

numerous articles on Indiana and Midwest history. His most recent book, *Summer Wind: The Vietnam War Letters of Richard "Dick" Wolfe*, coauthored

with his wife, Roxanne, is scheduled for release in October 2017.

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Above the Shots: An Oral History of the Kent State Shootings

By Craig S. Simpson and Gregory S. Wilson

(Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 2016. Pp. 272. Illustrations, notes, index. Paper, \$28.95.)

Was there an order to fire? Did the protests of the previous weekend justify the presence of the Ohio National Guard on campus? Debates persist, even forty-six years after guardsmen opened fire on student protestors at Kent State University. Craig S. Simpson and Gregory S. Wilson's *Above the Shots* provides a critical examination of the Kent State shootings. The authors draw from numerous archival sources, as well as fifty oral history interviews collected between 1990 and 2010 as part of the Kent State Shootings Oral History Project, to arrive at a more complete understanding of the events of May 1-4, 1970. Their use of these interviews provides the lynchpin that sets this book apart from the wealth of other scholarship about Kent State, most of which has sought to assess the veracity of contradictory claims. Simpson and Wilson begin by acknowledging that the oral histories frequently depart from factual evidence, verging even into the realm of rumor, but argue that they provide the reader with a more

thorough understanding not only of the events that transpired, but also of the motivations and meanings assigned to these events by participants.

The authors frequently bring to life the social nature of memory, highlighting how racial, economic, and political realities of the time may have contributed to varying interpretations of the same event. For example, interviews with local citizens highlight how the extreme levels of fear and animosity directed toward students were shaped to some extent by residents' inability to access accurate information over the course of the weekend. The authors' weaving together of scholarly accounts and oral history interviews allows the reader to empathize with these narrators' perspectives, while simultaneously drawing attention to potential fallacies in individual memory shaped by ongoing public narratives and the process of memorialization. One narrator's remembrance of Allison Krause putting a flower in the gun barrel of a guardsman was, as Simpson and Wilson note, most likely constructed

from two separate events: an iconic photo of a lilac in a guardsman's gun barrel and Allison Krause's statement that "flowers are better than bullets" (p. 80). Indeed, the authors' discussion of the dynamic processes of memory and narrative provides some of the most compelling and insightful reading, addressing both the causes and results of potential inconsistencies between historical and psychological truths.

The last chapter traces the work of numerous individuals and groups in commemorating the Kent State shootings over a period of more than forty years. Readers may thus need to adjust their pacing expectations, as the first four chapters address the events of four days. Thus, a section entitled "From Bruno Ast to the May 4 Visitors Center" (i.e., from 1990 to 2012) covers roughly five pages. Simpson and Wilson's discussion in this chapter is rooted loosely in the interdisciplinary scholarly literature on collective memory, including Kenneth E. Foote's *Shadowed Ground* (1997), but readers who are particularly

interested in the history of debate and contestation over commemoration of the Kent State shootings may prefer to seek out additional sources. This is a minor criticism, however, given the scope of the work and the focus of the oral history interviews.

In sum, *Above the Shots* provides a critical and engaging analysis of the events leading up to and following the 1970 shootings at Kent State. At a time when Americans have begun to re-examine publicly the relationship between government and protestors, this book should be mandatory reading for both scholars and citizens.

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The Ohio State University in the Sixties: The Unraveling of the Old Order

By William J. Shkurti

(Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2016. Pp. 390. Illustrations, notes, bibliographic note, index. \$39.95.)

As a graduate of Ohio State University (class of '68) and a senior vice president of business and finance at OSU,

William J. Shkurti is working on familiar ground in this history of his alma mater in the 1960s. However, there is