

PUBLIC ART SAINT PAUL

The Sculptures of Upper Summit Avenue



PUBLIC ART SAINT PAUL: STEWARD OF SAINT PAUL'S CULTURAL TREASURES

Art in Saint Paul's public realm matters: it manifests and strengthens our affection for this city – the place of our personal histories and civic lives.

The late 19th century witnessed a flourishing of new public sculptures in Saint Paul and in cities nationwide. These beautiful works, commissioned from the great artists of the time by private individuals and by civic and fraternal organizations, spoke of civic values and celebrated heroes; they illuminated history and presented transcendent allegory. At the time these gifts to states and cities were dedicated, little attention was paid to long term maintenance. Over time, weather, pollution, vandalism, and neglect took a profound toll on these cultural treasures.

Since 1994, Public Art Saint Paul has led the effort to clean, restore, and celebrate the Saint Paul's cultural treasures. Four of the city's most significant sculptures are installed in a series of small parks on upper Summit Avenue: *The New York Life Eagle*, 1890, by Louis and Augustus Saint-Gaudens in Lookout Park at Summit Avenue and Ramsey Street; *Nathan Hale*, 1907, by William Ordway Partridge in Nathan Hale Park at Summit and Portland Avenues; *Indian Hunter and His Dog*, 1926, by Paul Howard Manship in Cochran Park at Summit and Western Avenues; and the *Soldiers and Sailor's Memorial* (or *Josias King Memorial*), 1903 by John Karl Daniels in Summit Park at John Ireland and Kellogg Boulevards.

Public Art Saint Paul began its stewardship efforts as the Twin Cities and Minnesota leader of the national

Save Outdoor Sculpture (SOS!) program 1993-94. This initiative of the Smithsonian Institution involved an inventory and basic condition assessment of works throughout America, carried out by trained volunteers whose reports were filed in a national database. Cultural Historian Tom Zahn was engaged to manage this effort and has remained an advisor to our stewardship program ever since.

From the SOS! information, Public Art Saint Paul set out in 1993 to focus on two of the most artistically significant works in the city's collection: *Nathan Hale* and the *Indian Hunter and His Dog*. Art historian Mason Riddle researched the history of the sculptures. We engaged the Upper Midwest Conservation Association and its objects conservator Kristin Cheronis to examine and restore the sculptures.

In July, 1995 the beautifully restored sculptures returned to their rightful places on Summit Avenue; amid worthy fanfare they were rededicated.

The Nathan Hale Chapter of the DAR, University Club, Ramsey Hill Association, Yale Alumni Association, City of Saint Paul, F. R. Bigelow Foundation, Upper Midwest Conservation Association, and over 100 private individuals supported the \$57,000 cost of restoration. Since that time, Public Art Saint Paul has underwritten and provided regular professional maintenance.

Nathan Hale

cast bronze, 1907

by William Ordway Partridge

*Commissioned by the Nathan Hale Chapter
of the Daughters of the American Revolution*

Nathan Hale, dedicated in 1907, was the first monument west of Ohio to honor the Revolutionary War. Its sculptor, William Ordway Partridge, (1861-1930) was born in Paris to a wealthy American merchant family. The family returned to the United States in 1870, as the second empire collapsed and the Prussians were at the gates of Paris. He studied art at Columbia College, where he also developed a keen and life-long interest in theatre. Later, he traveled extensively through Europe and studied sculpture at the École de Beaux Arts in Paris and in Rome. Upon returning to America, he studied dramatic arts, pursued a career as an actor and eventually returned to sculpture. To finance his continuing art education, he used his dramatic talents in giving poetry readings to Boston's social elite.

In 1902, Partridge published an historical character study of *Nathan Hale*, *The Ideal Patriot*. Shortly thereafter, he was commissioned to create Saint Paul's sculpture by the Nathan Hale Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution. Partridge worked for more than 5 years on the piece, seeking a depiction of Hale that would be "inspired and vital to the living present."

The bronze sculpture depicts Nathan Hale with hands tied behind his back, waiting to meet his fate on the scaffold. He is dressed in the simple garb of a schoolmaster. The St. Paul Pioneer Press exclaimed at the time of dedication that "the attitude is a striking one, full of strength and dignity".

