

“I hereby declare upon my word of honor that I have neither given nor received unauthorized help on this work.”

Adrianna Klimm

Through examining both primary and secondary sources on the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire and the General Slocum fire memorials, the proposed paper will examine the factors that contribute to the differing lasting impact of these two fires and the existence of their memorials. The paper will examine the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire and the General Slocum fire because these fires both took place in New York City, however, while the General Slocum fire had a higher death toll, the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory received a larger memorial and more space in the public consciousness, demonstrating that a high death toll does not always mean that a large memorial will be built.

To understand the differences between the memorials for the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire and the General Slocum fire and memorials elsewhere, several factors must be examined. This includes factors such as location in New York City, memorial cost and support, media coverage, and the other forms of remembrance besides the main memorials because these angles impact the result of the memorial and the overall impact of the disaster on the public. These factors do not apply only to the two fires, but to the other memorials and disasters that occur throughout the world. The more attention a disaster gets, the more impact it has, and the more it occupies the public consciousness.

To examine the impact of public attention on memorials, specifically on the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire and the General Slocum fire, the proposed paper will use newspaper articles covering the memorials to compare the coverage, details about the costs, design, and

construction of the memorials. It is important to look at newspapers first because they are a representation of what the public thinks about. A few examples of these articles include “Slocum Service Is Held: 1,000 Attend Service in Queens for Victims of Disaster (1932), “Coalition Pushes for Memorial to the Triangle Fire (2015),” and “After 112 Years, Triangle Shirtwaist Fire Victims Get a Memorial (2023),” all of which are articles written by the New York Times. The articles covering the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory are more recent because the memorial was officially dedicated in 2023, while the General Slocum memorial was dedicated in 1905, just a year after the fire. By using these articles and others, the proposed paper will analyze the media coverage, the changes in it over the years, and the ways the public remembers the disasters.

The proposed paper will also consult secondary sources such as journal articles, books, and information hosted on state and national park websites. These sources are important because newspaper coverage is limited, so secondary sources give a broader view of the fire memorials and the importance of memorials in general. For example, Ellen Wiley Todd’s journal article “Remembering the Unknowns: The Longman Memorial and the 1911 Triangle Shirtwaist Fire” published in the *Journal of American Art* details the process of creating the sculpture dedicated to the victims of the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire. This article will help to contextualize the process of creating one of the memorials. Another critical source is the book “Ship Ablaze” by Edward T. O’Donnell which provides analysis around the events of the General Slocum fire, as well as analysis on the memorial of the disaster that aren’t available by examining newspapers. These sources help to better support the argument of the proposed paper by providing more information and analysis on the fires and importance of memorials.

To accomplish the examination and comparison of the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire and the General Slocum fire memorials and contributing factors such as the media coverage and

methods of remembrance, the proposed paper will use a variety of newspaper articles, journal articles, books, and information hosted on the state and national parks websites. The topic of the proposed paper is important because disasters happen every day and how they are remembered impacts the lives of many.

Annotated Bibliography

Fadulu, Lola. "After 112 Years, Triangle Fire Victims Get a Memorial," *New York Times*, October 11, 2023.

This article was written by Lola Fadulu, a New York Times reporter who has a bachelor's degree from Amherst College in philosophy and a master's degree in investigative journalism from American University. She was a part of a reporting team from the New York Times that was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize in 2023 for the team's coverage of a New York City fire. The article covers the unveiling of the permanent memorial for the Triangle Fire, providing background on the history of the memorial, who designed it, a description of the memorial, a quote from the state governor about its importance, and quotes from descendants of the fire's victims.

Forrant, Robert, Jurg Siegenthaler, Charles Levenstein, and John Wooding . "The Triangle Fire Centennial Commemoration." In *The Great Lawrence Textile Strike of 1912: New Scholarship on the Bread & Roses Strike*, Routledge, 2014.
<https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/mono/10.4324/9781315230863-14/triangle-fire-centennial-commemoration-robert-forrant-jurg-siegenthaler-charles-levenstein-john-wooding>

This chapter covers the planning of the commemoration for 100 years after the fire as well as the argument for a permanent public memorial in honor of the Triangle Fire.

