Recommended Works about the May 4, 1970, Kent State Shootings & Related History (with annotations)

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What Happened on May 1–4, 1970


The Day the ‘60s Died. Dir. Jonathan Halperin. 2015. (TV documentary) [Visit PBS.org for purchase and viewing information. Contains a variety of voices. Offers a good chronology of May 1–4, except for ROTC burning. In addition, that the Kent State Shootings marked the beginning of the end of student activism is refuted in Chapter 14 of Thomas Grace’s Kent State: Death and Dissent in the Long Sixties]


Grace, Thomas M. Kent State: Death and Dissent in the Long Sixties. Amherst, MA: Univ. of Massachusetts Press, 2016. (book) [Definitive and meticulously researched and documented full-length study of student activism at Kent State, including May 1–4, 1970, and its aftermath]

Kent State: A Turning Point. Written by Carole Barbato, Mike Buday, and Laura Davis. Dir. Mike Buday. Kent State University May 4 Visitors Center. 2012. (video) [Viewable in the Kent State University May 4 Visitors Center, Kent, Ohio]

those on site in 1970, Ohio State Preservation Office director Franco Ruffini, sculptor Don Drumm, David Crosby, Gwen Ifill, and Oliver Stone]

_President Nixon’s Cambodia Incursion Address_. Richard Nixon Foundation.  
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3cAAnoqmsg. (video) [Nixon’s April 30, 1970, announcement of the invasion of Cambodia during the U.S. Vietnam War that caused campus protests across America, including at Kent State]

https://www.pbs.org/kenburns/the-vietnam-war/. (TV documentary series) [Coverage of the Kent State shootings begins episode 8]

**Key May 4 Sources from 1970s**

Davies, Peter, and the Board of Church and Society of the United Methodist Church. _The Truth About Kent State: A Challenge to the American Conscience_. New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1973. [Written to convince the U.S. Department of Justice to authorize a federal grand jury]


**First-Person Points of View**

Appy, Christian. _Patriots: The Vietnam War Viewed from All Sides_. New York: Viking, 2003. (book) [135 original interviews offering as many perspectives as one can imagine on the Vietnam War]


https://omeka.library.kent.edu/special-collections/kent-state-shootings-digital-archive/browse-by-sub-collection#Laura%20Davis%20May%204%20papers. (videos) [Thirteen hours of interviews]
with the highest-ranking uniformed officer on Blanket Hill during the May 4, 1970, Kent State shootings]


https://www.kentguardvoices1970.com/keith-crilow.html (video and transcript) [Selected interview from ONU’s project interviewing members of the Ohio National Guard deployed to Kent, Ohio, in May 1970]

The Oral History Project of the Sam Johnson Vietnam Archive. Texas Tech University, Lubbock TX.


https://www.cleveland.com/pdextra/2010/04/former_ohio_national_guard_off.html (news article) [Interview with Ohio National Guard Captain (ret.) J. Ronald Snyder, on site May 3–4, 1970]

“Reflections on May 4 and the Vietnam War: Tom Saal.” KentStateTV, Kent State University.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7debn9tbv_0 (video) [Vietnam Veteran and Kent State graduate Tom Saal talks about his evolving view on the Vietnam War. Saal is a retired English teacher and poet; his poetry also can be found online]

Smith, Karen Manners, and Tim Koster, eds. Time It Was: American Stories from the Sixties. (collection of memoirs) [Stories from everyday people affected by the Vietnam War and social-political-cultural changes during the long sixties]


May 4, 1970, Kent State Shootings Site
Kent State Shootings: An Appeal to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Interior to Designate a Portion of the Kent State University Campus in Ohio a National Historic Landmark. Kent State University Libraries. Special Collections and Archives, box 20, folder 31, Jerry M. Lewis Papers. (unpublished document) [Response of the May 4 families to National Park Service study failing to recommend National Historic Landmark status for May 4 site in 1978]


Kent State University May 4 Visitors Center. Kent, OH, 2012. (museum) [Tells the story of what happened on May 4 and its aftermath, set in the context of the long sixties]

Kent State University May 4 Walking Tour. Kent, OH, 2010. (outdoor educational installation) [Self-guided tour of the May 4 site featuring seven interpretive trail markers, educational map brochure, and documentary film, Someone to Tell the Story, narrated by Julian Bond]


May 4, 1970: Someone to Tell the Story. Dir. Steve Zapytowski. Written and prod. Carole Barbato and Laura Davis. Narr. Julian Bond. https://www.kent.edu/may4visitorscenter/may-4-walking-tour (documentary video) [Component of Kent State University May 4 Visitors Center Walking Tour of the May 4 site. The video, which employs 400 archival May 4 photos, is viewable within the site; the soundtrack may be listened to online at the link above, or by phoning 330-672-MAY4 (6294)]

