



# Miners' Journal.

Miners' Journal Published Quarterly by the Galena/Jo Daviess County Historical Society

Summer 2002

## "An Enduring Monument"

### A DOCUMENTARY HISTORY OF GRANT PARK ( PART 1)

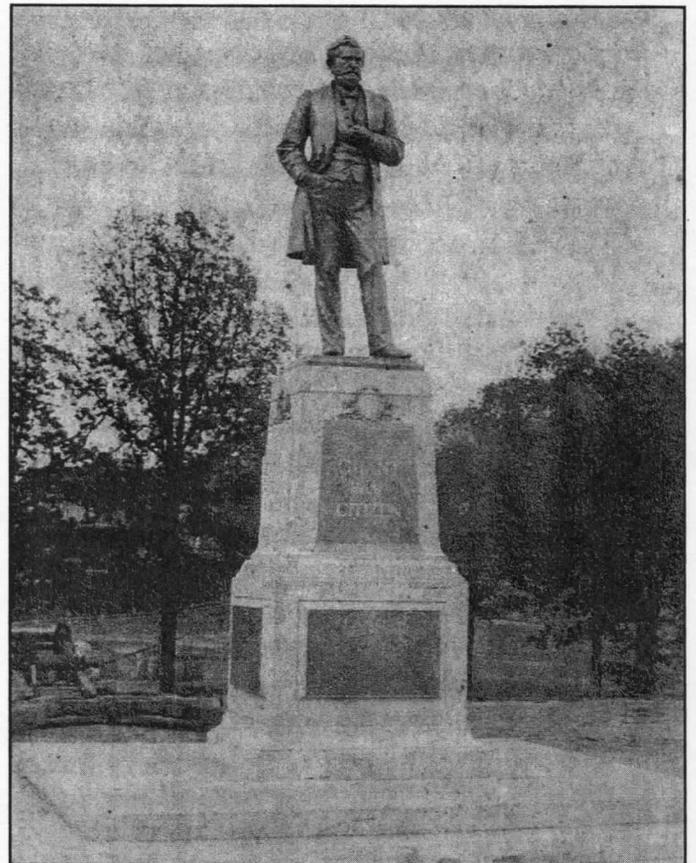
Compiled by H. Scott Wolfe, Historical Librarian, Galena Public Library

*If there is one thing above another Galena wants, it is a PUBLIC PARK...We trust our citizens will for a moment forget their speculating prospects, their business schemes, their mercantile and other pursuits, and figure on the practical benefits to be derived from a public park, to say nothing of the beauty it would add to our city which has been too long neglected. (Galena Daily Gazette, 23 January 1878)*

In May of 1890, Herman H. Kohlsaas, Galena's greatest promoter and benefactor, had proposed "an enduring monument to the memory of General Grant," and had "decided to present to the City of Galena an elegant and costly bronze statue of the departed hero." What was needed was "a site on which to place it." Thus began the storied history of Grant Park.

Originally created and dedicated as the site of three monuments...the Grant Statue, the Jo Daviess County Soldiers' Monument, and the Ladies' Auxiliary Fountain...the park evolved to contain many more items of public utility and interest. The construction and subsequent development of Grant Park has been rigorously documented by the Galena *Daily Gazette* (GDG). Here, in the words of contemporaries, is the fascinating story:

*Mr. Kohlsaas had looked over the city during the afternoon and had been particularly impressed with the ground lying between Second and Water streets, and extending from Johnson to*



Galena's Grant Statue, the gift of Herman Kohlsaas.

*Jackson street on the East Side. He believed all this property could be secured, should the city choose it as the site, and he proposed that the entire piece be bought, graded and converted into a park to be known as GRANT PARK...The statue will be placed*

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*"An Enduring Monument" (Continued...)*

*in the most conspicuous spot in the area...where it will stand for ages, a constant reminder of the greatness achieved by him whose deeds it is to commemorate. (GDG, 5/21/1890)*

