

Memory of Controversy and Controversial Memories: Lucy Parsons and the Haymarket Tragedy

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All the elements of a classic novel or an epic Hollywood movie can be found in the life story of Lucy Parsons. Her story is one of beauty and intelligence, passion and intrigue, mystery and violence, perseverance in the face of tragedy and sorrow, and the overriding force of controversy. In her lifetime, from her birth in 1853 to her death in 1942, she attained levels of celebrity where one could find her name reported in the Chicago papers nearly every week. Yet there exists only one substantial biography of Lucy Parsons and no memorial to her life's work as a labor activist, revolutionary anarchist, or warrior for the working class; until 62 years after her death and 118 years after the most pivotal point in her life, the riot in Chicago's Haymarket square.

In the spring of 2004 the Chicago Park District, in an effort to balance the predominantly male naming of parks with names of prominent women in Chicago's history, proposed to name a park after Lucy Parsons. According to the Chicago Tribune, out of the 555 Chicago parks only 27 are named for women.¹ The proposal was met with protest from Chicago's Fraternal Order of Police and the *Tribune* quoted FOP president Mark Donahue as saying, "they are going to name a piece of property in the city of Chicago after a known anarchist."² The *Tribune* also reported a story in 1996 of a Chicago artists' attempt to install a bench in Wicker Park in honor of Lucy Parsons. The artist, Marjorie Woodruff, waited two years to get approval for the installation of her tribute. Woodruff's bench incorporates tiles that tell the story of Lucy's fight for Chicago's laboring class, including provocative questions such as, "why have most of us never heard of Lucy Parsons?" and "why are people who are poverty stricken often blamed for their situation?"³ Decades after her death the task of memorializing her life continues to be mired in controversy. I will attempt in this paper to examine the facets of Lucy Parson's life and the choices she made which contribute to the difficulty in remembering her life, as well as an examination of the memorializing of the Haymarket tragedy by the city of Chicago.

Lucy Parsons was born in 1853 in Texas. She claimed descent from a Mexican mother and a Creek Indian father. But contemporaries who

saw her and modern historians who view photographs of her all agree that Lucy must have possessed African ancestry. The anarchist historian Paul Avrich writes that the "photographs of her clearly indicate a black or partly black ancestry." He also provides a report from the *Chicago Tribune* in 1886 that states, "Mrs. Parsons objects to the term 'colored' as signifying that she has negro blood in her veins. She says her mother was a Mexican and her father an Indian. But she is decidedly colored, just the same, and any ordinary observer would conclude that at least one of her parents was a negro."⁴ Lucy's biographer, Carolyn Ashbaugh, discovered that Lucy used a variety of maiden names on various documents; using the maiden name of Carter on her son's birth certificate and the maiden name of Hull on her daughter's. And while she usually offered Texas as her birthplace, she listed Virginia on both of the children's birth certificates.⁵ For the entry of her husband Albert Parsons in the *Dictionary of American Biography*, she listed the maiden name of Gonzalez, which Ashbaugh claims was the most frequent and Lucy's attempt "to verify a Mexican ancestry."⁶ Ashbaugh's research of Lucy's origins produced a number of contradictions and conflicting stories, even Lucy's middle name is in question; on occasions she used Eldine and also Ella.

From her research Ashbaugh theorizes that Lucy may have been born a slave on the Texas ranch of the wealthy Gathings brothers. The slave schedules that Ashbaugh uncovered show that the Gathings each owned two slave girls in 1860 who were Lucy's age and that Phillip Gathings had a daughter named Lucy born in 1849. It would have been common practice for a slave child to be named for the master's daughter.⁷ The exact reasons for Lucy's adamant refusal to claim her African and most likely slave origins remain a mystery, but her biographer does have a theory. Ashbaugh hypothesizes that while living in Texas, particularly in the years following the departure of the government of Reconstruction, Lucy most likely witnessed atrocities against her race which compelled her to denounce her heritage.⁸ Falling in love with Albert Parsons in 1871 provided other reasons for her to deny her race.

Albert Parsons, a blue-blooded American who could trace his ancestors to the American Revolution, was raised by his older brother William Parsons. William rose from the ranks of general in the Confederacy to a Republican state senator. Before the Civil War he edited a secessionist and white supremacist newspaper and advocated reopening the slave trade. Ashbaugh contends for William the important issue had been "the purity of blood and supremacy as a distinct race of the Anglo-

⁴ Paul Avrich, *The Haymarket Tragedy*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), 11.