By 1990 the noble sculpture's condition had badly deteriorated. The environment had taken its toll, with acid snow corroding the bronze and original patina. In the 1970's, a boom truck working on elm removal struck the sculpture's pedestal with such force that it ripped the sculpture and its 800-pound base from the pedestal and sent them flying. When it landed, the sculpture's feet were twisted and mangled: the work was hauled off to a storage lot. A monument company was called in to restore the work. Unfortunately, more damage was done in the process: the bronze was horribly pitted as it was sand-blasted. Uncertain how to reattach the figure's



feet to a base, the worker sawed off the heels and bolted the now flat-shoed sculpture to the base with lead pins — inviting galvanic corrosion. By 1993, these pins had completely disintegrated, leaving the sculpture with no attachment whatsoever.

Public Art Saint Paul's SOS! team examined the sculpture in 1993. The lack of attachment and dangerous instability was brought to the attention of Saint Paul Parks and Recreation, which removed the sculpture to storage.

In July, 1995 the beautifully restored work returned to its Summit Avenue home and was re-dedicated in concert with the Manship sculpture's return to Cochran Park. Members of the DAR and Yale Alumni Association joined in the celebration, along with the sculptor's family!



Indian Hunter and His Dog

cast bronze, 1926

by Paul Manship

Commissioned by the family of Thomas Cochran in his memory

In 1926 the cast bronze sculpture *Indian Hunter and His Dog* was created by Saint Paul native and internationally acclaimed artist Paul Howard Manship. Installed in a shallow blue-tiled pool in Cochran Park, the elegant Art Deco statue was encircled in 1927 by four cast bronze geese spouting water.

Cochran Park and the Manship sculptures were given to the city by the family of prominent Saint Paul businessman and civic leader Thomas Cochran Sr. Earlier in the century the site had been the favorite spot for neighborhood children to play and many of the park's details invite and speak to children. The small stone shelter, designed by the eminent Minnesota architect, Edwin Lundie, boasts delightful Gothic details and is the perfect spot for viewing beautiful sculptures. Mounted inside is a bronze plaque inscribed with a poem about childhood by Robert Louis Stevenson.

Paul Manship grew up in St. Paul. After study at the Art Students League in New York and the Philadelphia Academy of Fine Arts, he was awarded a Prix de Rome for study at the American Academy in Rome and also traveled to Greece. Among the important works he created through his long career are the Prometheus Fountain in Rockefeller Center, the Paul J. Rainey Memorial Gateway at the Bronx Zoo, the Osborne Memorial Playground in New York's Central Park, and *Four Moods of Time and Time and Fates Sundial* for the 1939 New York World's Fair. The Minnesota Museum of American Art holds a significant collection of Manship's works.



The Indian Hunter and His Dog remained a favorite of the artist throughout his life. Holding a bow in his left hand and arrows in his right, a moccasined Indian in breechcloth runs with his dog by his side. This native subject matter, reduced to its elemental forms, recalls Archaic Greek sculpture and is also a major expression of the elegant and sleek Art Deco aesthetic.

For lack of stewardship and outright criminal activities, the sculpture did not fare well over the years. Vandals broke arrows, bent the bow, shot the figure with bb guns and a '22, whacked it with a baseball bat, and carved initials and even whole names into the Indian's chest. In 1967, the statue was removed to Como Park out of concern for its safety in the then deteriorating neighborhood. A fiberglass replica was commissioned as a replacement. Oddly, the replica was colored green – the same as the color of bronze corrosion (if properly cared for, the work should be a deep Art Deco black).

The attempt to save the sculpture by moving it to Como Park didn't help – galvanic corrosion resulted from the original bronze base being replaced with lead. Rust developed where wire had been wrapped to secure broken arrows. The original granite bases in Cochran Park were lost and the bronze geese were secured to their new Como Park bases with bolts driven through the decorative leaves and the sculptor's signature! An auto mechanic used Bondo to glue broken pieces of the sculptures back in place and some black goopy material was dripped on the sculpture, causing further corrosion.

In response to the initiative of Summit Avenue resident Alma Joseph and the Ramsey Hill Association, action was taken by the Saint Paul City Council in 1994 to return the original work to Summit Avenue.

The beautifully restored sculpture returned to Cochran Park in July, 1995 and was re-dedicated in concert with the return of Nathan Hale. Members of the Cochran and Manship families joined in the celebration.



ART. SPIRIT & PRACTICE

The New York Life Eagle

cast bronze, 1890

by Augustus and Louis Saint-Gaudens

Commissioned by the New York Life Insurance Company

The New York Life Building was built and its New York Life Eagle installed in 1890, at the height of Saint Paul's late 19th century commercial & railway development. In 1865, the population was 12,976; by 1890, it had reached over 120,000.

