

THE GREATEST OUTRAGE: MILITARY PARK, LONG HOSPITAL, AND
PROGRESSIVE ERA NOTIONS OF URBAN SPACE

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Introduction

Military park [*sic*] is one of the oldest in the city and has long served as a breathing spot where people could go and get a bit of fresh air. The plan to spoil the park as a breathing spot is one of the greatest outrages that has been attempted in Indianapolis for several years. —Indianapolis Mayor Samuel Shank, *Indianapolis Star*, 6 November 1911¹

In 1911 Dr. Robert W. Long gave a gift of real estate to the state of Indiana and stipulated that the sale of the property would fund a teaching hospital for the Indiana School of Medicine. The state senator who sponsored the hospital bill suggested placing the proposed hospital within the boundaries of Military Park, the city's oldest park. Indiana University trustees agreed, which led to Indianapolis Mayor Samuel Lewis Shank's angry denunciation of the proposition as "one of the greatest outrages" proposed in recent years in Indianapolis. Three interested camps formed over the location of what became known as Long Hospital: the Indiana University trustees, who approved of placing the hospital in the park because of its proximity to downtown Indianapolis; lineage societies and veterans, who touted the park's historical significance as a nationalistic message to all residents; and the state and city governments and local civic organizations, who promoted the health benefits of public parks and playgrounds. Through open debate, particularly in Indianapolis' newspapers, each position supported Progressive era reform attitudes towards the use of civic space in terms of its relationships to public health, social morality, and nationalistic values.

The historical implications of the Long Hospital proposal debate have escaped most scholarly discussions of Military Park in Indiana and Indianapolis. Most scholastic mentions of Military Park are found in discussions about Indianapolis public parks or the

¹ "Shank Seeks to Halt Long Hospital Plans," *Indianapolis Star*, 6 November 1911.

formation of the Indiana University School of Medicine. Most scholars note Military Park's role in early Indianapolis history as a militia drilling site, an early recreational space, and its extensive renovation after the American Civil War. Acknowledgment of the park's significance in promoting public green space and as a forerunner to the playground movement is minimal.² Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI) history professor Ralph Gray chronicles the history of the campus in *IUPUI: The Making of an Urban University*. Gray focuses on the formation of the Indiana University School of Medicine in the early 1900s, but the fiercely debated decision about the placement of Long Hospital is largely glossed over. Gray acknowledges that Military Park was first chosen as the site by the Indiana General Assembly, and relates that the state's governor supported the current hospital site closer to City Hospital.³

Further discussion about the central debate on the placement of Long Hospital and Military Park demonstrates how Progressive-era Indianapolis citizens valued public green space and what was deemed legitimate use. The controversy strikes at the heart of how Indianapolis citizens perceived medical education reform, local history, and the role of public parks. The groups and individuals associated with the disagreement utilized competing Progressive era ideals, such as reforming medical school standards, promoting

² James R. O'Day, "George E. Kessler and Indianapolis Park System: A Study of its Historical Development during the City Beautiful Era, 1895–1915" (M.A. thesis, Ball State University, 1988), 45; Michelle D. Hale, "Let the Children Play!: The Indianapolis Playground Movement, 1894–1919" (M.A. thesis, Indiana University, 1997), 40; "Military Park," David J. Bodenhamer and Robert G. Barrows, eds. *Encyclopedia of Indianapolis* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 1008–9; Stephanie L. Seawell, "Douglass Park: The Lasting Public Landscape of Indianapolis' First Black Park" (M.A. thesis, Indiana University, 2005), 13.

³ Ralph D. Gray, *IUPUI: The Making of an Urban University* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003), 18–19.

nationalistic education, and retaining public parks. The adversarial factions of Indianapolis citizens, through the use of competing Progressive era rhetoric, highlight the importance of urban space and its function in the early twentieth-century American cities.

The Progressive era is largely characterized as a broad reform movement that sought to uplift society in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Progressive era reformers were often middle and upper class citizens concerned about social welfare and order. At the turn of the twentieth century, American society faced an influx of changes economically, politically, and socially. Industrialization radically changed the nature of American labor from small scale skilled crafts to unskilled large manufacturing jobs. A wave of European immigrants swarmed American cities and crowded ill-kept and ill-managed housing. Scientific breakthroughs in medicine and technology popularized standardized, statistical methods of study.

At the heart of the movement was a belief in the “good society” and reformers focused on improving the lot of the working classes. Progressives courted change often by methodical studies of social ills based on scientific reason and requested services and regulations from local, state, and federal governments. Reformers campaigned for regulated work weeks, child labor laws, and safe working conditions. Overcrowded cities became a focal point of Progressive era reforms, and prompted reformers to fight for regulations related to housing, sanitation, food production, and access to schools, public playgrounds, and public parks. Reformers physically transformed American cities in the

hopes that a positive environment with safe public programs and amenities would improve the morality and overall quality of working class lives.⁴

By the time Dr. Long made his \$200,000 donation of real estate to the state of Indiana for the Indiana University School of Medicine, Military Park was an important site locally because of its physical position near the state capitol grounds. Alexander Ralston, who studied under Pierre Charles L'Enfant, planner of Washington, D. C., designed the original one square-mile plat of Indianapolis in 1821. The U.S. Congress created Military Park in 1827 as a training ground for the state militia in close proximity to the Capitol. The park originally extended to the White River and early settlers avoided the flood- and malaria-ridden area. Later, the inexpensive land around Military Park became home to African American and European immigrant communities. Many of these newcomers first worked on the Central Canal in the 1830s, and situated their homes along the southern border of the park. The canal became a source of industrial power and its current powered a variety of mills as early as the 1840s. Both the canal and Military Park subsequently became community gathering spaces for the industrial and residential areas on Indianapolis' western edge.⁵

⁴ Paul Boyer, *Urban Masses and Moral Order in America, 1820–1920* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978), 221. For further reading about the Progressive Era see: John Milton Cooper, Jr., *Pivotal Decades: The United States, 1900–1920* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1990); Alan Dawley, *Struggles for Justice: Social Responsibility and the Liberal State* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1991); Steven J. Diner, *A Very Different Age: Americans of the Progressive Era* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1998); Michael G. Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991).

