *Partially Buried Woodshed*, now covered after being destroyed by university grounds crews, lie approximately one-half mile south of the boundaries of the historic site. Donald Drumm's *Solar Totem #1*, a towering monolith near Taylor Hall and on the historic site, formed a partial screen of COR-TEN steel between the guardsmen and students in the parking lot 250 feet away into which the Guard fired on May 4, 1970. The quarter-inch steel plate of *Solar Totem #1* was perforated by an M-1 round. "Transformed by history, the sculpture has become a relic of the war at home as it orients visitors to the positions of students and

⁴⁴² Quoted in Anderson and Gildzen, *Gathering of Poets*, back cover.

⁴⁴³ Barbour, "It Happened in Ohio," 1.

⁴⁴⁴ "In America's Wake 2011."

⁴⁴⁵ O'Hara, "Kent State/May 4," 311.

⁴⁴⁶ Lambert, "Significance of Famous Earthwork."

⁴⁴⁷ "Kent State/May4," 307.

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guardsmen on May 4 and makes apparent, with its hole, the tremendous power of bullets.”⁴⁴⁸ *Solar Totem #1* is regarded as a contributing object. The newest arrival as a donation to Kent State University is a 1970 sculpture by Bruno Lucchesi, a member of the New York art community that wanted to take action against Nixon’s expansion of the war into Cambodia. Deeply struck upon seeing John Filo’s iconic photo, Lucchesi created a fourteen-by-thirteen-inch terra cotta wall hanging sculpture in its image in remembrance.⁴⁴⁹

Constructing the memory and history of May 4, 1970, has taken a variety of commemorative, artistic, historical, scholarly, and cultural directions that extend across time and space. The passage of time, the construction of the monuments, and annual ceremonies, combined with the relevant issues of the present, all help clarify the significance of the historic landscapes associated with the violent repression of dissent. The common threads that tie these events and their significance together are nearly all present in the story of the May 4, 1970, Kent State Shootings. The preserved buildings, sanctified landscape, a dedicated memorial, the May 4 Visitors Center, and regular commemorations help connect the event, its victims, the survivors, the university, the community, and the nation to the voices and actions of protestor-citizens past, present, and future.

The May 4, 1970, Kent State Shootings Site evokes response. In this place, people remember the responsibility to honor those who have gone before. People also realize the meanings of what happened here—the greater patterns of history. Understanding these meanings builds possibility for productive social change.

The words that follow were shared by Kingman Brewster Jr., then president of Yale University, at the first May 4 commemoration in 1971. They express what citizens may continue to learn from this place and what happened here:

Kent State University’s campus is “especially fit ground on which to restore the honesty, the freedom and the openness which is essential, if change is to be accomplished by rational persuasion, rather than by violent confrontation. We will best serve the memory of those who died here, if we can convince our fellow citizens of two truths about our country: Violence is the enemy of constructive change, and the only way to prevent violence is to keep the door to change open.”⁴⁵⁰

Historic Context and Comparisons

what’s past is prologue

Shakespeare, *The Tempest*

The Kent State May 4, 1970, Shootings Site represents one of those singular events in American history where civic protest and tragedy combine as a pivotal moment for change. A thread of comparable tragic moments that have forced recognition twine throughout our history—reaching back to the founding of the country.

On March 5, 1770, a squad of British soldiers guarding a customs house fired on an angry Boston crowd, killing five and wounding several others: the Boston Massacre. Those arrested included eight soldiers, six of whom were acquitted and two found guilty of manslaughter.⁴⁵¹ The slain were seen “as martyrs to the cause of

⁴⁴⁸ O’Hara, “Kent State/May 4,” 314.

⁴⁴⁹ Lucchesi, letter to Beverly Warren.

⁴⁵⁰ “Ahern, Brewster Speak at Memorial Services.”

⁴⁵¹ Middlekauff, *Glorious Cause*, 206.

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American Liberty.”⁴⁵² While the place of the shootings is significant, its exact location has never been determined. Subsequently, the term *massacre* was used many times, in the nineteenth century often in reference to the Indian Wars and particularly in cases where unarmed women and children were purposely killed.

The Wounded Knee Massacre in South Dakota of two hundred and fifty to three hundred Lakota (Sioux) by the Seventh US Cavalry represents another clash of unequal forces with resulting tragedy. Here on December 29, 1890, United States military forces attacked a Lakota camp. Some of the Lakota were armed and returned fire. This was quickly suppressed, and the surviving Indians were ridden down and killed. Although Congress awarded seventeen Medals of Honor, photographs of soldiers posing over frozen corpses and “one long grave of butchered women and children and babies, who had never done any harm and were only trying to run away” showed a different reality. General Nelson Miles called for hearings and courts-martial, but there were no convictions.⁴⁵³ Wounded Knee, now a National Historic Landmark, signaled resignation to reservation life for Indians on the Plains. Through remembrance, though, it “became the rallying point for the Sioux uprising of 1973,” just as “the site of the Kent State killings in 1970 became a rallying point for the anti-Vietnam War movement.”⁴⁵⁴

The rise of organized labor in America provides another context for tragic violence and subsequent memorialization. The Haymarket Affair in 1886, the Ludlow Massacre in 1914, and the Matewan Battle in 1920 were all the result of increasing class awareness and the growing power of both corporations and an immigrant-based labor force.⁴⁵⁵

The roots of the Haymarket Affair can be traced at least as far back as the massive 1877 Railroad Strike, which ushered in an era of intense labor violence “as soldiers fired on their fellow citizens, railway cars burned, and the bodies of dead strikers lay strewn about the streets.”⁴⁵⁶ The carnage also radicalized the unions, whose membership was “outraged by the brutality of the police and the use of state and federal troops against workers,” and they armed themselves in self-defense.⁴⁵⁷ Haymarket itself was specifically a “revenge demonstration” in Haymarket Square, Chicago, for the killing by Pinkerton agents of six strikers advocating the eight-hour day at a May Day demonstration earlier that year. The Haymarket Square rally, sponsored by the Central Labor Union and attended by about four thousand people, was mostly peaceful until a bomb exploded. Seven policemen and four civilians were killed and many others wounded. Most of the casualties were attributed to the police firing wildly into the crowd following the explosion. Ten prominent radicals subsequently were arrested and tried for murder in a case where “the trial was about the political beliefs of the accused, rather than the act of murder.”⁴⁵⁸ All were found guilty and seven were sentenced to hang. In death they became martyrs for labor, representing “the persecution of the advocates of labor and the willingness of authorities to trample American traditions of free speech.”⁴⁵⁹ A Martyrs’ Monument was erected over the mass grave of the executed men in Forest Home/Waldheim Cemetery, signifying “one of the seminal events in the history of American labor.”⁴⁶⁰ The monument was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1997.

⁴⁵² Schlesinger, “Political Mobs,” 245.

⁴⁵³ Hillstrom and Hillstrom, *Defining Moments*, 72–76.

⁴⁵⁴ Jensen and Paul, “Wounded Knee,” 4. The Nixon administration rejected using force to evict the Wounded Knee occupiers “because it might result in another embarrassment such as the student killings at Kent State University,” Johnson, “Occupation of Alcatraz,” 71.

⁴⁵⁵ Painter, *Standing at Armageddon*, 50; Avrich, *Haymarket Tragedy*, 429; Corbin, *Life, Work, and Rebellion*, 245–47; McGerr, *Fierce Discontent*, 54–55.