This bustling transportation hub in the center of the country attracted the New York Life Insurance Company in its westward expansion. In 1887, the company embarked upon development of branches in Saint Paul, Omaha and Kansas City. It prided itself on its "artistic" New York headquarters building and was determined to carry that distinction to its new buildings on the frontier. The company commissioned the celebrated architect Stanford White to design its Kansas City and Omaha branches and the New York firm of Babb, Cook and Willard to design the St. Paul building. As he developed designs for the other two cities, White contacted his friend and frequent collaborator, Augustus Saint-Gaudens, to create a series of bronze Eagles to crown the main entries of all three new buildings.

Saint Paul's beautiful 10-story New York Life Building faced Minnesota Street, in the center of downtown. The entrance was three stories high and capped by the magnificent *New York Life Eagle*. The sculpture is an allegory of protection, with the majestic bird poised on a ledge of rock, its wings spread as a shelter over its nest of eaglets. Its talons firmly grasp a serpent that has threatened its young.

Giles Carroll Mitchell, in his book, *There is No Limit, Architecture and Sculpture in Kansas City*, noted that there was uncertainty as to whether the sculptor was Augustus Saint-Gaudens, or his brother, Louis. They often worked together. Augustus was one of the giants of American sculpture, creating the Shaw Memorial in Boston, Abraham Lincoln in Chicago, and the Sherman Memorial at the entrance to New York's Central Park. Louis's public works include the Lions for the Boston Public Library and the monumental figures for Union Station in Washington, D. C.

Mitchell's research led him to conclude that Stanford White commissioned Augustus to create the work, and that it was designed by Augustus,

but actually modeled (in marble) by Louis, who also oversaw its bronze casting.

Louis St. Gaudens was born in New York in 1854, six years after his family had emigrated from Ireland. His loyalty and devotion to Augustus were the deepest influences in his life. Like his older brother, he trained as a cameo cutter and joined Augustus in Europe, going first to Rome, then London, and finally to Paris in 1878, where he studied at the École des Beaux Arts. He returned to New York with Augustus in the early 1880's and helped him with his work for most of the rest of his life. The Boston Transcript of March 10, 1913, noted that "he best understood and could translate into model form his brother's ideas" and had a hand in virtually all of Augustus's commissions.

In 1900, he moved to Cornish, near Augustus's famed studio. He was part of his brother's "Cornish Colony" that also included painter Maxfield Parrish and sculptors Paulanship, Daniel Chester French, and Frederic Remington. Louis St. Gaudens died in 1913.

The *New York Life Eagle* occupied a central position in the life of the City of Saint Paul until 1967, when the beautiful New York Life Building was razed to make room for new urban development. This occurred before the organization of a Heritage Preservation Commission. A group of citizens led by Georgia Ray Lindeke did, however, make the case for preserving the *New York Life Eagle* from the building's demolition and headlines of the day asked, "Anybody for a Genuine Homeless Green Eagle?"

It was purchased from the demolition contract by real estate executive Watson Davidson and installed outside of his Pioneer Building. The sculpture was mounted on a low pedestal next to the building's 1960's parking ramp.

From 1967 until 1999, the *New York Life Eagle* was the property of whoever owned the parking ramp. Between 1995 and 1999, the property changed hands twice and was about to again. The sculpture was in extreme risk of being forgotten, discarded in a real estate transaction, or removed to a private property far away from Saint Paul. In 1999, with support from St. Paul attorney Jack Hoeschler, Public Art Saint Paul secured title to the work, thanks to the generosity of the Dynex Corporation, then owner of the ramp and the sculpture.

In 1999, as a condition of Dynex's gift, Public Art Saint Paul removed the sculpture from its 4th and Jackson perch to a secure maintenance facility in Como Park. Later that year, Public Art Saint Paul accepted the Ramsey Hill Association's proposal to install the sculpture in Summit Lookout Park. Located at the intersection of Ramsey Street and Summit Avenue, the park is the oldest in the city and offers a splendid vista of the Mississippi River valley. Eagles had returned to a restored river; this restored historic Eagle would join them.

In 2002, Public Art Saint Paul, Ramsey Hill Association, Saint Paul Parks and Recreation, and the Saint Paul Design Center convened a park design charrette at the University Club. The result was a concept for park improvements that would feature the sculpture. Landscape architect Regina Flanagan carried the concept through to a schematic design that was approved by the City for final design and implementation.

Public Art Saint Paul engaged conservator Kristin Cheronis to restore the sculpture. Working over a summer in the Como maintenance yard, she cleaned a century's dirt, grime, and errant paint and caulk from the bronze surface. She removed corrosion through water jet spraying, walnut shell blasting, and by hand with gentle abrasive pads. She drilled weep holes in the snake and at the tail of the Eagle. The snake, which had been broken at some point and inappropriately reattached with roofing tar, was properly welded into position. Patinas were applied to achieve a nuanced and rich color; wax was applied to protect the sculpture and give it a deep finish.

