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BUREAU OF PROPERTY CONTROL
CITY OF PORTLAND, OREGON

JOURNAL VOUCHER
FOUNTAINS, STATUES, & MEMORIALS

DATE March 19, 1968

JOURNAL VOUCHER NO. _____

Coming Of The White Man Statue
RECORD NO. _____ NAME _____

Washington Park
ADDRESS _____

Statue
CLASSIFICATION _____ CODE _____

Donation _____ October 6, 1904 _____ See Remarks
HOW ACQUIRED _____ WHEN ACQUIRED _____ ORDINANCE NO. _____

D. P. Thompson Family
FROM WHOM ACQUIRED _____

REAL PROPERTY CROSS REFERENCE:

535 _____ Bureau of Parks
LOCATION NO. _____ LOCATION NAME _____
Washington Park

DESCRIPTION: Life-size bronze statue of an indian chief, supposedly Chief Multnomah, and a young brave which captures their mood as they gaze toward the Columbia River and see for the first time the white stranger coming uninvited to their land. The statue stands upon a natural stone which is 9' wide by 7' long by 65" high. "Presented to the City of Portland by the family of David P. Thompson", is chiseled in the upper northeast face of the natural stone. Inscribed on the eastern base of the statue itself is "Coming Of The White Man".

The sculptor of this fine example of statuary was Hermon Atkins MacNeil.

HISTORICAL DATA First communication to the City of Portland in regard to the "Coming Of The White Man" statuary was in the form of a letter addressed to the Board of Park Commissioners from the D. P. Thompson family, August 2, 1902. The letter stated the intention of the D. P. Thompson family to present to the City of Portland a monument and their desire to have the City set apart an appropriate tract of land in the City Park (now Washington Park) where the monument might be placed. The Board of Park Commissioners took action September 5, 1902 and Mayor G. H. Williams along with T. L. Eliot were designated to answer the D. P. Thompson family. The reply found the Park Commissioners honored to accept the monumental bronze group, and to provide the necessary tract of land in City Park for its placement. The letter submitted to the Park Commission shows that the D. P. Thompson family made careful investigation of the skill of the sculptor commissioned to execute this work of art. Mr. H. A. MacNeil appeared on the scene highly recommended by Mr. Daniel C. French, who at that time was considered by some, one of the greatest - if not the greatest - living sculptors.

The creation of this work of art consumed approximately two years before its completion. The finished bronze work represents a real tribute to the skill of the sculptor, who had spent most of his life in the studios of Old World capitals and although having little contact with American Indians, captured the true spirit of the Multnomah Indians.

The dedication took place 3:00 p.m. October 6, 1904 and an article in the Oregonian October 7, 1904 extensively covers the dedication. The late D. P. Thompson was represented by Joseph N. Teal, his son-in-law, at the dedication. Prominent citizens and early pioneers walked or drove to the top of the steep promontory to gaze upon the statuary. Mayor Williams accepted the sculpture from Mr. Teal and lauded the generosity, public spirit, and good taste of the family of the late David P. Thompson.

REMARKS No official ordinance or resolution found accepting the "Coming Of The White Man"; however, Park Board minutes validate the acceptance of the statue by the City of Portland. September 5, 1902 - Park Board Minutes - Book I, Pages 77, 78, 80, communication from the D. P. Thompson family offering to the City of Portland a monument, or a group of statuary and acceptance of same by the Board of Park Commissioners.

October 7, 1904 - Park Board Minutes - Book I - Page 199, acknowledgement of the Park Board of the formal presentation of "The Coming Of The White Man" to the City of Portland and briefly describing the ceremony and participation by his Honor Geo. H. Williams, Mayor.

Material Source: Park Board Minutes - Book I - Pages 77, 78, 80, 199, 202, Annual Reports Pages 223, 224, microfilm copies of newspapers at Oregon Historical Society and Multnomah County Central Library.

NOTE: On March 10, 1971, Ordinance No. 132294 was passed accepting the "Coming of the White Man" statuary.