⁵ J. Darrel Bakken, *Now that Time has had its Say: A History of the Indianapolis Central Canal, 1835–2002* (Bloomington, IN: 1st Books Library, 2002), 11.

The first notable military use of the park occurred in the 1830s. First known as Military Grounds or Military Reservation or simply Reserve, the land hosted encampments of troops preparing for the Black Hawk and Mexican wars of the early- to mid-nineteenth century.⁶ In addition, Military Park functioned as a public meeting place for citywide celebrations and hosted the first Indiana State Fair. In 1860 state militia groups from around Indiana held an encampment in Military Park.⁷ Its role as a mustering camp for Union troops during the American Civil War led to a new name, Camp Sullivan, and a more noteworthy place in Indiana history. After the war, George Merritt, a local philanthropist, petitioned the city of Indianapolis to obtain rights to improve the former camp. Merritt earned his wealth in the woolen industry and as a local banker. Raised a Quaker, Merritt did not enlist in the Civil War, but instead organized Sanitary Fair efforts and after the war he envisioned the old encampment as a beautiful park.⁸

Under Merritt, the old camp was reshaped into a pleasant, inviting recreational space in the city's western end. Merritt, who lived near the park, with his own funds and contributions from neighbors, transformed the grounds with new grading, sculpted flower gardens, a central pond full of fish, and a path wide enough for carriages. Merritt also desired a children's playground, which he installed around 1895. By 1911, when the

⁶ William Sullivan, "Map of Indianapolis," 1836, Indiana Historical Society; Military Park photos, Box 44 and 46, W. H. Bass Photo Collection, Indiana Historical Society; Max R. Hyman, ed. *The Journal Handbook of Indianapolis: An Outline History* (Indianapolis, Indianapolis Journal Newspaper Co., 1902), 94-95.

⁷ Jacob Piatt Dunn, *Greater Indianapolis: the History, the Industries, the Institutions, and the People of a City of Homes*, Vol. 1 (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co., 1910), 219.

⁸ Indianapolis Public Schools, "Naming the George Merritt School," 12 December 1912, Indiana State Library; "George Merritt as a man of public spirit," *Indianapolis News*, 31 October 1903, p. 28.

Long Hospital proposal threatened the park, its grounds included a Romanesque Revival-style shelter house, a children's playground, an early settler's cabin, restrooms, a lending library, and in the winter, a toboggan run. In addition, the New York Street entrance to the park was framed by retired Civil War cannons and a cannonball monument resided near the pond.⁹ These war relics placed throughout the park served as visible reminders of its wartime connections and contrasted greatly with the welcoming flower beds and playground equipment.

By the early twentieth century, Military Park had been altered and reshaped numerous times by the ebb and flow of populist ideas and military necessity. Thus Military Park represented a shifting cultural landscape that exposed the changing attitudes of Indianapolis citizens towards the city's public space. The study of cultural landscapes began in the late-twentieth century with the rise of social history and environmental history. Historians and cultural geographers grappled with terms like landscape, cultural landscapes, and place. Central to understanding and studying landscape is the recognition that it is both natural and man-made. Despite its ambiguities and vague definitions, the study of landscape opened up new possibilities to understand human relationships with the natural and built environment. As discussed by Pierce F. Lewis, the study of cultural landscapes "has a great deal to say about the United States as a country and Americans as people." As D. W. Meinig relates, landscapes do not hold

⁹ "George Merritt as a man of public spirit," *Indianapolis News*; Military Park postcards, Box 20, Jay Small Postcard Collection, Indiana Historical Society; "The Military Park," *Indianapolis Journal*, 21 May 1868; W. M. Herschell, "Military Park, once trod by many soldiers, now the developing ground of baby aliens seeking to become athletic Americans," *Indianapolis News*, 23 July 1910.

uniform meanings to all observers and these differences are central to the study of the debate between supporters of Military Park and supporters of Long Hospital.¹⁰

In the 1990s Roy Rosenzweig and Elizabeth Blackmar further integrated the history of public parks with landscapes studies. *The Park and the People: A History of Central Park* detailed the creation of New York's Central Park and highlighted the meaning of individual and social class experiences. Rosenzweig and Blackmar illustrated that the values of public space emerge only when a study "puts people at the center and relates the park to the city."¹¹ The landscape gains meaning when discussed in relation to its role in urban planning, civic engagement, and cultural transformations. Therefore, the significance of Indianapolis' Military Park is found when immersed in the thoughts and actions of Progressive era reformers and those residents who lived near the park and used it frequently.

During the Progressive era, reformers believed that controlled, ordered landscapes could produce loyal, moral citizens. Paul S. Boyer relates that reformers turned to positive environmentalism, an ideology that stimulated reform by shaping the physical environments in ways that indirectly affected morality. Subscribers to positive environmentalism did not directly preach against vice and depravity, but offered other safer options. Reformers popularized city-owned or -sponsored dance halls, playgrounds,

¹⁰ Pierce F. Lewis, "Axioms for Reading the Landscape" in *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes: Geographical Essays*, ed. D. W. Meinig (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 12; D. W. Meinig, "The Beholding Eye: Ten Versions of the Same Scene" in *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes: Geographical Essays*, ed. D. W. Meinig (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 33.

¹¹ Roy Rosenzweig and Elizabeth Blackmar, *The People and the Park: A History of Central Park* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992), 3.

parks, and theatres that prohibited alcohol, gambling, and other vices.¹² Thus meanings and associations of landscapes played prominently in decision-making at this time. Studying reformers' attitudes towards landscape opens up further veins of accessing and understanding the motivations of this era. Within each voice in the debate over Military Park and Long Hospital concerns arose over the best use of the park in regards to the morality and well-being of the working class. Would the park be most beneficial as a means to health care? As the physical embodiment of a nationalistic message? Or as a recreational breathing space?

The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries ushered in constant changes in social and economic orders across the United States, spurred by an influx of immigrants, a counter rise of nationalism, and further industrialization. Scientific reason and models of scientific thought also rose in popularity at this time, spurred by Darwinian ideals and breakthroughs in medicine and technology. Leading doctors around the globe sought more prestige for their profession (as other professions were also doing) and organized and standardized the education of doctors and the practice of medicine throughout the early twentieth century.