⁵ Carolyn Ashbaugh, *Lucy Parsons American Revolutionary*, (Chicago: Charles Kerr Publishing Co., 1976), endnotes.

⁶ Ashbaugh, *Lucy Parsons*, 14.

⁷ *Ibid.*, endnotes.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 14-15.

¹ *Chicago Tribune*, May 13, 2004.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Chicago Tribune*, January 7, 1996.

American upon this continent.”⁹ Albert’s relationship with Lucy must have horrified William and perhaps in an attempt to lessen the damage to the Parsons name, Lucy’s identity as a Mexican-Indian was constructed. Miscegenation laws in Texas would also have prohibited a legal marriage between Albert and Lucy. The account of their marriage is also a mystery although both Lucy and Albert claimed to have been married in Austin in 1872. Consultation with an Austin historian by Ashbaugh failed to turn up a record of any marriage license issued to Albert and Lucy. Avrigh quotes William Parsons as insisting that the wedding “was a matter of public record in that city” and that due to Texas laws regarding miscegenation, Lucy’s claim of Mexican-Indian ancestry was obviously not in question by Texas authorities.¹⁰ Whether or not Lucy and Albert’s marriage was a legal union may remain a mystery but the passion, love, respect and devotion they held for one another is not. That is evident from Albert’s words as quoted in Avrigh’s work, “I have had the earnest, honest, intelligent, unflagging support of that grandest, noblest, bravest of women- my wife.”¹¹ Whatever Texas meant to their partnership as husband and wife it would be their departure for Chicago in 1873 that defined their lives as social reformers and revolutionaries.

Lucy’s philosophies on the life of a reformer further serve to mystify her memory. Ashbaugh contends that Lucy believed that the “life of the reformer is totally insignificant...and that she practiced this principle and consistently maintained that her own personal life was inconsequential; she refused to talk about herself.”¹² In the later years of her life, she remained critical of such reformers like Emma Goldman whom she felt wrote their books with too much emphasis on their personal lives. She commented that Emma Goldman’s autobiography should have devoted much more space to the history of the movement and not by “beginning and ending with Emma.... I don’t think it will be interesting to anybody outside the bunch that she was associating with at the time.” She was horrified at Goldman’s public account of her private love affair with Ben Reitman and believed that by leaving those episodes out of the book it “may have appealed to a more thoughtful element.”¹³ Lucy’s own writings—as evidenced in her contributions to the anarchist publication the *Alarm*, her lectures, and her book on the life of her husband Albert—concentrated on the goals of class equality and freedom from wage slavery, as well as her philosophies on Socialism and Anarchism; she never published or lectured on her own condition or revealed any personal details of her life story.

⁹ Ibid., 13, quotation from the announcement for William Parson’s proposed book, *Negro Slavery, Its Past, Present and Future*.

¹⁰ Avrigh, *The Haymarket Tragedy*, 12.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ashbaugh, *Lucy Parsons*, 32.

¹³ Ashbaugh, *Lucy Parsons*, 254–255.

Lucy’s denial of her race and what appears to be a deliberate attempt to confuse and obliterate her past serve to mystify Lucy as a person and deny her a solid position in the historical record. Tributes and public memorials enable a community to record and mark a collective memory, but these memorials are often promoted by representative groups, such as African-Americans, veterans, laborers, women or groups sharing a political or religious ideology. By denying her race she alienated herself from African-American memory and by refusing to document her own past she created a challenge for any other group desiring to commemorate her life. Her choices indicate the perils of adopting anonymity and ambiguity in life and the subsequent memorializing of that life. However, there exists ample evidence to prove her contribution to the epic struggle between capitalism and labor at the end of the nineteenth century, but her story was still largely forgotten, particularly among Americans and the city of Chicago. Lucy and Albert’s political evolution from socialism to anarchism, their subsequent battles with the ruling elite and the climax of the riot in Haymarket square, the unfair trial, conviction and execution of Albert and others serve to further explain the difficulties in remembering Lucy’s story.