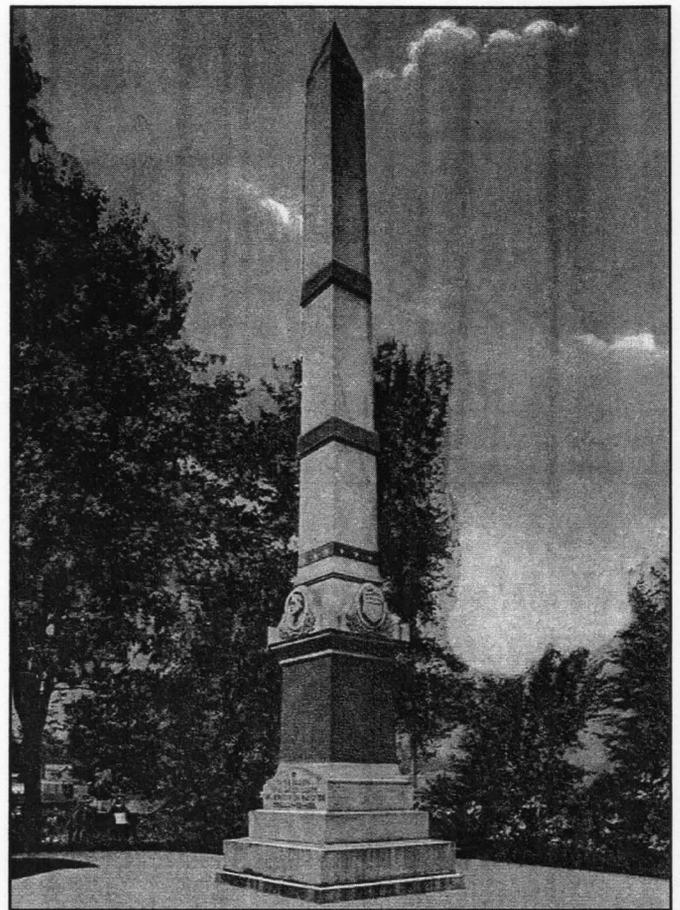
*One recommendation was strongly made by Mr. Kohnsaat and seconded by the Sculptor and park engineer, and that was that the soldiers' monument be removed from its present isolated (On Seminary Hill) site to the park. Should it be located in the northern part of the park it will be a great beautifier and will serve to set off the other monument. (GDG, 6/19/1890)*

*Grant Park will soon exist in more than name. To-day the beginning of active work in the preparation of the park for the reception of the monument was made, a party of surveyors beginning the work of cross sectioning the ground...As soon as the survey is completed the commissioners will advertise for bids for grading and before many weeks the graders will be at work. The buildings on the grounds are all to be moved off...(GDG, 7/30/1890)*

*The dwellers in Grant Park have been hustling around the last three or four days to get a place to live in till they can build new residences. They expect to move off the grounds within a week. (GDG, 8/22/1890)*

*McCaughey Bros., the well known contractors who are to do the grading of Grant Park, arrived with their paraphernalia Saturday night and have pitched their tents in the northeast corner of the park. They have advertised for teams and expect to break ground in a day or two. (GDG,8/25/1890)*

*About 19,000 cubic yards of dirt will be moved. The hill in the northern half of the park will be reduced fourteen feet and the dirt will be used to raise the hollow intervening between that and Second Street about thirteen feet, thus creating a natural and imperceptible slope from the west brow of the hill to Second Street...The ravine dividing the northern and southern sections of the park will be filled...(and) the descent on the west side will remain as abrupt as at present...Only those few trees which will escape the grader's*



The soldier's monument as it appeared in an early 20th century postcard.

*can be saved, and this is the one thing to be regretted. (GDG, 8/30/1890)*

*The work of grading Grant Park is progressing rapidly. The contractors have twenty four teams and more than forty men at work...The houses on the property will soon be out of the way as Mr. Geiger has begun the destruction of the Brown house and Mr. Lacy's house is now on rollers sliding down the hill from the park. (GDG, 9/2/1890)*

*The graders are putting the finishing touches to Grant Park. Today they are at work on the slope facing Johnson Street, which will be the main entrance, and tomorrow they expect to complete the work and fold their tents. (GDG, 10/8/1890)*

*The Park Commissioners paid over to the grading firm of McCaughey Bros. ...the sum of \$2405.05, in full payment of the work done by them.. But little more work can be done before spring. It is the intention to sod the edges and enclose the park by a*