Throughout the nineteenth century American physicians had mostly labored in a less than prestigious occupation. Hospitals were typically considered charitable institutes where the poor went to die, while the middle and upper classes were attended to at home by doctors and surgeons.¹³ Formalized medical training was largely learned at small, private medical schools, known as proprietary schools (or the more recent derogatory

¹² Boyer, 221.

¹³ John Whiteclay Chambers II, *The Tyranny of Change: America in the Progressive Era, 1900–1917* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1980), 89.

term: diploma mills) that included only relatively brief classroom instruction. The U.S. government did not license or legislate financial backing for these medical schools and as a result, proprietary schools were fee-based and operated in fierce competition for paying students. Other trainees apprenticed with physicians and never received a classroom education. America's leading doctors obtained a bachelor's degree from a major university, but this accounted for a small percentage of physicians. Most doctors earned meager wages, particularly in rural areas, and many farmed or held other occupations for extra income.¹⁴

The most prestigious medical schools in the nineteenth century remained abroad and doctors who desired more advanced training studied in Europe and brought the most innovative research and methods home with them. European medical schools received state funding and thus provided students with a more intense educational experience that included lectures, clinical studies, and medical research. European physicians and researchers made great strides in germ theory and bacteriology by the 1870s, to which the American medical community paid little attention. Similarly Europeans, especially the Germans, had greatly improved surgery efficiency and sanitation standards at this time as

¹⁴ Steven C. Wheatley, *The Politics of Philanthropy: Abraham Flexner and Medical Education* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988), 3–6; John Duffy, *From Humors to Medical Science: A History of American Medicine*, 2nd ed. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 203–204.

well. American physicians trained in Europe often accepted these new theories and procedures more readily than their less-educated contemporaries.¹⁵

Physicians trained abroad also experienced a more sophisticated method of educating medical students that included classroom studies and practical, hands-on experience. Medical schools existed at many major American universities, but in the 1890s only one school followed the European model, the Johns Hopkins University. Johns Hopkins became the most respected medical school in the nation and created the standard of education that would be emulated by other universities. Johns Hopkins deemed that medical education required students to first have a college degree; then complete a four-year curriculum that included lecture, laboratory experience, and clinical clerkships; and be taught by a full-time faculty that also conducted independent medical research. Johns Hopkins University also endorsed another standard: the teaching hospital. Students gained vital hands-on experience at a teaching hospital directly affiliated with the university. The universities of Michigan and Pennsylvania had each established teaching hospitals earlier in the 1800s and Harvard University conducted clinical studies beginning in the 1870s, but Johns Hopkins further refined the relationship between the hospital and the university. The teaching hospital, which granted students and faculty

¹⁵ John Duffy, *The Healers: The Rise of the Medical Establishment* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1976), 181; Kenneth M. Ludmerer, *Time to Heal: American Medical Education from the Turn of the Century to the Era of Managed Care* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 4–5; JoAnne Brown, “Crime, Commerce, and Contagion: The Political Language of Public Health and the Popularization of Germ Theory in the United States, 1870–1950” in *Scientific Authority and Twentieth Century America*, ed. Ronald G. Walters (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 53–81; Duffy, *From Humors to Medical Science*, 168–169, 189–192.

access to a variety of medical cases, became central to the medical school's mission as a research institution.¹⁶

The Johns Hopkins University medical school model slowly gained popularity across the country. The model's largest downfall, however, was the expense. It took large sums of money to create a medical school, which required a significant number of professors, doctors, administrators, plus laboratory equipment and a teaching hospital. As federal and state government spending did not include funds for private universities, many schools needed philanthropic monies to assume this new model of education. The industrial revolution had just created some of the nation's wealthiest entrepreneurs and many had developed their own philanthropic entities. Andrew Carnegie soon founded his Carnegie Foundation and focused initially on funding public libraries and parks. John D. Rockefeller also organized his own private charitable organization, which eventually included the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research.¹⁷ Schools readily vied for this pot of money. The wave of philanthropic endorsement, though, did not occur until the 1910s as a result of Abraham Flexner's report.

In 1907 the American Medical Association's Council on Medical Education approached the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, a specific branch in the philanthropic arm of Andrew Carnegie's empire, to sponsor an investigation into the status of American medical schools. The Carnegie Foundation accepted and hired Abraham Flexner to conduct the study. Flexner had recently completed a similar investigation into the effectiveness of United States colleges and universities, with some sponsorship from Rockefeller. Flexner grew up in Louisville, Kentucky, and graduated

¹⁶ Duffy, *From Humors to Medical Science*, 205–206.

¹⁷ Chambers, 89; Wheatley, 22.

from Johns Hopkins University with a major in classics. He returned to Louisville and eventually opened his own school. He briefly studied psychology at Harvard before embarking on his first critique of American colleges and universities.¹⁸

Beginning in 1908, Flexner personally visited every university-sponsored medical school in the country and compiled detailed descriptions of each program with ample critiques. Flexner's report, *Medical Education in the United States and Canada*, was published in 1910. Overwhelmingly, the report documented the mediocrity of American medical schools and called for higher admission standards and more rigorous coursework combined with laboratory experience in teaching hospitals.¹⁹ Flexner's report demanded the reform of U.S. medical schools and asked to focus on quality over quantity. Medical schools were encouraged to have a large full-time faculty, a focus on research, and expand laboratories and patient facilities.

The response to Flexner's report was, as expected, mixed. Most universities, however, realized that Flexner's assertions only reiterated growing trends in medical education and quickly strove to make necessary changes. Other schools resisted and criticized Flexner's methods and background. Flexner maintained that medical education needed serious reform and he soon accepted a new position on the Rockefeller-sponsored Board of General Education. As a result, Flexner granted over \$78 million of Rockefeller funds to medical schools during his long tenure. This immense spending also encouraged other philanthropic entities, the Carnegie Foundation and hosts of localized charities, to

¹⁸ Wheatley, 46.