In response to the oppression and atrocities Albert and Lucy witnessed, first against blacks in Texas and then the working class in Chicago, they adopted the ideologies of socialism and embarked on efforts to unionize laborers with the intent to force the capitalists to bestow upon the working class fairer wages and working conditions. The socialists in Chicago worked within the electoral system to get names placed on the ballots in the hopes of legislating the change they knew was so desperately needed by the working class. Albert himself ran for county office on the socialist ticket in 1877 and amassed an impressive number of votes. According to labor historian James Green, the *Chicago Times* dismissed the number as a “riot vote” and summed up his political aspirations as one of those “long-haired idiots and knaves.”¹⁴ Green writes that the socialist reformers held out hope of “gaining power through the democratic process. Over the next six years, however, a series of discouraging events would dash that hope and send him down a revolutionary road.”¹⁵ Lucy followed that road with Albert to the more radical and anti-statist ideology of anarchism.

Lucy attributed her attraction to anarchism as a result of the railroad strike in 1877. The violence and repression of those striking workers by the police forces bidding the requests of the ruling elite and the failures of the socialist parties to secure representation in the legislative process led her to conclude that the only alternative was to overthrow the existing capitalist society. At the root of anarchism is the belief that all government is corrupt and that true freedom and liberty

¹⁴ James Green, *Death in the Haymarket* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2006), 85.

¹⁵ Ibid.

cannot be achieved under the restrictions imposed by the few on the many. In her writings on the principles of anarchism she explains the impediment to progress that governments impose and how she arrived at this position after the railroad strike:

I then thought as many thousands of earnest, sincere people think, that the aggregate power, operating in human society, known as government, could be made an instrument in the hands of the oppressed to alleviate their sufferings. But a closer study of the origin, history and tendency of governments, convinced me that this was a mistake; I came to understand how organized governments used their concentrated power to retard progress by their ever-ready means of silencing the voice of discontent if raised in vigorous protest against the machinations of the scheming few...governments never lead; they follow progress.¹⁶

Adopting the revolutionary movement of anarchism removed Albert and Lucy from the work of campaigning for political offices and union organizing and catapulted them into the more radical and confrontational world of anarchists. Lucy's abandonment of socialism and efforts to legislate change within the existing government meant that she had no use to support woman suffrage. Lucy believed that the current state of misery for Chicago's laborers was a class issue and "never considered women's emancipation as important as class struggle."¹⁷ She attributed the oppression of blacks, women and immigrants on the fact that they were poor, not due to their race or sex. Ashbaugh writes that Lucy's brand of feminism "analyzed women's oppression as a function of capitalism... founded on working class values."¹⁸ These beliefs, (despite the efforts of historians such as the Chicago Park District's Julia Bachrach to include Lucy in the woman suffrage movement) serve to alienate Lucy from the traditional women's movement and most certainly remove her from the woman suffrage movement, a cause that she called the "bourgeois woman suffrage movement."¹⁹ The difficulty in placing Lucy's memory in the historical record of the women's movement illustrates another example of the difficult task of memorializing her life. As journalist Kathryn Rosenfeld writes, Lucy was "unequivocal about her anarchism and her advocacy of violence as a means of self-defense on the

¹⁶ Lucy Parsons, "Lecture on the Principles of Anarchism", accessed from the Writings of Lucy Parsons at <http://lucyparsonspj.org>

¹⁷ Ashbaugh, *Lucy Parsons*, 201.

¹⁸ Ashbaugh, *Lucy Parsons*, 202.

¹⁹ Kathryn Rosenfeld, "Looking for Lucy (in all the wrong places)," *Social Anarchism*, issue 37 June 2006, 3. Accessed on-line at: <http://www.socialanarchism.org>

part of the workers against the violent attacks of the police and bosses."²⁰ The anarchist's endorsement of violence as a response to the violent tactics employed by the police, the state, and the industrial capitalists against workers and reformers agitating for the eight hour day and improved working conditions presented perhaps the biggest obstacle to preserving Lucy's and her comrades' memories.

