Humanities Grant Program

“The Reconstruction of American Memory: Civic Monuments of the Civil War”
USCeRA # 13550-13-1542
Grant Award: $14,500
Final Report
July 7, 2015

Thomas J. Brown
Professor, Department of History
College of Arts and Sciences, USC Columbia
803.777.2341
tjbrown@sc.edu
Summary
This grant awarded the $14,500 that I requested for the 2013-14 and 2014-15 academic years, of which I sought $10,000 for course releases and $4500 for acquisition of images and the rights to publish them as illustrations in a scholarly monograph. The course releases in Spring 2014 led to substantial progress toward completion of the book. This internal funding leverage enabled me to win a prestigious residential fellowship at the National Humanities Center for the 2015-2016 academic year, during which I will finish the manuscript. I request an extension until June 30, 2017, of the time period for expenditure of the $4500 fund for images and publication rights.

Activities and Accomplishments during Grant Period
*The Reconstruction of American Memory: Civic Monuments of the Civil War* is an ambitious examination of war memorials unveiled from the 1860s through the 1930s. The book is the culmination of long term research on Civil War commemoration that has recently resulted in the publication of my monograph *Civil War Canon: Sites of Confederate Memory in South Carolina* (University of North Carolina Press, 2015) and that previously generated several edited volumes: *Remixing the Civil War: Meditations on the Sesquicentennial* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011), *Reconstructions: New Perspectives on the Postbellum United States* (Oxford University Press, 2008), *The Public Art of Civil War Commemoration: A Brief History with Documents* (Bedford Saint Martin’s, 2004), and *Hope and Glory: Essays on the 54th Massachusetts Regiment* (University of Massachusetts Press, 2001). In addition to the upcoming National Humanities Center fellowship, *The Reconstruction of American Memory* has received external support from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the National Gallery of Art, the American Antiquarian Society, and the Gilder-Lehrman Institute of American History.

The book consists of five core chapters, of which I drafted Chapter 5 (“The Great War and Civil War Memory”) prior to the grant period. The course releases funded by the grant during Spring 2014 enabled me to write a polished draft of Chapter 1 (“The Invention of the Soldier Monument”) and a solid draft of half of Chapter 2 (“Models of Leadership”) before the start of the 2014-15 academic year, in which I taught a full load. These materials were essential to my successful application for a National Humanities Center fellowship. I have returned to full-time work on the project and expect to have drafted four of the five core chapters before taking up residency at the center on September 1.

In addition to the decision to seek external funding for 2015-16 to facilitate completion of a better book, several other research-related developments impinged on my ability to maintain the schedule I anticipated in my grant proposal. The editing of *Civil War Canon* proved more time-consuming than I expected. I also took advantage of two unforeseen opportunities related to my work on *The Reconstruction of American Memory*. The Center for Advanced Study in the Visual Arts at the National Gallery of Art invited me to deliver a paper at a November 2013 symposium on “The Civil War in Art and Memory,” which offered an occasion to reflect more fully on one of the most important Civil War monuments, Augustus Saint-Gaudens’s memorial to Robert Gould Shaw and the 54th Massachusetts Infantry Regiment. After the symposium I prepared a more formal and thorough version of this talk, which will be included in an essay collection to be
published by the National Gallery of Art and Yale University Press in early 2016. That work has completed all stages of the editorial process.

The second unexpected research opportunity developed after it occurred to me to make my Fall 2014 undergraduate course on the Civil War and Reconstruction era an important part of the February 2015 observance of the sesquicentennial anniversary of the burning of Columbia. With assistance from my students I prepared a “live tweeting” of Sherman’s March from Savannah through Columbia that the Historic Columbia Foundation (HCF) sent out from January 15 to February 20. This project built on my work with HCF in reinterpreting the Woodrow Wilson Family Home, recently recognized with a South Carolina Heritage Tourism Honor Award and merit awards from the American Association of State and Local History, the South Carolina Federation of Museums, and the Confederation of South Carolina Local Historical Societies. The students’ exercise in this digital form of historical scholarship attracted considerable local media attention. As an extension of that project, I delivered a public lecture sponsored by HCF in February 2015 on the topic of “Monuments and Ruins: Atlanta and Columbia Remember Sherman.” I have since prepared a more formal and thorough version of that lecture and submitted it to a leading journal in my field.

Conclusion
The prospects for finding a first-rate academic publisher for The Reconstruction of American Memory are excellent, but illustrations will be a substantial financial challenge. As I reported in my grant application, the most comparable scholarly books include approximately 125 illustrations. My drafted chapters indicate that my book will be in the same range. I estimate that as many as fifty of the illustrations will come from the Library of Congress or other sources that will not charge fees for digital files or publication permission. I estimate that the other seventy-five images will cost approximately $60 apiece, for a total of $4500.

Acquisition of images and securing of publication rights ordinarily follows the formal acceptance of a manuscript by the governing board of a university press at the end of the evaluation process. For a manuscript submitted on the conclusion of my fellowship at the end of May 2016, a reasonable projection of the review process suggests that I would begin to collect images and rights toward the end of the calendar year. I accordingly request an extension until the end of the 2016-17 fiscal year of the timetable for expending the $4500 awarded to me for illustrations for The Reconstruction of American Memory.