¹⁹ Ludmerer, *Time to Heal*, 3; Kenneth Ludmerer, "The Rise of the Teaching Hospital in America," *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* 38 (October 1983), 389–414; Duffy, *From Humors to Medical Science*, 208.

sponsor burgeoning medical schools across the country. The Flexner report proved the catalyst of change in national standards of educating America's medical practitioners. After 1910 medical schools either sank or swam; many private schools or small university schools without access to large populations or teaching hospitals closed.²⁰

Indiana University officials recognized the influence of Flexner's report and accepted the new standards decreed for medical education reform. The local medical community quickly realized the need for a teaching hospital in Indianapolis. The proposed Long Hospital, a critical component to revolutionize the Indiana University School of Medicine, quickly collided with Progressive era reform notions related to nationalism, immigration, and the role of urban parks.

Local lineage societies, Daughters of the Revolution (DR) and Sons of the Revolution (SR), and individual Civil War veterans vocally disapproved of the potential placement of Long Hospital in Military Park. Members of the lineage societies and veterans believed in the inherent value of Military Park as a piece of Indianapolis history. They invoked ideals of nationalism and desired public commemoration of the park. The role of Military Park shifted after the Civil War as it became a cultural landscape tied to wartime sacrifices, emphasized by the war relics that adorned the park's grounds.

Lineage societies, whose membership was exclusive to individuals with roots to the American Revolution, forged limited specific American identities that became popular ways of excluding and reacting against new immigrant communities. Thus individuals with long-standing genealogical ties in the United States could join the exclusive groups, and a new immigrant could not. Between 1900 and 1915, fifteen

²⁰ Duffy, *From Humors to Medical Science*, 209; Wheatley, 57, 86–87.

million immigrants entered the United States, and in Indianapolis the city's population doubled from 1890 to 1900 to 169,000 individuals. This population trend continued and by 1910 approximately 233,000 individuals called Indianapolis home. Recent arrivals included many southern and eastern European immigrants, African Americans from the southern United States, and other rural migrants. Many of these arrivals, especially those from eastern European nations, brought new customs and traditions to the city. Nationally, xenophobic reactions to these newcomers caused many native born Americans to mistrust immigrants and call for their assimilation into mainstream society. National anti-immigration laws were proposed, though not passed until 1917. An "Americanization" movement also became popular, and encouraged immigrants to learn English and American dress and customs. Lineage societies became a vocal part of the Americanization movement by promoting the democratic ideals of American history as a means of securing and promoting a national identity.²¹

Within Indianapolis, veterans and lineage societies sought to preserve their history in the face of an emerging immigrant population as an expression of traditional American values. In turn, they hoped to teach new residents American morality. Indianapolis abounded with new residents by the early 1900s, particularly in the neighborhoods bordering Military Park and on the near west side. The DR, SR, and veterans believed that Military Park should be memorialized for posterity as the embodiment of American ideals.

After the American Civil War, memorials and monument building gained popularity throughout the United States. In the late 1800s Civil War commemorations

²¹ Chambers, 74–77.

and memorials surfaced in all manner of American towns and cities. Organizers held reunions and encampments, constructed monuments, and orchestrated parades in honor of those who fought and died. The memory of the American Civil War quickly, at best, became inconsistent. Throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century acts of reconciliation were contrasted with divisional regional and racial tensions. The conflict's divisions created difficulties in reconciliation and remembrance of the war that persist today. Alice Fahs and Joan Waugh assert that "from 1865 to the present each new generation has actively reinterpreted the Civil War to support its own ideological agendas." The war created great divisions in individual and public memorials based on geographic regions and personal sympathies.²²

Memorials are strong, powerful mediums that impose specific messages onto a place or landscape, and thus emphasizes a particular aspect of a location's history. Monuments, in the form of statues, plaques, and sculptures, are reminders of events and history. Monuments therefore serve various popular functions for observers: to promote patriotism and national values, to further the remembrance of honor, and to facilitate

²² Alice Fahs and Joan Waugh, eds., *The Memory of the Civil War in American Memory* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 4. For additional references on the memory of the Civil War see: William Blair, *Cities of the Dead: Contesting the Memory of the Civil War in the South, 1865–1914* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004); David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2001); G. Kurt Piehler, *Remembering War the American Way* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995), 48.

healing. Stuart McConnell claims “Monuments demonstrate forcefully in physical space the same sorts of tensions that less obviously characterize cultural and political space.”²³

By the 1870s the fervor for memorializing the patriotic dead expanded beyond Civil War subjects, and included a variety of events in American history, from the Pilgrims at Plymouth to the victims of the Johnstown flood.²⁴ Progressive era reformers who promoted American history as a tool to assimilate newcomers spurred the large-scale public demand for monuments and commemorations. From 1870 to 1910 the popularity of monument building exploded. The United States centennial in 1876, in the midst of Reconstruction and reunification, launched American history into the public forefront through celebrations such as the Philadelphia Exposition and later the 1893 Columbian Exposition.²⁵ Progressive proponents built upon this nationalistic history in response to concerns about the social morals of new immigrants and the lower classes. Nationalistic Americans maintained an identity as native born and were wary of the new arrivals who looked apart from mainstream society. Many reformers preached the virtues of United States democracy and culture to promote quick assimilation of immigrants into American society. Middle class reformers and politicians expounded the ideals of democracy found

²³ Stuart McConnell, “Epilogue: The Geography of Memory” in *The Memory of the Civil War in American Memory*, eds. Alice Fahs and Joan Waugh (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), p. 260; For discussion about the relationship between commemoration and Progressive Era reform see: Mike Wallace, “Visiting the Past: History Museums in the United States” in *Presenting the Past: Essays on History and the Public*, eds. Susan Porter Benson, Stephen Brier, Roy Rosenzweig (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986), 137–161; Patricia West, *Domesticating History: The Political Origins of America’s House Museums* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1999).

²⁴ Kammen, 107–116.