*"An Enduring Monument" (Continued...)*



The Ladies' Auxiliary Fountain.

wire fence and there the work will rest for the season. (GDG, 10/10/1890)

The firm paid out for team hire \$431, for labor \$369.40, for feed \$257.41, for blacksmithing \$27, and their boarding expenses, the freight charges for shipping their outfit to Galena and sundries raised the total expense of the work to \$1394.90. It will be seen by comparing, that the firm made a clear \$1000 by their two months work, with a few dollars left over to buy chewing gum. (GDG, 10/11/1890)

The contract for the granite work of the Grant monument has been let to H.C. Hoffman & Co., Chicago...the base of the monument will be twenty feet square, with three steps in the ascent to the pedestal. The base stones will be on Quincy granite and the pedestal of Main red granite. (GDG, 10/14/1890)

A Ladies' Auxiliary has been at work for some time raising funds for a beautiful fountain, and its success is already beyond doubt. (GDG, 11/1/1890)

The site for the Soldiers' Monument in Grant Park has been selected, and bids for constructing the

foundation as well as for moving the monument will soon be called for. The monument will be in the northern part of the park. (GDG, 3/19/1891)

The park commissioners have selected the site of the fountain which is to adorn Grant Park. It is on an elevated piece of ground near the center of the park and midway between the two monument sites. (GDG, 4/23/1891)

The third and last carload of stone for the base of the Grant monument has arrived...The stone is being hauled to the site and all is in readiness for the erection of the monument. (GDG, 4/24/1891)

The survey of the site of the fountain to be erected in Grant Park by the Ladies' Auxiliary was made to-day by J.C. Scott, and excavating was begun this afternoon. The fountain will be one of the chief ornaments of the Park. Seventy barrels of cement will be used in its construction. (GDG, 4/25/1891)

The park is the liveliest place in the city. A number of men in charge of Mr. Karns are moving heavy pieces of granite from the depot...to be used as a base to the Grant statue. A considerable force of men are excavating for the basin of the fountain, and work will commence next week on the excavation for the soldiers' monument. (GDG, 4/28/1891)

The first base stone of the Grant monument was laid to-day, and the work is rapidly progressing. J.C. Scott is laying out walks in the park. (GDG, 4/29/1891)

The superstructure of the fountain which is to be one of the adornments of Grant Park arrived this morning...The fountain was procured and will be erected by the Ladies' Auxiliary...The basin of the fountain is now in course of construction, under the supervision of Mr. C. C. Baker...It will be almost circular, with a diameter of about 18 feet. The bottom of the basin will consist of eighteen inches of concrete underlying a layer of cement a foot in depth and the side walls will be of cement, sixteen inches thick.

*The depth from the water level to the bottom will be two and one-half feet. The water supply will be taken from the main on Second street, from which a one and one-half inch pipe will lead to the fountain, and a pipe leading eastward to the gully on Jackson street will be the outlet.*

*The superstructure is one of the finest money can buy. The center piece measures fourteen feet from the water level to the topmost spray. The dado supports a basin having a diameter of 4 feet 8 inches, which is surmounted by a female figure holding aloft a smaller font, 3 feet 6 inches in diameter, above which is an ornamental head piece from which the spray is cast. In the ground basin surrounding the center piece are four smaller figures, each representing the nude form of a boy seated on a rock and holding aloft a shell, from which the spray issues. There are five sprays in all.*

*The fountain was ordered from New York, through the Chicago house of J.I. Mott & Co. and the design selected was one of the most artistic and costly in their catalog. The ladies are to be complimented on the taste displayed in its selection... (GDG, 5/2/1891)*

*Some strolling cows found their way in to Grant Park this morning and proceeded to amuse themselves by uprooting the cedar trees planted therein last week, but were interrupted by an indignant citizen who drove them out with a cane. (GDG, 5/5/1891)*

To be continued...

## GRANT BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

In a very successful event, the Spirits of the History Museum revived the annual Grant Birthday Celebrations of old with a variety of events which included a Grand Civil War Ball at the DeSoto House Hotel. Plans are already under way to repeat the event next April. Watch your *Miners' Journal* for dates and detailed information about this exciting event, and plan to attend. We would like to thank all of the many people who helped with the event this year, with very special thanks to our Spirits of the History Museum!