The Chicago summer of 1877 witnessed an uprising of laborers emanating from the striking railroad workers and spreading sympathy protests from the laboring class. Railroad barons called in state militia and police forces to convince the strikers to halt the work stoppage. On July 25 a confrontation between railroad workers, sympathetic rioters and police resulted in patrolmen opening fire and killing a railroad switchman and two boys. As crowds grew in protest of the police violence, the scene became more bloody and brawling raged all afternoon with striking butchers and meat cutters joining the melee in what became known as the 'battle of the viaduct.' Police stormed a meeting of German cabinetmakers and attacked the participants with clubs. Witnesses reported a police sergeant firing at bystanders. James Green claims that while they were "sent out to suppress rioters, the police became rioters themselves."²¹ The fatalities from the violence numbered 30 men and boys, whereas the police force, including 5,000 "specials they deputized suffered no casualties."²² With donations from Chicago's wealthiest citizen, Marshall Field, the city purchased cannons, a Gatling gun, 296 rifles and 60,000 rounds of ammunition in preparation for further uprisings.²³ A further setback for the workers' ability to protect themselves from an overzealous police force and capitalists funding weapons purchases was the Supreme Court of Illinois' decision to ban "armed marches of proletarian militiamen- a decision Parsons and Spies denounced as a clear violation of the Second Amendment of the U.S. Constitution."²⁴ For the reformers it now appeared that the Bill of Rights could no longer protect them. In the summer of 1885, the police exhibited a renewed sense of brutality under the command of Captain John Bonfield.

Bonfield and his forces set out to break a strike being conducted by the city's streetcar drivers and upon arrival in the city's west side they encountered a growing crowd of sympathizers. As the crowd threw obstacles in the way of the marching police, Bonfield and his men proceeded to club anyone including an elderly man and two men who approached to ask the captain a question, whom he beat unconscious.²⁵ Later governor of Illinois John Altgeld, in trying to understand the events that led up to the fateful Haymarket riot, wrote of the police

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Green, *Death in the Haymarket*, 78-9.

²² Ibid., 80.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid., 91

²⁵ Ibid., 123.

brutality inflicted upon the workers. He wrote that officers “brutally clubbed people who were guilty of no offense whatsoever” and that “some of the police under the leadership of Captain John Bonfield, indulged in a brutality never equaled before.”²⁶ It was in this climate that Albert and Lucy Parsons realized that the reform they so passionately worked toward would take a revolution and that revolution required that the oppressed arm themselves, or at least publicize the resolve to meet violent measures with violence.

A poem Lucy composed for the anarchist publication the *Alarm* is an angry diatribe in response to the futility of union organizing, striking and reforms at improving the lot of the working poor. In the poem she titled *To Tramps*, she incites the unemployed and working poor to take up arms against the capitalists whose “mission is simply robbery.” She advises them before they consider suicide in the “cold embrace of the lake” to consider the power of violence when employed by the masses. She recommends “each of you hungry tramps who read these lines, avail yourselves of those little methods of warfare which science has placed in the hands of the poor man...learn the use of explosives!”²⁷ Ashbaugh responds to Lucy’s advocating the use of dynamite; “Lucy was more vigorous in her support of propaganda by the deed than was Albert; he tended to be a prophet of social revolution, while all the oppression which Lucy suffered for her dark skin and her womanhood went into the anger with which she encouraged the use of dynamite.”²⁸ Despite Lucy’s personal views on the use of violence, it was the anarchists’ endorsement of violence that instilled fear in an already volatile atmosphere and it was an endorsement that would come back to haunt them.

In 1886, after witnessing the killing of peacefully striking workers by police at the McCormick reaper plant, fellow anarchist Samuel Fielden called for a protest meeting in Chicago’s Haymarket square. The evening of May 4th, Albert and Lucy along with their two children, walked to the Haymarket where Albert spoke for about an hour regarding the eight-hour day movement to workers outraged over the latest reports of police violence against striking workers. Albert, Lucy, and the children had retired to a local saloon, when police ordered Samuel Fielden to cease speaking to the gathered crowd as he dismounted the wagon he had used as a platform a bomb was thrown into the advancing line of patrolmen killing one of them. Panicked police officers fired recklessly into the crowd inflicting injury on innocent bystanders and killing seven more of their own. An anarchist ‘witch hunt’ ensued and Albert along with seven other anarchists were brought to trial and convicted of conspiracy to employ the use of dynamite against law enforcement. Four of the

anarchists, including Albert Parsons and Sam Fielden were sentenced to hang. The trial, the later pleas for clemency and the execution itself gripped Chicago, the nation and the world with its drama.