²⁵ See Robert W. Rydell, *All the World’s a Fair: Visions of Empire at American International Exposition, 1876–1916* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984).

in historical lessons, which led to the popularity of building monuments, designating sacred places, and collecting relics.²⁶

In Indianapolis the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) and the Indiana state government responded to the monument building movement and provided funds for the construction of the Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument, which graces the center of the city's downtown. The monument, constructed from 1888 to 1901, served as an all-encompassing memorial to those Hoosiers who fought and died in American wars.²⁷ The state of Indiana also endorsed other monuments linked to earlier events in the state's history. By the 1910s the state had sponsored the construction of monuments to the Battle of Tippecanoe, a precursor to the War of 1812; the Pigeon Roost Massacre, also associated with the War of 1812; and Chief Menominee, the leader of Potawatomi who were forcibly removed from their lands in 1836.²⁸ Each site boasted obelisk-style stone monuments with statuary, commemorative plaques, and a grand dedication ceremony. These monuments served to mark and preserve sites important to state history for the education and improvement of later generations.

While monuments proved en-vogue at the end of the nineteenth century and beginning of the twentieth century, sites and objects related to famed historical events

²⁶ Kammen, 132.

²⁷ The Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument located in the downtown circle of Indianapolis cost nearly \$600,000 in 1902. Designed by Bruno Schmitz, a German-American, the monument began as only a memorial to the Civil War and upon dedication it was also applied to the Spanish American War and other events. See Jennifer D. Born, "A Survey of Indiana Military Monuments" (M.A. thesis, Indiana University, 2000), 84.

²⁸ Jacob P. Dunn, "The Moravian Mission near Anderson," *Indiana Magazine of History*, 9 (June 1913), 79; *Laws of the State of Indiana 1903* (Indianapolis: Wm. B. Burford, 1903), 25–26; *Laws of the State of Indiana 1907* (Indianapolis: Wm. B. Burford, 1907), 67, 623.

and people also became prized collectibles. Curious bystanders gathered bullets and relics from Civil War battlefields while shots still echoed. In the decades following the war, new museums displayed coveted artifacts and items from battlefields and notable generals.²⁹ Landscapes associated with the Civil War became powerful reminders of the brutality of war with lasting effects on individuals and society. G. Kurt Piehler asserts President Abraham Lincoln's role in elevating the relationship between the site of events and remembrance through the dedication of the Union cemetery at Gettysburg. The war dead buried at Gettysburg became "emblematic" of the continued struggle to preserve the Union and national values of democracy.³⁰ The importance of place grew more significant throughout the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century. As national reconciliation attempts continued between North and South, pilgrimages to important sites increased in popularity. In 1909 many prominent politicians traveled to Lincoln's Kentucky birthplace and residence in Springfield, Illinois, to celebrate the centennial of his birthday.³¹

Similar to monuments, the designation of sacred space also comes from specific memories or ideas about a place and time. Rowland A. Sherrill notes, "The designation of a spot in the landscape or culturescape as 'sacred' results from human decision-making, a result flowing from perceptions of the special, spiritual meanings associated with the site."³² Therefore, sacred space, similar to monuments and memorials, ultimately, remains subjective and based upon particular group experiences, values, and collective

²⁹ Kammen, 119.

³⁰ Piehler, 50–51.

³¹ Kammen, 109, 115.

³² Rowland A. Sherrill, "American Sacred Space and the Contest of History" in *American Sacred Space*, eds. David Chidester and Edward T. Linenthal (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 313.

memory. What is sacred to one group or culture may not be to another. The lessons learned from a landscape designated as sacred, particularly in the early twentieth century, often conveyed the values specific to one group. How does one culture or group attempt to import such lessons on another? Grounded in human designation, Simon Schama notes, “Landscape is the work of the mind.”³³ Applied to sacred places, a specific landscape, through group designation and morals, constructs a particular, hand-picked legacy.

The social, political, and academic groups who contested the use of Military Park in 1911 demonstrate how Progressive reforms fought for legitimacy within an urban setting. While lineage societies clamored for recognition of the park’s storied past, city, state, and civic leaders claimed the value of the park as an urban green space or “breathing spot” steeped in the rhetoric of the Progressive era’s City Beautiful movement. The idea of Military Park as an urban green space existed unofficially before the City Beautiful movement, but the influences of the Indianapolis Board of Park Commissioners and noted landscape architect George E. Kessler heightened the importance of urban parks and playgrounds.

Indianapolis’ rapid growth in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries greatly influenced the need and visibility of the city’s parks. The dramatic population growth of America’s cities encouraged the expansion of the traditional grid layout. As a result nineteenth-century city planning directly affected today’s cities, as planners and architects began to establish norms about “appropriate physical form for . . . urban areas.” As early as the late 1870s middle-class concerns about the moral and physical order of

³³ Simon Schama, *Landscape and Memory* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1995), 7.

the city spurred debates about the proper form and function of a city, in light of crowded city centers. One solution called for increased open space and public areas.³⁴ City planners began developing “special purpose planning,” specific projects, such as city parks and designed suburbs, in hopes of meeting the immediate needs of citizens in overcrowded cities. David Schuyler asserts that many planned landscapes of the nineteenth century “attempted to . . . promote the highest potential of civilization in America.”³⁵ These ideas about planned landscapes emerged fully in the early twentieth century, embodied in the attitudes of the City Beautiful movement and Progressive era. Public parks and park systems became central to discussions of proper city shape, function, and amenities.³⁶

The predecessor to the urban park first appeared in the form of the rural cemetery movement in the 1830s. The rural cemetery movement emerged from health concerns associated with overflowing, cramped city cemeteries. It incorporated landscaped formal and informal picturesque gardens in an attempt to bring city inhabitants closer to the pastoral and natural.³⁷ Transcendental thought of the mid-nineteenth century also contributed to the ideology of urban parks by promoting nature as the antithesis to the noisy city. Urban officials sought to recreate nature in the city to soothe and refresh its

³⁴ Boyer, 121; David Schuyler, *The New Urban Landscape: The Redefinition of City Form in Nineteenth-Century America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 1–8.

³⁵ Jon A. Peterson, *The Birth of City Planning in the United States, 1840–1917* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), 21–25; Galen Cranz, *The Politics of Park Design: A History of Urban Parks in America* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1982), 15; Schuyler, 6.

³⁶ Peterson, 152–155; Galen, 84.

³⁷ Peterson, 21–25; Schuyler, 37.

citizenry.³⁸ City parks emerged in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as urban areas swelled in population and size.