## THIRD ANNUAL GALENA ANTIQUE SHOW

Once again Antique Show promoter and Museum supporter Georgia Maisel will be presenting a special Charity Preview Sale Night to benefit the Galena Historical Society on September 27, 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. Admission for this preview night of the Annual Galena Antique and Collectible Show and Sale will be \$7.00 and also includes desserts and one free appraisal provided by Kyle Husfloen.

The Museum will again have a table at the show where they will be selling Galena history books as well as items from our Antique and Collectible Corner. A raffle of one special item is also planned.

If you have any nice older items that you could donate to the Society for sale at the show, please call Daryl or Nancy at 815/777-9129.

Joining the show this year will be Mary Lou's China and Crystal Repair Service. For your convenience, repairs will be done while you wait!

The show and sale will be held at the Galena Convention Center on Highway 20 West on Galena Square Drive on September 28, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and September 29, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Items to be featured include furniture, glass and china, jewelry, collectibles and primitives, quilts, vintage clothing, advertising, decorator items and general store items. This is a quality show. Admission on Saturday and Sunday will be \$3.00. Appraisals will be available for a fee. These dates coincide with the Fall Tour of Homes. If you'd like more information, you can call 847/498-2481.





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## *"An Enduring Monument"*

### A DOCUMENTARY HISTORY OF GRANT PARK ( PART 2)

Compiled by H. Scott Wolfe, Historical Librarian, Galena Public Library



A throng gathers in the Park for the Grant Birthday Celebration of 1905.

When did the various landmarks of Grant Park appear? The story continues:

*"The contract for moving the (Soldiers') monument and laying the foundation was awarded to Louis Homrich and M. Slattery. The amount of their bid was \$630, and they furnish bonds to erect the shaft on its new site without injury..."*  
(GDG, 5/4/91)

*"The last stone of the pedestal of the (Grant) monument was raised to its position Wednesday evening. All is now in readiness for the statue..."*

*Mr. W.D. Karns, who superintended the construction of the pedestal will remain to put the statue in place...The pedestal is a superior piece of work. Its height is ten feet, the base consisting of three steps of gray Quincy granite, surmounted by two blocks of red (Maine) granite with a polished tablet on each face...A large flower bed has been laid out near the center of the park, and the commissioners are awaiting further donations of flowers...and ground has been broken for the foundation of the Soldiers' monument at the northern end of the park."*  
(GDG, 5/7/91)

Continued on page 2...

*"An Enduring Monument" (Continued...)*

*"The last stone of the Soldiers' monument was raised from the foundation today...The most difficult and dangerous portion of the work is now ended. The pieces will be boxed in transportation to guard against accident. The work is attended with considerable risk for the contractors. The die stone contains several hundred names, the engraving of which cost 15 cents a letter, and should accident deface it the contractor would lose more than the total amount of their contract."*  
(GDG,5/14/91)

*"The great base stone of the Soldiers' monument, six tons weight, was transported to the park without incident this afternoon. Eight horses drew the truck on which it was carried...The foundation is now being (laid) for the cannon which accompanies it."* (GDG,5/15/91)

*"The statue of General Grant...arrived this morning. It lays in the Illinois Central freight depot and will be hauled to the park and mounted on the pedestal immediately. The statue is of bronze, eight feet high and weighs about four tons. It is the work of Johannus Gelert, a Danish sculptor of note who has for some time resided in Chicago...It has been decided that the statue will face Johnson street...The idea originally was to have it face the river, which would afford a front view from the west side, and the pedestal was erected accordingly. After the changes had been decided upon, the top stone of the pedestal was turned so that it now sets at right angles to its former position."* (GDG,5/16/91)

*"Johannus Gelert, the sculptor of the Grant statue, came over from Chicago Saturday evening and under his supervision the statue was elevated to the position on the pedestal today...It is symmetrical throughout and is a superior piece of art, in the possession of which Galena may well pride herself. The statue was viewed by several hundred people today. It will be covered and will not be exposed again until finally unveiled."* (GDG, 5/18/91)

*"J. T. Slattery was awarded the contract for macadamizing the area surrounding the Soldiers'*



The pagoda (actually a pergola) at the present time, covered in Chinese Wisteria vines.