⁴⁵⁶ Lears, “Gilded Age.”

⁴⁵⁷ Avrich, *Haymarket Tragedy*, 122, 160.

⁴⁵⁸ Bachin, “Haymarket Martyrs’ Monument,” 234–35.

⁴⁵⁹ Painter, *Standing at Armageddon*, 49–50.

⁴⁶⁰ Bachin, “Haymarket Martyrs’ Monument,” 4–8, 18–19; Foote, *Shadowed Ground*, 139–40; Avrich, *Haymarket Tragedy*, 436.

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Different from the Eight-Hour Movement, which covered broad national themes in labor relations that were at the center of contention at Haymarket, the Great Coalfield Strike and Ludlow Massacre involved issues connected specifically to the dangerous, low-paying conditions in Colorado's coal mines. The miners at Ludlow struck against Colorado Fuel and Iron, a company owned by the John D. Rockefeller and Jay Gould financial heirs. The miners were forced out of their company homes and into a tent city established by the United Mine Workers. The owners called on the Baldwin–Felts Agency to provide strikebreakers, many of whom then were recruited into the ranks of the Colorado National Guard. The harassment of the Ludlow tent camp culminated on April 20, 1914, when elements of the Colorado National Guard, along with a mix of strikebreakers and other law enforcement personnel, attacked the camp. When armed strikers began to deploy, the soldiers countered with dynamite and a gun battle commenced. In spite of attempts by the strike leader Louis Tikas to intervene, the shooting escalated as men, women, and children fled for cover. Late in the all-day battle, Tikas was killed and the soldiers burned the camp, trapping two women and eleven children in a pit under a tent, where they suffocated. The "Death Pit" provided a rallying symbol for the miners, and set off a conflict between miners and authorities that lasted nearly two weeks until President Woodrow Wilson sent troops to stop the fighting and end the strike.⁴⁶¹ Hundreds of strikers were arrested and ten National Guardsmen were court-martialed, but in the end "no one was convicted or punished for any of the crimes of the Colorado Coalfield War."⁴⁶² While labor injustices rarely drew much sympathy at the time, "the deaths of innocent women and children provoked outrage that extended far beyond labor, socialist, and progressive circles."⁴⁶³ Rockefeller faced harsh criticism and subsequently promoted a series of reforms that temporarily eased the worst conditions in the western mines and at the same time set the stage for Progressive activists like Upton Sinclair. The United Mine Workers purchased much of the Ludlow site, built a memorial, and, in doing so, created "an icon of industrial conflict" that marked "a turning point in the struggle for union recognition" and eventually symbolized "the wave of industrial violence that led to the 'progressive' era reforms in labor relations."⁴⁶⁴ The Ludlow Tent Colony Site was designated a NHL in 2009.

Coal was also the focus of the next major deadly encounter between labor and ownership, this time in the hills of West Virginia. The exact circumstances surrounding what was called the Matewan Battle are unclear, but on May 19, 1920, four months after John L. Lewis, the head of the United Mine Workers, announced a campaign to unionize West Virginia coal mines, Matewan chief of police Sid Hatfield and Mayor Cabell Testerman were confronted by strikebreakers of the Baldwin–Felts Detective Agency hired by the coal company to evict unionized miners.⁴⁶⁵ In the battle, Alfred Felts, two newly fired miners, seven detectives, and the mayor were killed.⁴⁶⁶ This sparked "a 28 month strike that led to over two dozen deaths, West Virginia's longest and most controversial murder trial, a United States Senate investigation, the retaliatory assassination of Sid Hatfield, and the largest armed civilian insurrection since the Civil War," culminating in the Battle of Blair Mountain.⁴⁶⁷ Matewan, like Haymarket and Ludlow, was a significant event in the growth of unions and labor rights in the United States. The martyrs in this case were Hatfield and Testerman, who had struck the first blow in this protracted confrontation and who had paid for their efforts with their lives. In the end, the union won, and, as Bailey notes, "not until New Deal legislation formally endorsed the UMWA's [United Mine Workers of America's] legitimacy did southern West Virginia's operators realize that although they had won the 1920–22 battle, they had lost the war."⁴⁶⁸ The Matewan Historic District was designated a NHL in 1997.

⁴⁶¹ McGovern and Guttridge, *Coalfield War*, 219.

⁴⁶² McGuire, "Terrible Unrest," 59.

⁴⁶³ Green and Jameson, "Marking Labor History," 6.

⁴⁶⁴ Walker, "Ludlow Massacre" 70–74, 67; McGuire, "Terrible Unrest," 62.

⁴⁶⁵ Bailey, *Matewan Before the Massacre*, 6.

⁴⁶⁶ Savage, *Thunder in the Mountains*, 14, 25.

⁴⁶⁷ Corbin, *Life, Work, and Rebellion*, 202.

⁴⁶⁸ Bailey, *Matewan Before the Massacre*, 256.

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The arc of protest and violent confrontation continues in American culture well after the labor protests of the early twentieth century and into the civil rights era of the mid-twentieth century. African Americans fought for their right to vote and to live their lives in a desegregated America, often with effective use of the tactic of nonviolent civil disobedience. The church bombings, police brutality, arrests, and pattern of white resistance in the South were particularly brutal. Many properties, including the Edmund Pettus Bridge, Selma, Alabama (NHL, 2013), the Lyceum–Circle District at the University of Mississippi in Oxford (NHL, 2008), and the 16th Street Baptist Church, Birmingham, Alabama (NHL, 2006) testify to this dynamic of active protest and resistance, often with tragic consequences. Although it is tempting to read an evolutionary trajectory into this recurrent test of citizenship and the right to dissent, even unto death, the quest for pattern, rather than an assurance of cause and effect, provides context, which may enhance understanding. From the Boston Massacre to Kent State to Black Lives Matter, resistance has taken many paths over the years. Affirming nonviolence as the path to social and economic justice, Martin Luther King Jr. understood that “a riot is the language of the unheard.” King implored America to listen, to *hear* the voices of the disadvantaged, the marginalized, the aggrieved and to make just change.⁴⁶⁹ The balance between free speech and the legitimate use of force is a critical and delicate one that bears constant awareness and renegotiation.

Comparatively, other properties pertaining to the broader civil rights movement possess sufficient significance and integrity to be recognized as National Historic Landmarks. However, properties pertaining specifically to the student protest movement either are not yet designated, or they are recognized for other reasons. Examples in the first category would include: the Edmund Pettus Bridge, Selma, AL (NHL, 2013), with a period of significance of March 7, 1965, to March 21, 1965; the Lyceum–The Circle Historic District, Oxford, MS (NHL, 2008), with a period of significance of 1962; and the Robert Russa Moton High School, Farmville, VA (NHL, 1998), with a 1950–1974 period of significance. An example in the second category includes Low Library at Columbia University, New York City (NHL, 1987), with a period of significance of 1800–1899. Low Library is designated for architecture, and there is no mention of the 1968 student takeover and associated protest movement. Similarly, the central campus of South Carolina State University in Orangeburg, South Carolina, was listed on the NRHP in 1996 as the South Carolina State College Historic District, with a period of significance of 1917–1969, but it does not include the portion of the property where the students were shot or highway patrolmen stood in 1968, and it now has seen additional construction resulting in a loss of integrity. The site of the Jackson State shootings also has seen considerable landscape modification and is not now an NHL or on the NRHP. In addition, Sproul Plaza at Berkeley and the Commerce Building at Wisconsin have not been nominated for inclusion on the NRHP or as National Historic Landmarks at this time. In sum, the Kent State May 4, 1970, Shootings Site, as a key place in the “forgotten movement”⁴⁷⁰ associated with student protests against the Vietnam War, is one of the best remaining places to connect with this aspect of American history. As a Vietnam veteran visitor to the May 4 site recently shared, it is one of two places he has cried. The other was the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

Postscripts

- I. *“No one told me that meetings were prohibited. But if someone had, I would have gone anyway, because in my heart I would have believed it to be a violation of my constitutional rights.”*
—Roseann (Chic) Canfora, Kent State student protester (“The Shootings at Kent State,” 360)
- II. *“If those children hadn’t applied pressure, nothing would have happened. Those children had a cause and were seeking justice.”*

⁴⁶⁹ King, “MLK: A Riot.”