Greenhouse, Steven. "Coalition Pushes for Memorial to the Triangle Fire," *New York Times*, November 21, 2015.

This article was written by Steven Greenhouse, who was at the time a labor and workplace reporter for the New York Times. The article details the plans for the Triangle Fire memorial, the need for one, the opinions of the designers on its importance, and the Triangle Coalition's argument for a memorial. It also describes the tentative cost of the memorial.

Greenhouse, Steven. "\$1.5 Million State Grant to Pay for Memorial to Triangle Fire," *New York Times*, December 23, 2015.

This article was written by Steven Greenhouse, who was at the time a labor and workplace reporter for the New York Times. The article covers the news of the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire memorial being funded by a state grant and the reactions of those involved with the memorial, including the New York governor at the time.

National Park Service. "Triangle Shirtwaist Factory (Brown Building)," Accessed October 22, 2024. <https://home.nps.gov/places/triangle-shirtwaist-factory-brown-building.htm>

This web page provides information about the Brown Building, the building that was home to the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory. It also provides information about the building's dedication as a national historic landmark.

New York City Parks. "Tompkins Square Park: Slocum Memorial Fountain: NYC Parks," Accessed October 22, 2024. <https://www.nycgovparks.org/parks/tompkins-square-park/highlights/17099>

This web page provides general information about the General Slocum fire and basic facts about the fountain that serves as a memorial to the victims of the General Slocum fire in Tompkins Square Park, a park in New York City.

New York Times. "For a Slocum Memorial: Senate Has Bill for One-Gas and Telephone Measures," January 27, 1905.

This article briefly covers the passing of a bill by the state senate that allows for a memorial for the General Slocum fire to be built.

New York Times. "Slocum Service Is Held: 1,000 Attend Service in Queens for Victims of Disaster," June 16, 1932.

The article covers the yearly memorial service for the General Slocum fire including where it's held, who is in attendance, and who led the service.

New York Times. "Slocum Victims Honored: 10 Survivors of 1904 Disaster Attend Memorial Services," June 18, 1951.

The article talks once again about the yearly memorial service for the General Slocum fire with an emphasis on the survivors in attendance and the remarks of the service.

New York Times. "4,000 At Memorial of Slocum Tragedy: Survivors of Disaster and Kin of Its 1,021 Victims Gather at Queens Cemetery," June 16, 1932.

The article discusses the yearly memorial service held in honor of the victims of the General Slocum fire, including those in attendance and remarks from some of the people in attendance.

O'Donnell, Edward T. *Ship Ablaze: The Tragedy of the Steamboat General Slocum*. New York: Broadway Books, 2004.

The author, Edward T. O'Donnell, is an associate professor of history who provides analysis of the General Slocum fire, covering the start of the fire through the memorial and aftermath. This book is useful to provide information on the ceremony dedicating the memorial and what came after the fire.

Petersson, Anna, and Carola Wingren. "Designing a Memorial Place: Continuing care, passage landscapes and future memories." *Mortality* 16, no. 1 (2011): 54-69.
<https://doi.org/10.1086/725865>.

This journal article discusses the decisions that go into selecting personal memorials, such as gravestones, their link to grief and remembrance, and the commonalities that process shares with the process of designing public memorials.

Todd, Ellen Wiley. "Remembering the Unknowns: The Longman Memorial and the 1911 Triangle Shirtwaist Fire" *American Art* 23, no. 3 (2009): 60–81.
<https://doi.org/10.1086/649776>.

The author, Ellen Wiley Todd, is an American Art History professor at George Mason University. She teaches courses on museums, women and art, and art historiography. The journal article focuses on the sculpture that Evelyn Beatrice Longman created as a memorial after the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire, the events that led up to its creation, and the design.

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