James Green contends that the “breadth and depth of coverage devoted to the Haymarket case exceeded all others in the post-Civil War years.”²⁹ Pleas for clemency for the condemned flooded Governor Ogelsby’s office. Samuel Gompers of the newly formed American Federation of Labor warned the governor that if executed these men “would be looked upon as martyrs...thousands of labor men all over the world would consider that these men had been executed because they were standing for free speech and free press.” Gompers questioned how “this country could be great and magnanimous enough to grant amnesty to Jefferson Davis, who had committed treason and led a rebellion against the government that cost countless lives, surely the state of Illinois could do as much for the anarchists.”³⁰ All efforts at clemency were futile and the men were resigned to their fate accepting of the supreme sacrifice to the cause. The day of the executions Lucy along with her two children attempted to visit Albert to say their last goodbyes. Police refused to let her in and she exploded in anger screaming at them “you murderous villains! You forbid me to see my husband, whom you are about to kill and not let him take a last look at his children, whom you are about to make orphans.”³¹ While she claimed to not have any bombs with her at that moment she informed the officers that she could obtain them and use them if she desired. She was promptly arrested, and, while Albert met his fate in the gallows, Lucy and the children endured the humiliation of being strip searched by police for bombs and denied the opportunity to say goodbye to their beloved husband and father.

The funeral march for the Haymarket martyrs, as they came to be known, was witnessed by an estimated 200,000 people. According to Green, “Chicagoans had never witnessed such a massive public funeral. The crowds exceeded even those that had gathered to march behind Lincoln’s coffin...however, then Chicago’s citizens had walked together... united in their grief. Now, one class of people grieved while another gave thanks for the moral judgment rendered on the gallows.”³² Lucy’s grief was inconsolable as she interred her husband and his comrades at Waldheim Cemetery. She would be forced to endure unbearable grief again three years later at the death of her daughter, Lulu. Albert’s execution served to fuel the revolutionary spirit of Lucy and she continued to lecture on the evils of capitalism and the plight of the working class.

²⁶ Green, *Death in the Haymarket*, 124.

²⁷ Lucy Parsons, “To Tramps”, accessed from the Writings of Lucy Parsons at <http://lucyparsonspj.org>.

²⁸ Ashbaugh, *Lucy Parson*, 55.

²⁹ Green, *Death in the Haymarket*, 229.

³⁰ Green, *Death in the Haymarket*, 263.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 267-8.

³² *Ibid.*, 275.

Lucy's activities after the executions were followed closely by the press and the police. A search of the *Chicago Tribune* alone produces numerous articles from reports of her arrests to her love life, her travels and her efforts to exonerate her husband's memory and always including the suffix "the widow of Albert Parsons". Some articles such as one in 1894 are simply four lines long just reporting that she "addressed a small audience."³³ The Tribune reported in 1896 that Lucy's house had caught fire and of the items lost were the "chair in which Parsons sat in jail, a toy boat that he carved, the knife with which he did the whittling, books from which he had gleaned his fund of arguments against the government, all went up in smoke, together with a considerable library."³⁴ Destruction of those types of artefacts added to the difficulty of future remembering of Lucy and Albert's ordeal, as did the confiscation of materials by the police, in what Green refers to as a "forty year ordeal of episodic jailings of Mrs. Parsons, whose activities would become an obsession with the Chicago Police Department."³⁵

Remembrance of the fallen police officers in the form of a monument was pursued soon after the riot and the publisher of the *Tribune*, Joseph Medill, raised enough money for a bronze statue to be commissioned from donations received primarily from businessmen's clubs. A bronze statue designed by John Gelart of a "noble policemen with arm raised" was erected in Haymarket square on Memorial Day 1889.³⁶ Labor historian Lara Kelland writes that "the statue would serve as a potent symbol of police power for years."³⁷ However, a tradition of vandalism against the statue began on May 4, 1903 when the city and state crest were torn from the monument. May 4, 1927 found the monument knocked from its pedestal by a street car driver. In 1969 the statue was faced with its most violent abuse when someone placed a bomb under the statue. After Mayor Daley saw to the repair of the statue, it sustained more damage from another bomb the following year. Following the last round of vandalism, Daley ordered round the clock police protection for the statue at the taxpayer's expense of \$67,000 a year. In 1972 the statue was permanently moved inside Chicago Police headquarter and it remains there today. Attempts at preserving the cultivated memory of victimization for the fallen police officers began immediately and while it may have persevered in certain circles it is obvious from the abuse inflicted on the monument on the anniversaries of the Haymarket tragedy, not everybody was adhering to the memory in the same manner. Memorializing the Haymarket tragedy became as

³³ *Chicago Tribune*, May 28, 1894.