⁴⁷⁰ Fendrich, “Forgotten Movement.”

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—Doris Krause, mother of Allison Krause (Clines, “Students From Then and Now Pass on Painful Lessons of Kent State”)

III. “*Flowers are better than bullets, that was pure hope speaking.*”

—Yevgeny Yevtushenko on Allison Krause (“Flowers and Bullets”)

IV. “*She resented being called a bum because she disagreed with someone else's opinion. She felt that war in Cambodia was wrong. Is this dissent a crime? Is this a reason for killing her? Have we come to such a state in this country that a young girl has to be shot because she disagrees deeply with the actions of her government.*”

—Arthur Krause to reporters outside his home the day after his daughter Allison was killed (*The 20th Century with Mike Wallace: The Legacy of Kent State*)

V. “*We implore you to consider the incalculable dangers of an unprecedented alienation of America's youth, and to take immediate action to demonstrate unequivocally your determination to end the war quickly.*”

—Letter sent to President Nixon from thirty-seven university and college presidents responding on May 4, 1970, to Nixon’s bombing of Cambodia on April 30 (McFadden, “37 College Chiefs Urge Nixon Move for Prompt Peace”)

VI. “*My phone would ring, and it'd be Motown wanting me to start working and I'd say, 'Have you seen the paper today? Have you read about these kids who were killed at Kent State?' The murders at Kent State made me sick. I couldn't sleep, couldn't stop crying. The notion of singing three-minute songs about the moon and June didn't interest me. Neither did instant-message songs.*”

—Musician Marvin Gaye (Ritz, *Divided Soul: The Life of Marvin Gaye*, 140)

VII. “*Discontent must either be met or suppressed; . . . to meet it is liberation and to suppress it is the end of liberty. . . . Dear God, help us, this war must end.*”

—Edward M. Kennedy (Cyler, *Edward M. Kennedy*, 162)

VIII. “*Four students were killed. The photograph of a young woman kneeling over the body of a dead student represented all that I and many others feared and hated about what was happening to the country . . . I wore a black armband in memory of the students who had been killed . . . I tried to explain the context in which protests occurred and the impact that the Kent State shootings had on Yale law students.*”

—Hillary Rodham Clinton, former US secretary of state (*Living History*, 45–46)

IX. “*When the President of the United States thus creates a national mood, I suppose one cannot be too surprised if the National Guard of Ohio fails to exercise discrimination. . . . I know Kent; I have often lectured at Kent State. It is the essence of an Ohio small town; the students are all from small towns or off the farms; nothing could be more square, unradical and midwest-American.*”

—Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., American historian (*Journals*, 323)

X. “*The killing of the students at Kent State electrified campuses . . . the country was in upheaval.*”

—Norma Becker, New York civil rights and antiwar organizer (“Harassing Antiwar Demonstrators,” 314)

XI. “*When students were killed at Kent State . . . I too began to speak out against the war.*”

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—Ron Kovic, Vietnam veteran and author of *Born on the Fourth of July*, in his speech to the Democratic National Convention (Moser, *The New Winter Soldiers: GI and Veteran Dissent During the Vietnam Era*, 123)

XII. “*It wasn’t until Kent State and Cambodia that I started getting active again. When they turned the guns against their own people here at Kent State, when I saw American people believing the lies about Cambodia, that was it.*”

—Jack McCloskey, Vietnam veteran (Stacewicz, *Winter Soldiers: An Oral History of the Vietnam Veterans Against the War*, 99)

XIII. “*The actual day that the Kent State thing happened we had a big brawl at the NCO [noncommissioned officers] club. . . . That’s what pushed me over the edge to some degree. . . . I went AWOL. I went to anti-war stuff all over the state and Washington, D.C. Eventually they court-martialed me. . . . I joined VVAW right after Kent State . . . and redoubled my activism.*”

— Bill Davis (Moser, *The New Winter Soldiers*, 108)

XIV. “*The Kent State thing went down, and I started to have the disturbing feeling that what went on in Vietnam was going to happen here in the United States—that cordon and search operations were going to go on here. Our country was going to be a military dictatorship and the same kind of crap that I participated in was going to come home to roost. That scared the shit out of me.*”

—John Kniffin, Vietnam veteran (Stacewicz, *Winter Soldiers*, 112)

XV. “*This is for the brothers and sisters at Kent.*”

—An anonymous Vietnam soldier as he solemnly tossed a handful of medals toward the US Capitol steps on April 23, 1971 (Moser, *The New Winter Soldiers*, 113)

XVI. “*Then Jackson State and Kent State and the invasion of Cambodia happened in early 1970, and I just got to where I felt I had to do something. I didn’t know what it was I was supposed to do; I just felt there was something I was supposed to do. The military was killing our babies. You don’t send the military into your schools. That was wrong. That’s what we had done. We knew it. It was a gut reaction. There wasn’t any analysis. There was just this overwhelming sense that what had just happened was very, very wrong. Something had to be done. We didn’t know what.*”

—Pfc. Mike McCain (Stacewicz, *Winter Soldiers*, 150)

XVII. “*Nixon, remember what happened to George III. We will make Kent State our Boston Massacre. The Continuing American Revolution is growing. The American Empire is falling.*”

—Tom Roberts (Moser 1996:168 quoting *Aboveground* Final Issue [May 1970], TL)

XVIII. “*Kent State happened, and I think that threw me for a loop. I could not deal with having these fucking scum beat people up and shoot them down. I knew right away what happened. It was very clear to me that they had just fired into this fucking crowd. I’d been in the military, and I knew what it takes to shoot at people. I said, ‘Man, there is no way that they didn’t do that on purpose. There is no way that you should open up on some kids throwing rocks.’ I just couldn’t deal with that anymore. Everything came home. I can’t get away. These fuckers are pushing me from all sides.*

I agonized over it for a few days and started asking around. I found out they were doing stuff over at the student center. I just walked in there one day and said, ‘Hi, I want to join up and do whatever. I don’t

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give a fuck what it is.' I identified myself as a veteran. I started doing different stuff like passing out literature. I felt like this has got to be done and I can't do anything else. It was an irresistible force."