March 19, 1968

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COMING OF THE WHITE MAN

PARK ROAD TO SIV
PARK PL.

WASHINGTON PARK

FOOT PATH

SIV

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Portland, Oregon, August 2, 1902.

To the Honorable,

The Board of Park Commissioners
of the City of Portland.

Gentlemen:

The undersigned intend to give to the City of Portland a monument, or group of statuary, and desire at this time to have your Honorable body set apart and appropriate a tract of land in the City Park where said monument can be placed. As the location taken in connection with the proposed group is of the utmost importance, we apply to have you set apart for said purpose the elliptical plot of ground situated near the menagerie at the summit of the City Park. It is the purpose, if we receive your permission, to place this monument near the center of this plot, and as to its adaptability there can be no question. It is impossible at this time to state just the exact place in the plot where the monument would finally be placed.

In order that you may understand the character of the proposed monument, we would state that the group to be erected will be of bronze, on a pedestal of natural rough stone or large boulder, the pedestal or foundation to be not less than six feet, and not to exceed twelve feet in height, and the figures to be eight and one-half feet in height.

The sculptor has entitled the group "The Coming of the White Man", and has presented his subject by two Indians, the one pointing out such coming to the other. We hand you, herewith, a photograph of the first rough sketch of the proposed group, but

will say that the pedestal and foundation have been changed to conform to the description above set out, and will not appear as they do in the photograph.

The sculptor to whom this work has been assigned is Mr. H. A. Mac Neil, who has the reputation of being one of the very best of the American sculptors; and in this connection we submit to you a letter from Mr. Daniel C. French, one of the greatest-if not the greatest- living sculptors, as to Mr. Mac Neil's standing in his profession. Kindly return to us Mr. French's letter.

Mr. Mac Neil has recently spent one week in Portland looking over the ground as to the most appropriate place for this group, and his choice is as above indicated.

It will take from eighteen months to two years to complete this work, but, as much will depend upon its environment and surroundings, it is necessary at this time to know the position it will occupy when completed.

We shall be glad, if your Honorable body desire any further information, to appear in person and explain the matter more thoroughly than it can be done in a letter.

An early reply will very greatly oblige,

Yours respectfully,

Mary R. Thompson,
Genevieve Thompson
Walter M. Neal.

THE BOARD

OFF

DATE OF ORGANIZATION
OCT. 20, 1900

H. S. ROWE, MAYOR, CHAIRMAN
W. B. CHASE, CITY ENGINEER
CHAS. F. BEEBE,
T. L. ELIOT,
HENRY FLECKENSTEIN,
L. L. HAWKINS,
RUFUS MALLORY,

PARK COMMISSIONERS

OF THE
CITY OF PORTLAND

THOS. C. DEVLIN,
SECRETARY

PORTLAND, OREGON, Sept. 19, 1902.

To Mrs. Mary R. Thompson,
Mrs. J. N. Teal,
Miss Genevieve Thompson.

Dear Ladies:-

The undersigned were appointed at a meeting of the Park Commission of Portland, September 5th, 1902, to convey to you an expression of the thanks of the Commission on their own part, and on the part of the public whom they serve and represent, for the proffer of a monumental bronze group, to be placed by you in the City Park. The Commission feel honored by your request that they shall be the recipients and guardians of this gift. They have designated a certain spot which they understand to be acceptable to yourselves and the Artist, Mr. MacNeil, for the placing of the group with its proper foundation. Permit us to express the hope that the time of this ^{on the completion of the work} ~~placing~~ may be made the subject of a formal presentation by yourselves or representatives, ^{at} ~~to~~ which citizens may be present, and an adequate response be made by the Commission for the City.

Trusting that the proposed impressive work of art will proceed felicitously in the hands of those to whom you have delegated it, and that it will remain for many years as an ornament and inspiration to the City of Portland and to all Americans.

We remain,

Yours most sincerely
Committee for the Park Commission,

Signed G. H. Williams
T. L. Eliot

GENIUS IN STATUE

Great Work of Art for City Park.