³⁴ *Chicago Tribune*, August 6, 1896.

³⁵ Green, *Death in the Haymarket*, 195.

³⁶ Lara Kelland, "Putting Haymarket to Rest?," *Labor Studies in Working Class History of the Americas*, vol.2, issue 2, Spring 2005, 31.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

conflicted and mired in opposition as the battle of labor and capitalism itself.

The monument erected at the graves of the Haymarket martyrs was commissioned with funds provided by the Pioneer Aid and Support Association, a group formed to financially assist the surviving families of the accused men and to care for the grave sites. In 1893 a bronze statue sculpted by Albert Weinberg was unveiled at the grave site in Waldheim Cemetery. The *Chicago Tribune* reported that 8,000 visitors viewed the monument the day following the unveiling on June 25.³⁸ Samuel Fielden's final words as he mounted the gallows and the state's noose was placed around his neck, 'the day will come when our silence will be more powerful than the voices you are throttling today', are engraved at the base of the monument. Kelland writes, "Governor Altgeld's pardon, issued the day after the dedication ceremony confirmed the innocence of the Martyrs in public memory through a dramatic and lengthy statement accompanying the pardon."³⁹ James Green agrees that the governor's "courageous statement added enormous power to the memory of the Haymarket defendants as innocent victims of a 'judicial hanging'."⁴⁰ Despite Governor Altgeld's pardon and admission that the Chicago anarchists were deprived of a fair trial and the generally accepted view that the police officers who died were victims of their own bullets, the opposing memories of the Haymarket ordeal remained in conflict.

Perhaps it was in an effort to avoid the seeming impossibility of reconciling the oppositional views of the Haymarket tragedy that compelled Chicago to ignore commemorating the event altogether. While the rest of the world, particularly Mexico and Latin America, vigorously worked to keep the memory of the 'Chicago Martyrs' alive, Chicago did not even place a memorial in the square where the tragic events had unfolded. In an effort to avoid the radical connotations inherent in the term "anarchists," Chicago mayor Harold Washington proclaimed the month of May in 1986 Labor History month. He avoided referring to the anarchists as "men who died for their beliefs," but rather commemorated "the movement towards the eight-hour day, union rights, civil rights, human rights" and to remember "the tragic miscarriage of justice which claimed the lives of four labor activists."⁴¹ Trading the radical label "anarchist" for the more benign "labor activist" set the stage for the Labor History Society to request that a permanent memorial be placed in the square. Mayor Washington died before the proposal became a reality. By 2002 a panel including representation from the Illinois Labor History Society, Chicago's Public Art Program and the Chicago Police Department embarked on the effort to commission a memorial in

³⁸ Green, *Death in the Haymarket*, 291.

³⁹ Kelland, "Putting Haymarket to Rest," 33.

⁴⁰ James Green, *Taking History to Heart*, (Amherst; University of Massachusetts Press, 2000), 132.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 143.

Chicago's Haymarket Square. The monument, unveiled in 2004, is an ambiguous and abstract work of art intended to convey the importance of free speech. The message defuses the politicized reality of the anarchists' radicalism and the corruption and violent tactics of an oppressive police force. Ironically, the president of the Chicago Fraternal Order of Police, Mark Donahue, spoke at the monument's dedication stating, "we've come a long way to be included in this...we're part of the labor movement now too, and glad to be here."⁴² This is the same individual who criticized the Chicago Park District's efforts to name a city park after Lucy Parsons just a few months later. While his criticism of the park naming seems in conflict with his statement of inclusion in the Haymarket memory, Kelland believes that it "illuminates much about the ideological consensus over recent memorializing efforts." She claims that "by polarizing the meaning of the 1886 event between free speech and labor in opposition to radical social critique of government and industry, the memorial effort becomes palatable for those officially involved."⁴³

Despite Lucy Parsons' efforts to mystify her past, despite the destruction of archives by two fires, the latter taking her life in 1942, and despite the disappearance of the remainder of her papers after her death, Lucy Parsons does have a Chicago public park named for her. Even though the tragic story of Chicago's Haymarket is considered to be a watershed event in the history of labor, it has taken 118 years for Chicago to officially commemorate its story, albeit a less threatening and depoliticized story. Her refusal to publicize and document her personal life allowed and continues to allow her memory to be largely forgotten.

⁴² Kelland, "Putting Haymarket to Rest." 37.

⁴³ *Ibid.*