—Bill Branson (Stacewicz, *Winter Soldiers*, 164)

XIX. *"After Kent State, there started being a lot of anti-war demonstrations at City College here in San Francisco. I started going to them, started looking at guys at demonstrations—some of them wearing fatigues, a little bit older than the students—started talking to some of them. About four of us started a group called Veterans for Peace."*

—Jack McCloskey (Stacewicz, *Winter Soldiers*, 215)

XX. *"Four young men and women had their lives taken from them while lawfully protesting this outrageous government action. We are going . . . to make sure that the powers of the politicians do not take precedent over the right of lawful protest."*

—Graham Nash (n.d.) commenting on the release of the song "Ohio"

XXI. *"Violence and hatred for the President, of an order probably never before seen in this country, exploded on campuses after this outrage. White House staffers looked stunned: heads were hanging; some said, 'Hell, it isn't worth it. Let's just bug out of the damn war.' . . . Kent State, in May 1970, marked a turning point for Nixon, a beginning of his downhill slide toward Watergate."*

—H. R. Haldeman, Nixon's chief of staff (*The Ends of Power*, 105, 107)

XXII. *"I thank God this amendment was submitted when it was, because as every Senator knows, in the turbulent days following the invasion of Cambodia and the tragedy at Kent State University, this amendment gave a constructive rallying point to millions of anguished citizens across this war-weary land."*

—George McGovern, US senator (*Congressional Record*)

XXIII. *"In some fashion as yet undetermined, the guardsmen opened fire on unarmed students and four of them fell dead. This shocking incident added to the growing furor over the continued killing in Indochina. The next day I decided that the time had come for a major televised attack on the Nixon war polices."*

—George McGovern, US senator (*Grassroots: The Autobiography of George McGovern*, 165)

XXIV. *"Metzenbaum was vocally against the war, while my questions focused mainly on its conduct. I don't know if the Kent State shootings made the final difference in the outcome, but I lost the primary by fewer than thirteen thousand votes."*

—John Glenn, US senator (*John Glenn: A Memoir*, 325)

XXV. *"Rhodes also may have been hurt by the killing of four Kent State students the day before the primary. He had successfully opposed hard-line state legislation against student protesters, and Taft headquarters criticized Rhodes for that opposition only hours after National Guardsmen—ordered to Kent State by Rhodes—shot the students. On the issue of campus violence, Rhodes had no way he could possibly win. He was damned because he did and damned because he didn't."*

—"Primaries: Upset Time" (17)

XXVI. *"For many of us there is little to remember but the promises and . . . the loss of the symbols of those promises—of John and Robert Kennedy, of Martin Luther King, Jr., of Medgar Evers, of Fred Hampton, and Malcolm X, of Allison Krause, Sandy Scheuer, Jeffrey Miller, and William Schroeder from Kent*

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State, and Philip Gibbs and James Green from Jackson State: the loss too of friends, the fifty-three thousand Americans who have lost their lives in this degrading and immoral war.”

—John Kerry, US secretary of state (Moser, *The New Winter Soldiers*, 12–13)

XXVII. *“Our tragedy should never dissuade us from teaching young people not to be afraid to raise their voices, singly or in groups, when they believe their cause is just.”*

—Henry Halem, professor of art, Kent State University (Dionne, “After Twenty Years, Apologies for Kent State Dead”)

XXVIII. *“How America accepts and understands Kent State will tell us the answer to the question, does America work?”*

—Charlie Rangel, US congressman (“Kent State Reopened,” 12)

XXIX. *“From Vietnam to Cambodia, from Los Angeles to Memphis, from Kent State to Watergate, the American spirit suffered under one shock after another, and the confidence of our people was deeply shaken.”*

—President Jimmy Carter (“Transcript of Speech Given at the Dedication of the JFK Library, Boston,” 1981)

Conclusion

May 4 was a *course-altering* event, a profound shock to the American conscience. It changed the paths of American history, policy, and conduct of the Vietnam War and fundamental approaches and attitudes to civil disobedience and protest. As such, it was in many respects unique. None of the previous campus demonstrations or subsequent events had a comparable impact. The Kent State site is of such transcendent import and impact and retains integrity enough to convey the significance of the events of May 1–4, 1970, and 1977–1978 that it deserves recognition as a National Historic Landmark.

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- Preliminary Determination of Individual Listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- Previously Listed in the National Register. NR# 10000046, Listed 02/23/2010
- Previously Determined Eligible by the National Register.
- Designated a National Historic Landmark.
- Recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey: #
- Recorded by Historic American Engineering Record: #

Primary Location of Additional Data:

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State Agency
- Federal Agency
- Local Government
- University
- Other (Specify Repository):

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10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreage of Property: 17.24 acres

UTM References:	Zone	Easting	Northing
A	17	470829	4555647
B	17	471293	4555721
C	17	471410	4555517
D	17	471271	4555259
E	17	470881	4555379

Verbal Boundary Description:

The site boundaries are shown by the yellow line on the attached map entitled, "May 4, 1970 Kent State Shootings Site, Portage County, Ohio: 2007 Landforms and Buildings, May 1970 Shooting Victims, and Keyed Locations of Historic Photographs Supporting Site Boundary Justification."

Northern boundary: The May 4 Shootings Site on the campus of Kent State University is defined here in clockwise fashion, beginning with a point at the southeast corner of the Center for Visual Arts (which at this corner includes the former Heating Plant) and continuing eastward along the southwest elevation of Oscar Ritchie Hall. Moving eastward, the property boundary is defined by the southern margin of Lilac Lane. The boundary then continues east, following Lilac Lane to a point adjacent to the northwest corner of Prentice Hall, where it makes an approximately ninety-degree turn to the south along an unnamed walkway to the southwest corner of Prentice Hall. From the southwest limit of Prentice Hall, the property boundary continues east, following the southern limit of Prentice along a line that continues to the western margin of Midway Drive, with one small turn to the east to include a small block on the eastern side of Midway Drive coincident with the location where Kent State student D. Scott Mackenzie was shot.

Eastern boundary: The property continues south along Midway Drive to a point coincident with the former location of the northeastern corner of an eight-foot-high barrier fence that formed the northeast corner of the Practice Field in 1970. The eastern boundary of the property then continues south along the eastern margin of the former Practice Field fence to the point where it turned ninety degrees to the west and then southwest to a point where there was an area of construction in 1970 associated with the building of the Kent Student Center. The boundary then roughly follows, with several angular turns, the eastern and southern edges of the noncontributing gym annex building.

Southern boundary: The extreme southern boundary of the property extends westerly from the Kent Student Center location for approximately 350 feet to the southeast corner of Lake Hall.

Western boundary: From the southeast corner of Lake Hall, the boundary extends northwesterly to the eastern elevation of the Stopher-Johnson dormitory complex and then follows the outline of this building before extending in a line northwesterly to a point coincident with the southeast corner of the post-1970 Art Building. From this point, the boundary extends along the eastern elevation of the Art Building and then northwest across the Art Building parking lot to the southeast corner of the Center for Visual Arts (formerly the corner of the Heating Plant), closing the perimeter to the north. Altogether, the property boundary encloses 17.24 acres of land.

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Boundary Justification:

The physical boundary of the May 4, 1970, Kent State Student Shootings Site is defined by the actions of the student protestors, the Ohio National Guard, and an active audience on the morning and early afternoon of May 4, 1970, the first period of significance, on the campus of Kent State University. The core area of the Move the Gym protests of 1977, the second period of significance, also lies within this area.