The most prolific and influential park project of the 1800s was Central Park in New York City. Frederick Law Olmsted and Calvert Vaux established themselves as the country's premier landscape architects with their winning 1858 Greensward plan and created a natural landscape in stark contrast with the crowded city. Olmsted and Vaux believed in the "moral superiority of a natural aesthetic." In order to create a naturalistic setting, Central Park set high standards for urban parks, and Olmsted and Vaux curbed urban influences whenever possible (i.e., sunken roads that left picturesque landscapes uninterrupted). The completion of Central Park established an urban need for city parks, and other cities quickly began large scale park projects. These early large scale parks of the 1860s set the stage for the important role parks would play in the early 1900s and for Progressive reformers.³⁹

Cities in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries became synonymous with dirt, poverty, and moral depravity. The influx of immigrants and rural migrants who crowded American cities by the turn of the twentieth century led to Progressive reforms that hoped to relieve urban residents of the stress and dangers of city living. Progressives believed the government, through broad social programs, could develop social control and encourage an educated citizenry. Social welfare and order could be established with "a transformed, consciously planned urban environment."⁴⁰ Simply put, an orderly city

³⁸ Cranz, 15.

³⁹ Schuyler, 99; Rosenzweig and Blackmar, 1, 131.

⁴⁰ Boyer, 190, 221

would produce orderly citizens. Progressive reformers quickly adapted ideals of social improvement to the physical environment of the city.

By the 1890s early reformers saw park building as a vital means of social improvement. Small parks were valued within congested areas and park planners desired to connect smaller parks with parkways and boulevards. Kansas City, Boston, and New York leaders hired popular landscape architects and created the first park systems in the United States.⁴¹ This system of parks and boulevards correlated with the aesthetics of the City Beautiful movement, inspired by the neoclassical grandeur of the 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago. The City Beautiful movement typically involved the addition of “classically inspired, monumental architecture; wide, tree-flanked boulevards and large civic spaces.”⁴² City officials utilized these additions to create an urban landscape that enabled civic betterment. They developed comprehensive plans that incorporated simple beautification projects (adding wide boulevards or park statuary) and long-term projects that created entire city park systems. Parks often replaced the city’s most undesirable features, such as slums, city dumps, and overgrown vacant lots. In addition, Progressives sought more than exposure to beautification, but decreed that parks should offer visitors programs, entertainment, and sport.⁴³ By the early twentieth century many urban Americans worked in repetitive, monotonous factory or office jobs without adequate stimulation. Progressive reformers believed urban parks and physical recreation provided a creative outlet for the working and middle classes. In addition, the increased amounts of

⁴¹ Ibid., 236–240

⁴² Bonj Szczygiel, “‘City Beautiful’ Revisited: An Analysis of Nineteenth-Century Civic Improvement Efforts,” *Journal of Urban History* 29 (December 2003), 107.

⁴³ Peterson, 152–155; Galen, 84; Boyer, 240.

leisure time for many Americans, created by restrictive labor laws, also spurred the emphasis on meaningful recreation found in parks and municipal facilities.⁴⁴

Along with architecture and civic buildings, Progressive reformers promoted playgrounds as an outlet for city officials concerned with overcrowded housing and its affects on youth. Further, early twentieth-century psychologists had recently developed new ideas about socialization and childhood, and they placed a large emphasis on the importance of play to a child's development of social behavior. Progressives quickly included this psychological rhetoric and used it to further the momentum of the playground movement. The first playgrounds in the United States appeared in the 1860s and 1870s in Boston and Chicago, but the movement did not gain widespread support until after 1900. The playground movement spread quickly across the country, often in tandem with the development of public parks. City officials used the rhetoric of the playground movement as a solution to concerns about the well-being of children residing in busy, congested cities full of vice and dangers. Progressive reformers believed playgrounds provided children with a positive environment unaffected by the social ills found on urban streets. Playgrounds thus gave children the opportunity to grow into moral, well-mannered adults.⁴⁵

Progressive era notions about form and function of urban space thus, in the case of Military Park, competed for legitimacy. The tensions heard throughout the year-long debate highlight the relationship between landscape, its function, and Progressive reforms. At the center of each group was also concern for how the park or the hospital would affect the well-being of the working class.

⁴⁴ Cranz, 62; Peterson, 162–163.

⁴⁵ Boyer, 242–247; Cranz, 61–67.

The first chapter discusses the motivations of Indiana University administrators and faculty for locating the School of Medicine in Indianapolis. The chapter relates the university's reaction to the controversy created by the hospital proposal and documents the rise of the medical profession and their concerns towards the entire state's working classes.

The second chapter will focus on the lineage societies and veterans who believed the park should be preserved as a memorial space. These groups focused on the site's history as an embodiment of American ideals of sacrifice, patriotism, and democracy. Ultimately, these groups and individuals focused on the park as a place of nationalistic education.

The third chapter will highlight the role civic groups and government officials played in the debate about Military Park and Long Hospital. These entities sought the preservation of Military Park as a much needed green space in a congested area of the city. These groups and individuals believe that the ideals of city beautification and the park's role in safe, moral recreation to its neighboring working class citizens were central to their argument.

Ultimately, debate between Military Park and Long Hospital evokes varying perceptions of the proper use of public space. Military Park was one of the first parks utilized as a playground in Indianapolis, and civic leaders and state and local government officials often cited its use by working-class children. Indiana University trustees and faculty also focused on the plight of the working class, but did so as a means of convincing others about the importance of Long Hospital to the state and city. They perceived the best use of the space as a teaching hospital with medical services available

to the working classes. Progressive era notions of medical reform and professionalism motivated the forces behind the hospital proposal. Military Park's location proved its largest selling point.



Figure 1. Annotated 1941 aerial photograph illustrates locations that played a role in the location of Robert W. Long Hospital: A) Military Park, B) Robert W. Long Hospital, C) City Hospital (now Wishard Memorial Hospital), D) proposed site of Kessler's Plaza Plan, E) site of Central Canal. Photo from Electronic Atlas of Central Indiana, Historical Aerial Archive, <http://atlas.ulib.iupui.edu/>.

Chapter One: A Doctor's Gift

The contingent from the Indiana University promoted Long Hospital as a public philanthropic institution vital to making the Indiana University School of Medicine a regionally and nationally renowned school. Dr. Robert Long's gift was also popularized for its potential benefits to the health and welfare of the state's working class.