The May 4th Augmented Reality Experience. Kent State University, 2020. https://may4thxr.kent.edu/index.html (website and app) [Then and now images of points within the Kent State Shootings site illustrating what happened on May 4]

Orangeburg, Kent State & Jackson State

Bass, Jack, and Jack Nelson. The Orangeburg Massacre. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2002. [Definitive account of the shootings and the aftermath at South Carolina State University, Orangeburg, SC; includes interviews with survivors and witnesses]


Parker, Adam. *Outside Agitator: The Civil Rights Struggle of Cleveland Sellers Jr.* Spartanburg, SC: Hub City Press, 2018. [Written after his conviction was overturned, Sellers reflects in depth on the Orangeburg shooting and the aftermath of his conviction]

video of the author discussing his book in 2012 is posted by the Library of Congress at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9xJ6cLKoyy4

Sellers, Cleveland. *The River of No Return: The Autobiography of a Black Militant and the Life and Death of SNCC*. Jackson, MS: Univ. Press of Mississippi, 1990. (book) [A leader in the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, Sellers was the only person who was arrested and convicted for participating in protests at Orangeburg in 1968]


**Archives & Websites**

Audio Recording: Raw Tape and Edited Actualities, May 4, 1970. Kent State University Special Collections & Archives, https://omeka.library.kent.edu/special-collections/items/show/6411, accessed July 14, 2021. (primary audio sources) [Includes Prof. Seymour Baron reasoning with students as he tried to save them from further harm after the shootings and Prof. Glenn Frank’s emotional plea that convinced students staging a sit-in after the shootings to leave the Commons]


Kent State Collection. Call no. MS 804. Yale University Library Manuscripts & Archives. https://archives.yale.edu/repositories/12/resources/4471, (website finding aid) [Second-largest collection of archival May 4 sources, including trial documents and photographs]

Governor Rhodes Speech on Campus Disorders in Kent, May 3, 1970. Kent State University, Radio–TV Information. May 4 Collection, box 70, folder 27. (transcript) [Rhodes’ press conference in which he vows to “eradicate the problem” of student protestors at Kent State and elsewhere]

Kent State Shootings: May 4 Collection. Kent State University Special Collections & Archives. https://www.library.kent.edu/special-collections-and-archives/kent-state-shootings-may-4-collection, (website) [Largest existing collection of May 4 archival sources, 50,000 items from which are digitized—including photographs and oral histories]

Photographs in the May 4 Collection: Home. Kent State University, Special Collections & Archives. https://libguides.library.kent.edu/May4Photographs, (website finding aid) [Guidance in finding, downloading, and protocols for using archival May 4 photos]

**Historical Contexts**

*The 20th Century with Mike Wallace: The Legacy of Kent State*. Produced by Janis Klein. CBS News/The History Channel, 1996. (video) [Illustrates cultural change and includes moving footage of Allison Krause’s father defending her right to dissent]

Grace, Thomas M. “Kent State and Historical Memory.” In Carole A. Barbato and Laura L. Davis, eds., Democratic Narrative, History, and Memory. Kent State Univ. Press: Kent, OH, 2012. 8-29. [Chronicles efforts of Kent State students during first five years after the shootings to sustain awareness of the killings and build lasting understanding of their significance in American history]


Legal Aftermath of May 4, 1970, Kent State Shootings


May 4 Memorialization & Remembrance

Allison, Bill, Sandy, and Jeff. Dir. Lori Boes. Kent State University May 4 Visitors Center, 2021. (video) [new link coming soon] [Remembers the lives of the four Kent State students killed by guardsmen on May 4, 1970—Allison Krause, Bill Schroeder, Sandra Scheuer, and Jeff Miller. See the companion piece, Remembering May 4: Sandy, Bill, Allison, Jeff, still images of exhibits for each of the students, at https://www.rememberingmay4.org]

Lewis, Jerry M. “The Candlelight Walk and Vigil.” In Hensley and Lewis, Kent State and May 4th, 213–16. (article) [Tradition of remembrance at Kent State]


**Arts & Culture**


Okantah, Mwatabu S. *The Okantah Blog*. [https://www.theokantahblog.com/](https://www.theokantahblog.com/) (blog). 2019. [Okantah is an Associate Professor, Director of the Ghana Study Abroad Program, and Interim Chair of the Department of Africana Studies at Kent State University. In addition to on his blog, he shares his poetry through publication and performance with the Cavani String Quartet and others]

Wiles, Deborah. *Kent State*. New York: Scholastic Press, 2020. (novel in verse) [A moving, fact-based telling, related by voices reflecting that which is true to each]