The proposed National Historic Landmark site boundary is drawn to encompass, but not exceed, the full extent of both of the periods of significance. The boundary is coincident with the core area of the May 4, 1970, events, except in that small area (.38 acres) of the site that has been impacted by a portion of the Art Building constructed in 1972. Included within the boundary are the locations of major actions and the key features involved that allow for the remaining setting to convey its significance. This setting is important to understanding what the participants experienced and in explaining how the physical features determined or influenced actions during the two periods of significance. The proposed NHL boundary is the same as that of the 2010 NRHP listing.

The Stopher-Johnson buildings are located outside the western boundary of the NHL. The original Stopher-Johnson complex, where students gathered on May 4, 1970, to observe the activity on the Commons, was demolished to make way for the newly constructed Stopher-Johnson residence halls on a comparable footprint. However, these buildings still provide a historic setting for the NHL.

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11. FORM PREPARED BY

Name/Title: Laura L. Davis, Professor Emeritus of English, Kent State University; Mark F. Seeman, Professor Emeritus of Anthropology, Kent State University; Bradley S. Keefer, Associate Professor of History, Kent State University; Mindy J. Farmer, Director, Kent State University May 4 Visitors Center; Lori Boes, Assistant Director, Kent State University May 4 Visitors Center. This form uses as its base the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form for the May 4, 1970, Kent State Shootings Site (2010) prepared by Mark Seeman; Laura Davis; Carole A. Barbato, Professor Emeritus of Communication Studies, Kent State University, and Jerry M. Lewis, Professor Emeritus of Sociology.

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NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS PROGRAM

November 22, 2016

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Photograph 1. The Commons looking south to the Victory Bell, Taylor Hall, and Blanket Hill.
Photo by Mark Seeman, December 2006.

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Photograph 2. Blanket Hill summit south of Taylor Hall and looking west toward the *Solar Totem #1* sculpture and the Pagoda.

Photo by Mark Seeman, December 2006.

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Photograph 3. The Prentice Hall Parking Lot (contributing structure) facing west toward the gym annex with Sandy Scheuer death site marker at right.
Photo by Mark Seeman, July 2008.

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Photograph 4. The Prentice Hall Parking Lot and slope to the Practice Field area with Jeffrey Miller death marker (noncontributing object) in foreground, facing southeast. Photo by Mark Seeman, December 2006.

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Photograph 5. The Practice Field (remnant) looking toward the gym annex (noncontributing building), facing southeast.

Photo by Mark Seeman, January 2007.

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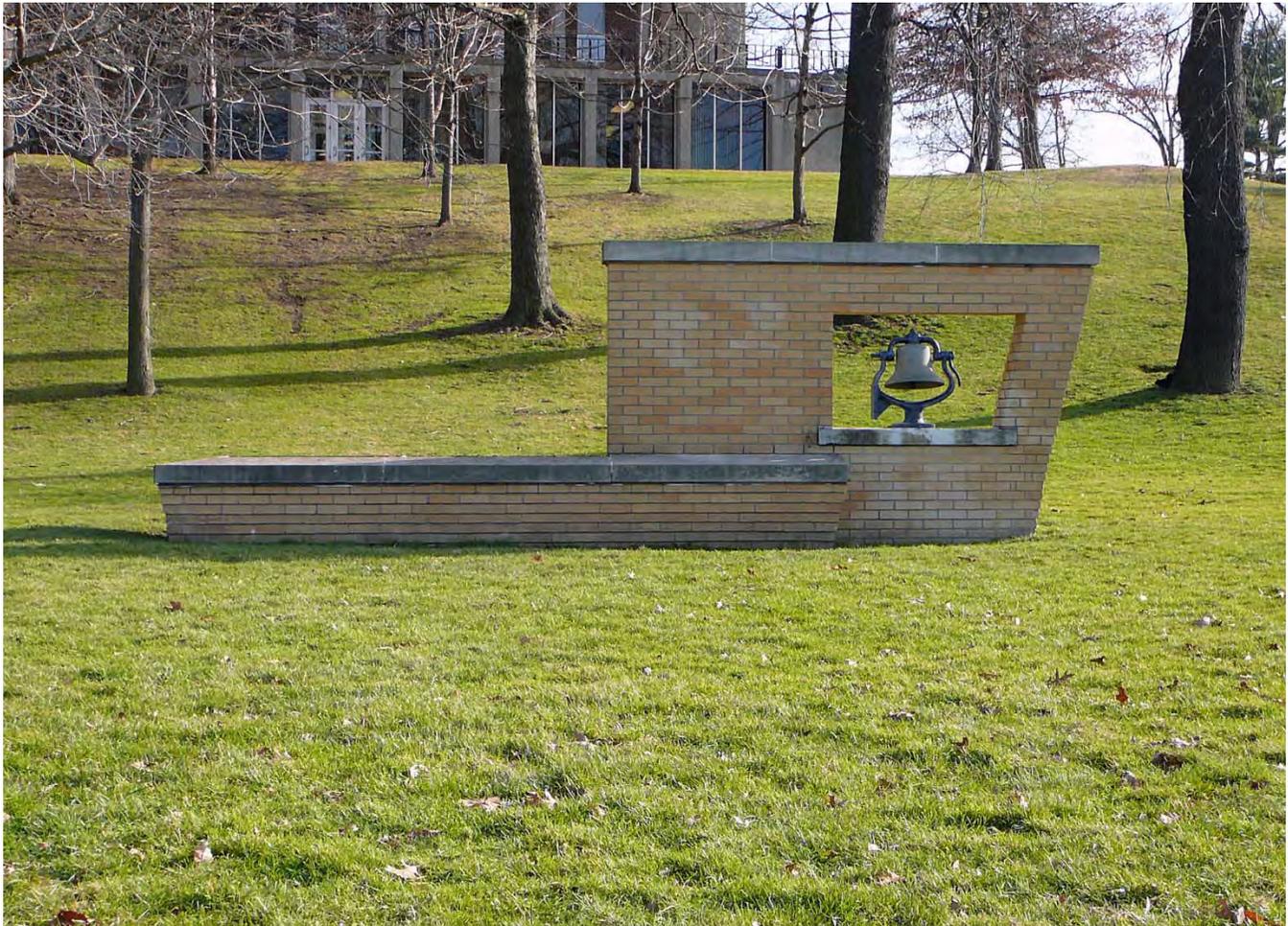
Photograph 6. Contributing building, Taylor Hall, facing southeast
Photo by Mark Seeman, December 2006

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Photograph 7. Contributing object, Victory Bell, facing south southeast
Photo by Mark Seeman, December 2006.

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Photograph 8. Contributing structure, Lilac Lane northern boulder marker, facing east, (Lilac Lane extends southeast).

Photo by Mark Seeman, December 2006

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Photograph 9. Contributing object, the Pagoda, facing south.
Photo by Mark Seeman, December 2006.

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Photograph 10. Contributing object, *Solar Totem #1* sculpture with Prentice Hall Parking Lot in background, facing northeast.

Photo by Mark Seeman, January 2007.

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Photograph 11. The May 4 Memorial (noncontributing) was dedicated on May 4, 1990, and was accompanied by "the first official apology to each of the dead students and their families for the actions of the state of Ohio," from Governor Richard Celeste, facing north.

Photo by Mark Seeman, October 2009.