*monument in Grant Park, his bid being \$125. The original idea was to have a cement surface, but it was abandoned, and the macadam will be covered with two inches of fine gravel from the old Peru mines."* (GDG,5/20/91)

*"Last Saturday night the tools used by Mr. Karns in putting up the Grant statue were stolen from his tool box in Grant Park. They were presumably stolen by some boys, and if they have been pawned or sold, the parties into whose hands they have fallen will be paid the full price for them...no questions ...asked."* (GDG, 5/20/91)

*"On the west slope of the park the words "Grant Park" have been cut out of the sod and will be planted with flowers, making a pretty bed that will be distinguishable from Main street.. The plateau surrounding the Grant monument has been graveled and the park is almost in readiness for the great doings that will attend the dedication."* (GDG,5/29/92)

[Ed. Note: The installation of the Civil War Blakely rifle (1896) and the "Spanish Cannon" (1899) have been discussed in prior issues of *The Miners' Journal*..]

*"The work of excavating for the foundation for a tool house and band stand has...been begun and will be prosecuted to a finish as rapidly as possible. The stand will be located a short distance east of the Grant monument and will be octagonal in shape. The plans indicate that it will be a very attractive*

*"An Enduring Monument" continued...*

*structure in appearance and just what has been wanted there since the construction of the park."* (GDG,10/18/1900)

*"It is Mr. Siniger's intention to secure a half dozen pairs of gray squirrels as soon as possible and turn them loose in the park. If these beautiful and exceeding nimble animals are properly treated they soon become great pets."* (GDG,5/23/01)

*"Lester E. Ginn is busily engaged in erecting the upper portion of the band stand in Grant Park. The structure is going to be a very handsome and attractive affair when finished and will add much to the progressive appearance of the park. In all probability it will be used for the first time on the Fourth of July. It is a move in the right direction and the park commissioners are deserving of credit for the enterprise thus exhibited."* (GDG,6/18/01)

*"The latest and best improvement is about completed and will prove just what was wanted for many years—a pavilion and comfort station. This is built of concrete of artistic design and modern in every respect. The covered pavilion is large enough to accommodate quite a number of persons and is lighted with electric lights in the center of the ceiling, while around the edge of the roof are rows of smaller electric lights that will be lighted on special occasions. Rustic furniture, consisting of tables, benches and chairs will be provided... Below the pavilion is located the comfort station that is strictly sanitary. The rooms are in smooth hard finished cement and are well lighted.. In the room for women will be found chairs, a looking glass and a lavatory. This building has been built by James B. Ginn, a local contractor who deserve credit for such an attractive structure."* (GDG, 8/20/17)

*"The Board will also let a contract to have the words "Grant Park" in large raised cement letters laid on the hill side of the park facing the river and the railroad tracks. This is a mighty good idea as these letters can be seen by the passengers on all I. C. and C. & N. W. trains...At each entrance to the Park will be erected square brick or cement posts upon which will be neat flower boxes and just above each flower box will be a boulevard light, thus stand will*



Young ladies pose in front of the pavilion, c. 1920 .

*making a very attractive ornament. The band stand will be painted white with a red roof, also the pavilion roof is to be painted red in order to afford more of a contrast."* (GDG,5/8/20)

*"Work is about completed on the new pagoda that has been built near the east entrance of the park, this being of cement and, when covered with vines, will be a most inviting nook. It will be well lighted at night."* (GDG,6/30/21)

*"Walter A. Slattery and his crew of men have about completed a Rockery at the north east entrance to Grant Park. This Rockery is quite a pretentious affair and comprises a fountain, lily pond, and fernery and, when completed will no doubt add greatly to the beauty of Grant Park if such a thing could be possible—in this already most beautiful small park in the State."* (GDG,6/15/23)

[Ed. Note: The German Krupp cannon, the WW1 trophy installed in Grant Park in April of 1926 as a "memorial to the local soldiers of the World War who have 'gone West,'" will be the subject of a future *Miners' Journal* article.]

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