In 1902 newly-elected Indiana University President William Lowe Bryan realized the growing professionalism of many areas of study and proposed the idea of creating a school of medicine. In 1903 the medical school ushered in its freshman class, whose members would complete two years of coursework in Bloomington. Many details remained open, such as whether the medical school would be located solely in Bloomington or if students would complete work in Indianapolis. Bloomington at the turn of the twentieth century contained a population of about 4,000, whereas Indianapolis's population exceeded 175,000, and many argued that the larger population would mean more valuable opportunities for medical students. President Bryan also recognized the major expense associated with starting a quality medical school that included laboratories and clinical studies, and he hoped to gain state sponsorship.¹

By the early 1900s, Indianapolis already supported a medical college, the Medical College of Indiana, located at Market Street and North Senate Avenue. The college first opened in 1878 with the union of the Indiana Medical College and the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Indiana. Students completed coursework and, after the establishment of the Indiana State Board of Medical Registration and Examination in

¹ Burton Dorr Meyers, "A History of Medical Education in Indiana" in *One Hundred Years of Indiana Medicine 1849-1949*, ed. Dorothy Ritter Russo (Indiana State Medical Association, 1949), 72-73.

1897, which raised medical school standards, some clinical training in later years of attendance. Beginning in 1899 graduation required four years. In that same year, Dr. Henry Jameson, an assistant professor at the college since its inception, became dean.²

In 1904 Dr. Jameson approached President Bryan and proposed a merger between the Medical College and the Indiana University medical school. President Bryan considered the request, but differing opinions about how much time students would study in Bloomington and Indianapolis hindered progress. Dr. Jameson championed holding classes in both Indianapolis and Bloomington, while President Bryan remained staunch that two years of coursework should remain in Bloomington with two years of clinical experience in Indianapolis.³

President Bryan's unwillingness to locate more of the medical school in Indianapolis led Dr. Jameson and the Medical College of Indiana to approach Purdue University about opening a medical school. The department was self-sustaining and included a merger with the Fort Wayne Medical College. The school became known as the Indiana Medical College, School of Medicine of Purdue University. The Indiana Medical College organized quickly and secured a contract with the Indianapolis City Hospital for clinicals, much to the ire of Indiana University, which desired the same contract.

Indiana University continued planning and the school bought the former Central College of Physicians and Surgeons building in Indianapolis to function as a hospital of sixty beds in 1906. The university thus concluded in 1907 that two years of coursework in Bloomington would be followed up with two years of clinical work in Indianapolis.

² Ibid., 63–64.

³ Ibid., 74.

The question of state sponsorship still remained. In 1907 both Indiana University and Purdue University introduced bills to the General Assembly asking for state authorization. Each bill failed and neither university received state support.

The rivalry between the two schools increased, but after three years of existence the Indiana Medical College of Purdue University witnessed consistently shrinking enrollment. Therefore in the fall of 1907 the school proposed a merger with Indiana University, which was accepted. Dr. Jameson resigned, eventually becoming president of the Indianapolis Board of Park Commissioners, and the two faculties merged. With the rivalry settled, Indiana University stood poised to receive state authorization. The medical school set high admission standards and required two years of college attendance, something few medical schools in the country demanded.⁴

It was at this point that Abraham Flexner visited the Indiana University School of Medicine in 1909. Flexner, hired by the American Medical Association and the Carnegie Foundation to evaluate American and Canadian medical schools, traveled to 155 medical schools. In his autobiography Flexner states of his visits: “I had no fixed method of procedure. I have never used a questionnaire. I invariably went and saw the schools and talked with teachers of medical sciences and their students.”⁵ Flexner evaluated the status of each school’s admission requirements, facilities, equipment, faculty credentials, and access to patients. Flexner’s 1910 report, *Medical Education in the United States and Canada*, included short summaries of each school visited and a definitive judgment of

⁴ Burton, 75-77; Ralph D. Gray, *IUPUI: The Making of an Urban University* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003), 16.

⁵ Abraham Flexner, *Abraham Flexner: An Autobiography*, 2nd ed. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1960), 75.

merits and demerits. The influence of Flexner's report was widespread across the United States and Canada. He championed stricter and higher admission requirements, modern laboratories, student access to patients, and research as a school's priority. Flexner's report standardized medical education and became the catalyst that furthered the modernization of America's medical schools.⁶

In Indiana, Flexner visited the Indiana University School of Medicine and the program at Valparaiso University. Overall, Flexner gave the Indiana University medical school a fair and hopeful review. Flexner noted that the merger of Indiana University and Purdue University medical programs put the school in good position for expansion. He also stated that the Bloomington courses were well instructed and equipped and that the school's fiscal priorities should be spent on the improvement of the Indianapolis facilities. Flexner also asserted that the advancement of the medical school can "do Indiana no greater service."⁷

The medical school faculty and trustees indeed saw the worth of Flexner's assertions and they sought better facilities and set more stringent academic standards for students. In order to complete this task, the medical school brought in Dr. Charles P. Emerson as dean in 1911. Emerson graduated with an M.D. from Johns Hopkins University in 1899. Johns Hopkins had become the premier medical school in the United States, with its own teaching hospital and strict admission standards, and was the model to emulate. Emerson was superintendent of the Clifton Springs Sanitarium in New York and had published texts on clinical diagnosis. Dr. Welch, who helped hire the new dean,

⁶ Duffy, *From Humors to Medical Science*, 211

⁷ Abraham Flexner, *Medical Education in the United States and Canada*. (Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, Bulletin No. 4: 1910), 220–222.

praised Emerson's "valuable experience" and boasted that he was "an excellent organizer and commands all of the resources of modern medicine." Emerson stated early in his tenure, "In planning for the future of the Indiana University School of Medicine we wish [it] to be understood clearly that we propose to make a radical break from the past. We are now a university medical school and propose to do work consistent with that title." University medical schools, as Flexner decreed and cited Johns Hopkins as the model, should include a research-based mission, a teaching hospital, and high admission standards.⁸

Since the merger of the medical schools at Purdue and Indiana universities, the medical school had maintained cordial working ties with Indianapolis' City Hospital and City Dispensary. City Hospital opened in 1866 and in the 1880s prominent Indianapolis physician Dr. William N. Wishard, then hospital superintendent, expanded the institution and built modern new wings. The City Hospital and also the City Dispensary provided health services to Indianapolis residents without means to pay, but both institutions by the early 1900s were considered overcrowded and inadequate.⁹

Despite faculty access to City Hospital and Dispensary, Emerson felt that the school of medicine required its own teaching hospital without hassles about disputed salaries, equipment costs, and other squabbles common at this time. Emerson stated that "a medical school must have practically entire control of the clinical materials it uses."