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Photograph 12. May 4 Walking Tour trail marker #6 (noncontributing), one of seven markers installed within the site in 2010, facing southeast.

Photo by Mark Seeman, September 2015.

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Photograph 13. The B'nai B'rith Hillel marker (contributing object) is a part of the annual commemorative Candlelight March on the Kent Campus, facing southeast.
Photo by Mark Seeman, September 2015.

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Historic Image 1. May 4, 1970: On left, students gather at the Victory Bell on the Commons for the noon rally. (Photo © John P. Filo.)

Contemporary view on right shows Victory Bell, Commons, Blanket Hill, Taylor Hall, Stopher-Johnson complex, facing south.

(Photo courtesy of Mark F. Seeman, 2006.)

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Historic Image 2. May 4, 1970: Students move off the Commons as the Guard moves out from the site of the burned ROTC building. Alan Canfora holds flag and Bill Schroeder holds books under his arm in center of photo.

(Photo © John P. Filo.)

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Historic Image 3. May 4, 1970: View of students retreating along west side of Taylor Hall, facing east. (Photo courtesy of Kent State University Libraries, Special Collections & Archives.)

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Historic Image 4. May 4, 1970: Guard in kneeling position on Practice Field, with demonstrators in Prentice Hall Parking Lot in foreground.

(Photo by Beverly Knowles Burger for which permission was requested and granted for inclusion in the nomination of the May 4 site for National Historic Landmark status.)

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Historic Image 5. May 4, 1970: On left, guardsmen kneel and point weapons at students.
(Photo © John. P. Filo.)

On right, contemporary view of the Practice Field area showing east elevation of the gym annex, facing south.
(Photo courtesy of Mark F. Seeman, 2007.)

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Historic Image 6. May 4, 1970: Guard in kneeling position on Practice Field, with Alan Canfora waving flag. (Photo © John. P. Filo.)

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Historic Image 7. May 4, 1970: On left, guardsmen reclimb Blanket Hill, moving north toward the Pagoda. (Photo courtesy of Harold Walker family.)

On right, contemporary view of the south slope of Blanket Hill facing southwest and showing northeast elevation of gym.

(Photo courtesy of Mark F. Seeman, 2006.)

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Historic Image 8. May 4, 1970: Members of Troop G on the right flank look toward the Prentice Hall Parking Lot as they reascend Blanket Hill.

(Photo © John P. Filo.)

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Historic Image 9. May 4, 1970: On left, the Guard moving north near the crest of Blanket Hill at the Pagoda, a moment before turning and shooting. John Cleary stands in center of sidewalk, near *Solar Totem #1* sculpture. (Photo © John P. Filo.)

On right, contemporary view of the Pagoda and *Solar Totem #1*. (Photo courtesy of Mark F. Seeman, 2006.)

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Historic Image 10. May 4, 1970: The Guard wheels to the east and shoots from the Pagoda position, 12:24 p.m. (Photo © John A. Darnell Jr.)

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Historic Image 11. May 4, 1970: As guardsmen shoot, students flee and flatten to the ground, Prentice Hall Parking Lot and adjacent slope.

(Photo courtesy of Kent State University Libraries, Special Collections & Archives.)

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Historic Image 12. May 4, 1970: Seconds after guardsmen have shot from the Pagoda (upper right) into the Prentice Hall Parking Lot, viewed from Prentice Hall. Numbers mark where those who died fell: 1. William Schroeder; 2. Sandra Scheuer; 3. Jeffrey Miller; and 4. Allison Krause.

(Photo by Beverly Knowles Burger for which permission was requested and granted for inclusion in the nomination of the May 4 site for National Historic Landmark status.)

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Historic Image 13. May 4, 1970: Mary Vecchio calls out over the body of Jeffrey Miller in this now iconic photograph recognized with the Pulitzer Prize.

(Photo © John P. Filo.)

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Historic Image 14. May 4, 1970: Students at barrier between Oscar Ritchie Hall and Heating Plant in foreground, Guard lined up at ROTC site in middle ground, and students staging sit-in to protest shootings in upper ground.

(Photo permission courtesy of Don Roesse/Akron Beacon Journal.)

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Historic Image 15. Move the Gym: Protestors during the Move the Gym protest establish and reside in Tent City on Blanket Hill from May 12 through July 12, 1977. Here, late May 1977. (Photo © John P. Rowe.)

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Historic Image 16. Move the Gym: A nightly meeting of the May 4th Coalition in Tent City, covered by numerous news crews, as the July 12, 1977, mass arrests approach.

(Photo courtesy of Kent State University Libraries, Special Collections & Archives.)

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Historic Image 17. Move the Gym: Kent State University police remove 193 protestors occupying the proposed gym annex site on July 12, 1977. Among the first to be arrested, in the front row, Martin (center, in yellow shirt) and Sarah Scheuer (parents of Sandra Scheuer), and to their right, Albert and Anna Canfora (parents of Alan Canfora), Rev. John Adams, and Richard Boyle.
(Photo © John P. Rowe.)

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Historic Image 18. Move the Gym: Joan Baez rallies with 3000 on the Commons, August 20, 1977, to support the preservation of Blanket Hill. On stage, linked in solidarity, are (left to right) Arthur Krause (father of Allison Krause), Rev. John Adams, Sarah and Martin Scheuer (parents of Sandra Scheuer), Anna and Albert Canfora (parents of Alan Canfora), and Robert Baker (attorney). (Photo © John P. Rowe.)

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Historic Image 19. Move the Gym: A national rally on the Commons of about 3000, most of them students who travelled from Boston, New York City, Chicago, Iowa, and elsewhere to support the protest to preserve the site, September 24, 1977.

(Photo courtesy of Sonny Canfora.)