As restoration was in process, the Ramsey Hill Association set to work to develop the park. Architect (and Ramsey Hill resident) Jack Buxell provided the services of his design firm to complete the park design. Structural engineer

Tom Stoneburner of TKDA donated structural engineering of the pedestal. Sculptor John Hock, metallurgist John Brynildson, and sculptor Philip Rickey developed the sculpture installation plan. Larry Gleason of CPMI donated coordination of the pedestal construction project. Grazzini Brothers, Mankato Stone Company, and Rak Construction provided materials and constructed the pedestal. Murphy Warehouse transported the sculpture to Lookout Park and hoisted it into place.

The beautifully restored *New York Life Eagle* alit in Lookout Park on June 29, 2004. Garrison Keillor served as MC for the dedication program hosted by the University Club that included: welcome by the mayor and councilmembers; observations about "Louis and Augustus Saint-Gaudens: Artists of the American Renaissance" by Christopher Monkhouse, Curator of Decorative Arts at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts; recollections about the *New York Life's Westward Expansion* by New York Life Foundation Chair Peter Bushyaeger; and the story of the sculpture restoration by Public Art Saint Paul board chair Peter Kramer. All joined Maria Jette and Dan Chouinard in celebratory Songs of Eagles.

Councilmember Jay Benanav helped to secure the New York Life Foundation's lead gift for sculpture's restoration and installation. Other major contributors were the St. Paul Pioneer Press, the Patrick and Aimee Butler Foundation, Garrison Keillor and Jennie Nielson, the Scrooby Foundation, and the Ramsey Hill Association.

The Lookout Park Partnership renovated the park, with major support from Ruth and A.J. Huss, Dusty and George Mairs, Rotary Club of Saint Paul, City of Saint Paul STAR program, and many generous individuals. The Park was rededicated on August 13, 2008.



Soldiers & Sailors Memorial (or Josias King Memorial)

cast bronze, 1903
by John K. Daniels

*Commissioned by the Anchor Post #21 of the
Grand Army of the Republic*

Originally installed at the intersection of old 4th and Dayton Avenues, the sculpture was moved to its present location in Summit Park to make way for the construction of the Cathedral of Saint Paul. The sculpture was dedicated on November 20, 1903.

The figure is of Josias King of the First Minnesota Regiment. Posted to the Potomac, the regiment participated in First Bull Run, the campaign on the Peninsula, Antietam, and Fredericksberg. At Gettysberg, the regiment lost 83% of its men on the second day as it stopped Confederate penetration of the Union line; those remaining returned the following day to stop Pickett's charge. King was mustered in as First Lieutenant on September 14, 1862; by the war's end he was a Lieutenant Colonel and remained in the Army until 1871. He spent the rest of his life in St. Paul and died in 1916. He was present at the sculpture's dedication.

The sculpture is attributed to John Karl Daniels (1875-1978), a prominent Minnesota sculptor who went on to create Governor Knute Nelson, explorer Leif Erickson, and other sculptures at the Minnesota State Capitol. Daniels was born in Norway and immigrated to the United States in 1884. He attended Mechanic Arts High School in Saint Paul and later studied sculpture in Norway and Paris. His studio was a former icehouse located behind the old Van Dusen mansion in Minneapolis.

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However, Daniels created only the head of the sculpture; the body is a generic cast of a Union soldier. The sculpture is mounted atop a 50-foot high pedestal of Vermont granite. There are four bronze plaques set into the pedestal with the seal of the Grand Army of the Republic; language dedicating the work to "perpetuate the memory of the Union soldiers and sailors 1861-65"; paeon to the "Victories they helped achieve"; and acknowledgement of those who commissioned the memorial.

In 2013, Public Art Saint Paul commissioned an examination of the sculpture's condition and treatment proposal from conservator Kristin Cheronis. Engineer Ken Green from MacDonald Mack brought structural expertise to the process. The restoration project is estimated to cost \$90,000, including restoration, scaffolding and pedestal repair, site preparation and security, historic research, and public awareness. Public Art Saint Paul intends to undertake the project in 2016, pending success in fundraising.

Funding for the conservator's treatment proposal was provided by Leaetta Hough and Bob Muschewske and the William and Nancy Podas aRt&D Fund.

By Christine Podas-Larson, President Public Art Saint Paul

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Brad Daniels, and Bob Muschewske*