"COMING OF THE WHITE MAN"

Chief Multnomah and Young Brave Are Depicted in Bronze, Gazing Into Distance, Presumably at Arrival of Explorers.

Hermon Atkins MacNeil has been engaged all this week in superintending the setting up of his masterpiece in sculp-

into that old chief. He has depicted a patriarch in the full possession of his bodily strength, with a frame of iron and still capable of fighting with dash and a certain stroke. His are the legs of strength and agility, the knees tightly bound by tendons and the cords of the thigh drawn. He stands on his toes to see better, making hollows in his hips and bringing out the groin line clear. His legs are those of perfect strength, with the veins showing a little more prominently than in a young man. The body is upright, the arms folded and a shield is slung over the back.

It is the face that is the power. It is that of a Multnomah, a man of mental ability, a savage leader. He guided his own people by his wisdom and led them in conquest on the enemy. The neck is drawn in heavy cords and upon it is the chin of hauteur, almost disdain, the eyes expectant, but not astonished; the nose masterful, the long, strong hair bound back by a band.

Beside him is the young brave, a pace behind his elder, the skin thrown over his shoulders still caught by the wind. He has barely stopped, his face, his body, his arms, his legs, everything expressing open curiosity and wonderment. He holds up in his left hand a branch which he might have broken from the vine maple

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Ex-Senator George W. city, having returned but from his timberland holder Hill district on the in Southern Columbia co

It is known that the \$ of his personal effects in destroyed St. Helens a sho it is supposed by many forest fires have also ta the recent past. This is by Mr. McBride, who say age through Columbia c overestimated and that reality been more of a be jury to the people holding that district. Yesterday Senator told of his exper vations gained while can vicinity of the fires that sweeping through the tim incalculable loss to the

"It may seem strange such an assertion," said in the face of the excite and the stories that have told, but I believe I am sa out of a tract of timber estimated at \$3,000,000 the not more than \$1000. In Bunker Hill along the I have some timber, and of the fire I was campe district. In the tract w my observation there w and I think I am safe in more than 500 acres w fire and of that portion a acres were really damage gratton.

"I was close to the m continued the Senator. ected in its progress. I tion to visit the scene a study of the fire (the remaining timber

"COMING OF THE WHITE MAN"



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THOMPSON STATUE BEING ERECTED IN CITY PARK.

ture, "The Coming of the White Man," upon a knoll in the City Park. Within a day or two the bronze figures of Chief Multnomah and the young brave will be standing upon a rough rock as if they had just run up the hill, looking off through an opening in the trees over Portland toward the Columbia River gap, as if beholding for the first time Lewis and Clark as they came out through the narrow walls of the canon.

This gift to the city, made by the children of the late D. P. Thompson, in memory of their father, has taken one of the leading sculptors of the country two years to complete, and he has now come to Portland to see it placed in position and superintend the work. Yesterday he was on the knoll, which is just to the east of the bearplt, with his coat off, his hand in the work itself, with the bronze statue upright on the grass beside the pedestal, facing as it will stand when placed. People drifting by stopped and even the least artistic could see that

he has just passed, and waves it in token of a good will to the strangers.

Before Sunday this masterpiece will be in place and the people of Portland will see that they have a work of art not surpassed by any the country boasts of and something that will call to mind to their great grandchildren why the Centennial of the coming of Lewis and Clark was celebrated in the year 1906.

Veteran Fireman Seeks Divorce.