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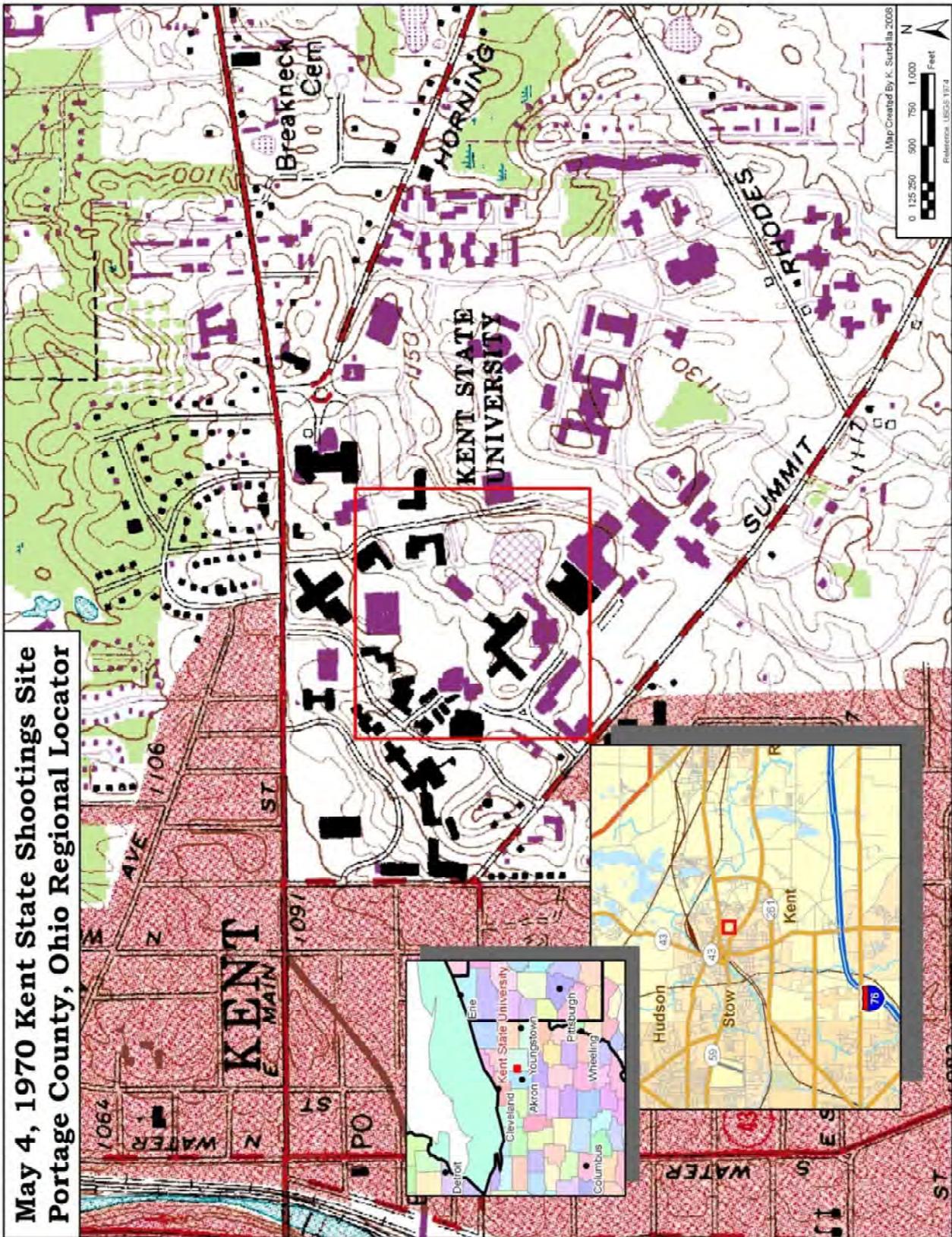
Historic Image 20. Move the Gym: Following the May 4, 1978, commemoration, demonstrators line the top of Blanket Hill and police line the fence surrounding the gym annex excavation site. Here, the sides face off after some activists attacked the fence and police fired tear gas. (Photo courtesy of Sonny Canfora.)

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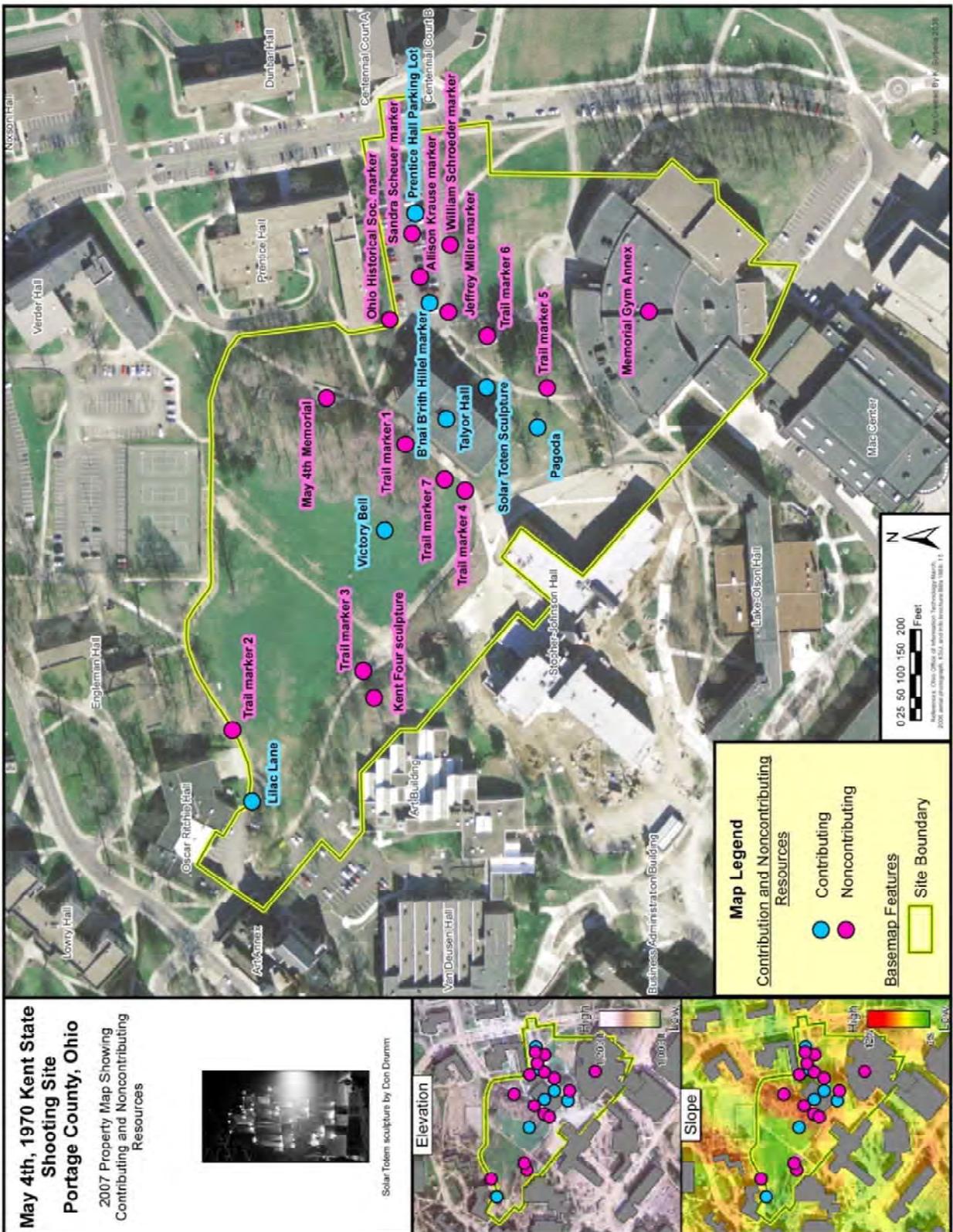


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Map 2. Property map of May 4, 1970, Kent State Shootings Site, Portage County, Ohio: showing contributing and noncontributing resources

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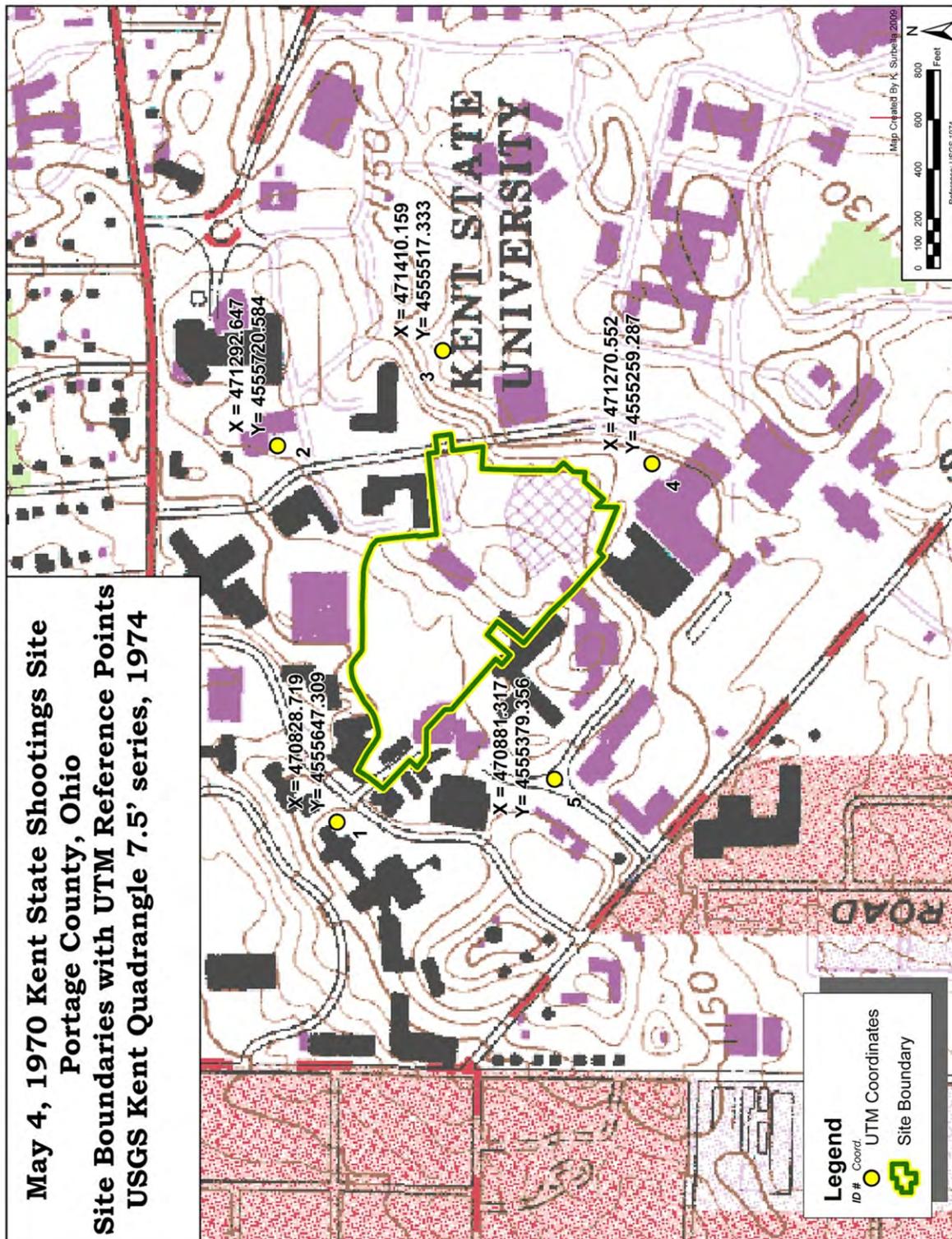


Map 3. Map of May 4, 1970, Kent State Shootings Site, Portage County, Ohio: historic 1970 map with troop movements, major positions, firing trajectories, and locations of students killed and wounded.

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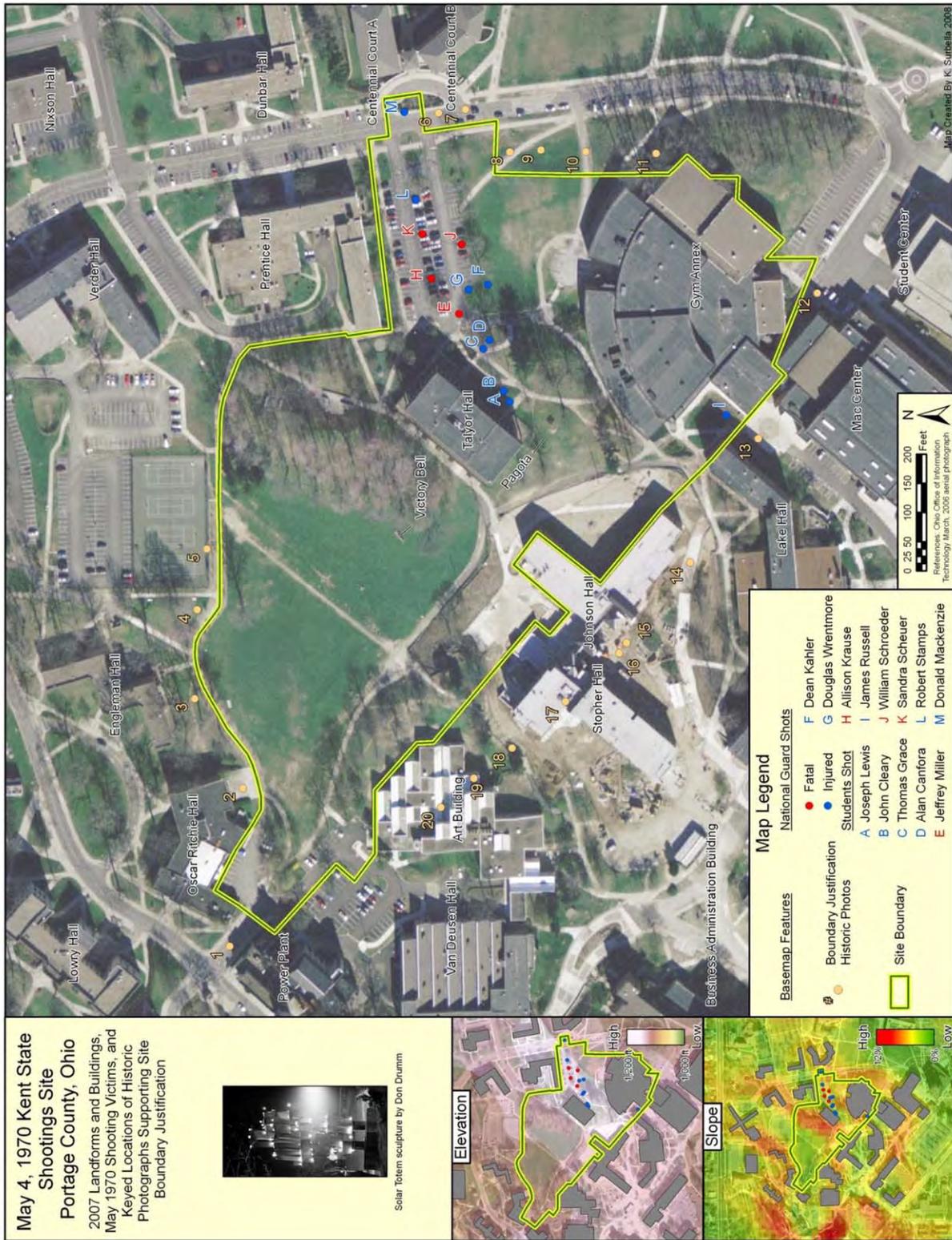
Map 4. Map of May 4, 1970, Kent State Shootings Site, Portage County, Ohio: site boundaries with UTM reference points, USGS Kent Quadrangle, 7.5 series, 1974.

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Map 5. Map of May 4, 1970, Kent State Shootings Site, Portage County, Ohio: boundary justification supported by key 1970 historic photographs and showing site boundary, locations of killed and wounded students, and modern landforms and buildings.