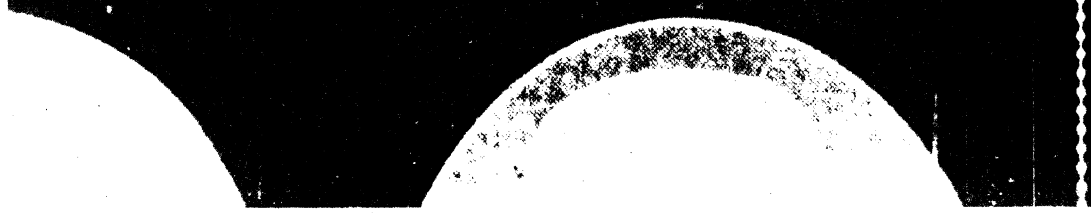
Charles C. Dobelbower, an old-time Portland fireman, has commenced suit in the State Circuit Court in Columbia County against Frances A. Doblebower for a divorce on account of desertion. Mr. Dobelbower has been living for some time past at Rainier and Mrs. Dobelbower conducts a lodging-house on Salmon street.

Says Jennings Refused to Pay Fare.

Helen C. Jennings, in answer to the suit of her husband, O. C. Jennings, for

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GIVE STATUE TO CITY

**Heirs of D. P. Thompson
Make Presentation.**

MONUMENT IS VERY STRIKING

**J. N. Teal Makes Speech Explaining
Something of the Artist's Con-
ception, and Mayor Williams
Accepts Gift for Portland.**

Before several carriage loads of Port-land's leading citizens the bronze statue, "The Coming of the White Man," conceived by the genius of Hermon Atkins MacNeil, was formally presented to the city yesterday at 3 P. M. by the heirs of the late D. P. Thompson, represented by Joseph N. Teal, his son-in-law. Walking or driving, it is a steep climb to the highest eminence in the City Park, where the statue has been placed, but a crowd of prominent people came to look upon the masterpiece and receive the gift in the name of the city. There were many pioneers present, men and women with whose lives the epoch the statue symbolizes ends, who stood and listened while their pioneer Mayor, Judge Williams, spoke their gratitude for them.

It is a tribute to the artist that he, a man who was raised in New England, has spent his life in the studios of the Old World's capitals, and knows Indians only from contact with the present generation, should be able to portray a great Indian chief, like Multnomah, so masterfully that Mayor Williams, who knew the original inhabitants of the country, should say it "represented the real Indians as they were."

The idea embodied in the group is read at a glance. It possesses the simplicity of the highest art. Multnomah, who ruled his own tribe by his oratory and the neighboring tribes by the strength of his arm, has been warned that there are white men coming through the Columbia River gap. He runs with the lightness of youth up a knoll to see them, and is accompanied by a young brave. The sculptor chooses the moment when they catch the first sight of the approaching strangers, Lewis and Clark. The chief, his face lined with character, stands on his toes to see better, but does not give way to curiosity and excitement as his younger companion. He stands erect, haughty, a savage sovereign. The young chief waves a branch in token of good

Doubtless, through rumors running from tribe to tribe, he had heard of the results of the white man's visits in the country to the east, but he had never come in contact with them. Haughty, defiant, as becomes a mighty chieftain, resentful, yet interested, wise with the wisdom of age and experience, feeling forebodings of disaster, he stood sternly on the rock, bravely facing a fate he could not avoid, resolved, as a great warrior, to fall, if fall he must, as only warriors fall. The younger tribesman, full of curiosity and interest, recking not of the future, the novelty of it all appealing to him, waves from a bough broken, from the nearest bush, a salutation. It is the antithesis of youth and age. What higher psychological moment could have been chosen, what more striking theme to represent civilization's approach? It is a note sounded by a genius.

Multnomah's Falling Star.

It seems to me that as one looks on the bronze figures standing on the rock gazing up Columbia's Gorge, one cannot but feel for old Multnomah and his falling star, and pity the youthful innocence of the boy who did not know that before civilization's march barbarism falls, as disappears the dew before the rising sun. By you and by succeeding generations must the verdict be rendered as to how well and feelingly the sculptor has done his work. The donors can only say they feel a debt of gratitude to Mr. MacNeil in thus perpetuating the thought which to them was almost as vague as a dream. There are those around us who were amongst the founders of this commonwealth, who helped lay the first rough hearth-stone, who hewed the first trees that made the cabin home that has since developed into the stately structure we call our state. To them this group must bring memories of struggles, joys and sorrows of half a century ago, and to them it tells a story as full of romance and as wonderful as that of the early Puritan or Virginian.

Duty a Pleasant One.

As a son of Oregon, as a loyal citizen of this beautiful city, I could say much on a subject so interesting and so dear to me, but I must trespass no further on your time, as my duty is a simple, but a pleasant one.

Mr. Mayor, to you, as representing the City of Portland, I now, on behalf of the donors, the family of Mr. Thompson, deliver this statue, assuring you that it is to them a double pleasure, as they not only carry out the wishes of a husband and father, but also have erected a memorial which will recall to generations yet unborn the early history of the great Oregon Country.

Mayor Williams made one of his usual short replies:

Mayor Williams Makes Reply.

Mr. Teal: I accept for the City of Portland this magnificent group of statuary presented by the family of the late David P. Thompson. They have made a gift to this city which will stand here for generations to come as a monument to their generosity, public spirit and good taste. This statuary will add greatly to the attractions of this beautiful park. I have seen many of the equestrian and heroic statues of Eastern cities, but none of them appear to me to be so full of animation as the group now before us. These two life-like bronze figures represent not the Indians of poetry or romance, but they represent real Indians as they were when the star of empire on its Western coast first burst upon their startled vision. The elder and larger Indian with an apparent air of strength and dignity seems to say:

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D PROBLEM

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Mr. MacNeil received the congratulations of both Mr. Teal and Mayor Williams on his success in producing a statue which appeals so strongly to the memory of earlier days on the part of those who have lived a long lifetime since the tribe of Multnomah has died.

Statue on High Knoll.

The statue stands where Mr. MacNeil conceived the idea which it embodies. It is the high knoll above the Barnes road, which falls away rapidly to the city lying at its feet, and overlooks the stretch of the Columbia River as far as the opening in the Cascade Mountains, through which it flows.

Mr. Teal, in his address of presentation, after explaining that it had always been the desire of Mr. Thompson to have some monument erected to the early history of Oregon, said regarding the statue:

Imagine, if you can, proud old Multnomah when he first caught a glimpse of the white stranger coming unbidden to his land. A conqueror of all the surrounding tribes, the great head of what, to him, was a great nation, he now faced an unknown problem.

of struggles, joys, sorrows of half a century ago, and to them it tells a story as full of romance and as wonderful as that of the early Puritan or Virginian.

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Mayor Williams Makes Reply.

Mr. Teal: I accept for the City of Portland this magnificent group of statuary presented by the family of the late David P. Thompson. They have made a gift to this city which will stand here for generations to come as a monument to their generosity, public spirit and good taste. This statuary will add greatly to the attractions of this beautiful park. I have seen many of the equestrian and heroic statues of Eastern cities, but none of them appear to me to be so full of animation as the group now before us. These two life-like bronze figures represent not the Indians of poetry or romance, but they represent real Indians as they were when the star of empire on its Western course first burst upon their startled vision. The elder and larger Indian with an apparent air of strength and defiance seems to say:

"Come one, come all, this rock shall fly from its firm base as soon as I." While his younger, more excitable companion points with an expression of wonder as he sees something approaching, new and surprising to him. These two Indians appear to see in the shadowy distance Lewis and Clark and their comrades advancing into the Oregon Country. The historic significance of this group is the white man's invasion of the wilderness home of the Indian. This monument will probably stand here when the race of people whom it represents has become extinct, and will then describe to those who come to see it better than any book the form, features and chief characteristics of the original inhabitants of this country.

David P. Thompson in his lifetime erected in the Plaza Block a splendid representative of our wild animals, and now his family have supplemented that monument to his memory by erected in this park a more splendid representation of the wild men of our country. Men and animals are on the downward way to a place among the "things that were."

I feel authorized to say to you, Mr. Teal, that the people of Portland will receive and guard this group of statuary with unceasing admiration for the skill of the sculptor and gratitude to the donors of this very interesting and valuable gift to the city.

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