⁸ Gray, 13–17; *Journal of the Indiana State Medical Association*, 4 (15 August 1911), 350–351; Charles P. Emerson, "Indiana University School of Medicine Report," 2 December 1912, President Bryan L. Williams Correspondence, Indiana University-Bloomington Archives, 5, 10.

⁹ David Bodenhamer and Robert G. Barrows, eds., *Encyclopedia of Indianapolis* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 1432–1433; Elizabeth M. Wishard, "A Charter Member and His Son," in *One Hundred Years of Indiana Medicine, 1849–1949*, ed. Dorothy Ritter Russo (Indiana State Medical Association, 1949), 34–35.

He realized that unless a university had its own teaching hospital, cooperative agreements with city hospitals or other hospitals always limited student and faculty access to patients and research studies. University medical schools were becoming more research driven, and a faculty controlled teaching hospital was the necessary means towards a research-based institute. Emerson admitted, “A good medical school is judged in part by . . . the research work which the members of its faculty publishes.”¹⁰ Emerson understood that a teaching hospital was vital to the existence and prestige of the Indiana University medical school.

In addition to the prestige of the university, medical school officials also championed that a teaching hospital would be accessible to all Indiana residents. City Hospital only treated residents of Indianapolis, and Emerson noted the lack of charitable care given to rural residents throughout the state of Indiana. Indeed, he regularly received “very distressing” requests for charitable medical care from impoverished individuals throughout the state. At the time of the Long Hospital debate Emerson received pleas for help from rural Delaware County, Elwood, and South Bend. H. D. Fair, secretary of the Delaware County Medical Society, wrote Emerson about an impoverished thirteen-year-old girl suffering from congenital syphilis. Fair implored, “If I send her to your clinic are you prepared or willing to administer this treatment for the sake of charity?” In another request Francis R. Zacharek, a lawyer from South Bend, asked Emerson to admit two

¹⁰ Charles P. Emerson, Indiana University School of Medicine Report, 7, 12.

invalid adolescents who had been placed in an orphanage after living with alcoholic parents and even included photos of the children with the letter.¹¹

The answer to the teaching hospital concerns of Indiana University's medical school appeared in 1911. Dr. Robert W. Long and his wife Clara recognized the need for adequate and accessible hospital care for the entire state and planned to give Indiana University a teaching hospital. Dr. Long was born in New Maysville, Indiana, in 1843, and his father was also a doctor. He went to Franklin College and then enlisted as a soldier in the Civil War. After the war, he attended the Rush Medical College in Chicago and the Jefferson Medical College in Philadelphia. In 1875 Dr. Long began practicing medicine in Indianapolis, and he quickly became a notable physician. In 1890 he began investing in real estate and grew wealthy. Long used his wealth inconspicuously and supported many charitable works that fed and clothed widows and orphans, most anonymously, as reported by close friend Dr. John F. Barnhill. For all of his charitable deeds, Long wanted something larger, a gift that would help more people and the medical school. With Dr. Barnhill's encouragement the idea to fund a teaching hospital took shape.¹²

Long determined, after consulting with President Bryan, Governor Thomas R. Marshall, Dr. Barnhill, and Dr. Emerson, that the best means of donation would be a gift of real estate to the State of Indiana for the purpose of funding a hospital for the Indiana

¹¹ Charles P. Emerson, "Shows hospital needs of school," *Indianapolis Star*, November 14, 1911; H. D. Fair to Charles Emerson, 19 January 1912; J. R. Fischer to Charles Emerson, 30 January 1912; Francis R. Zacharek to Charles Emerson, 21 March 1912, IU School of Medicine Office of the Dean, 1903–1949, IUPUI Archives. Emerson, as shown in later letters of this collection, agrees to treat the girl referred by Fair, he considers the case from Zacharek, but no definitive response survives.

¹² "Death of Dr. Robert W. Long—His Life History." Robert W. Long Scrapbook, IUPUI Ruth Lilly Medical Library.

University School of Medicine. On 24 January 1911 Senator Dennis Harlan introduced the bill. The bill detailed that the state would be required to sell the Longs' gift of real estate and money from the sale of lands would be appropriated to the medical school with the stipulation of funding construction of a teaching hospital. The state was also charged with selecting a permanent site for the hospital. The bill also stipulated that the hospital would be located on state lands, which could be a two-hundred-foot-wide strip of land in Military Park, or it could be located on lands designated for new state construction projects, such as a state library or Supreme Court building. The bill gave the state until January 1, 1912, to purchase any new lands for construction projects that could include the hospital.¹³

Long, in his proposal to the General Assembly, stated that he hoped the hospital will be useful “by making it possible for worthy persons of limited means from all parts of Indiana to secure hospital advantages and services” and “by providing clinical facilities for the students of medicine in connection with Indiana university [sic].”¹⁴ Long further explained: “We realize that there are in all parts of Indiana many worthy men, women, and children who could be relieved from a life of suffering and prepared to support themselves instead of being dependent on the public, if they could afford to go to a good hospital.”¹⁵ Dr. Long realized that the hospital could better the lives of those without means for medical care. Following Progressive era trends, Dr. Long encouraged the university and the state to support a large institution based on its ability to help the indigent. Further, Dr. Long also supported recently popularized medical education

¹³ *Laws of the State of Indiana, 1911* (Indianapolis: Wm. B. Burford, 1911), 19.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 16.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

reforms, believed his gift would enable quality education to the students of the medical school, while providing accessible healthcare to the poor of Indiana. The bill was approved on 7 February 1911.

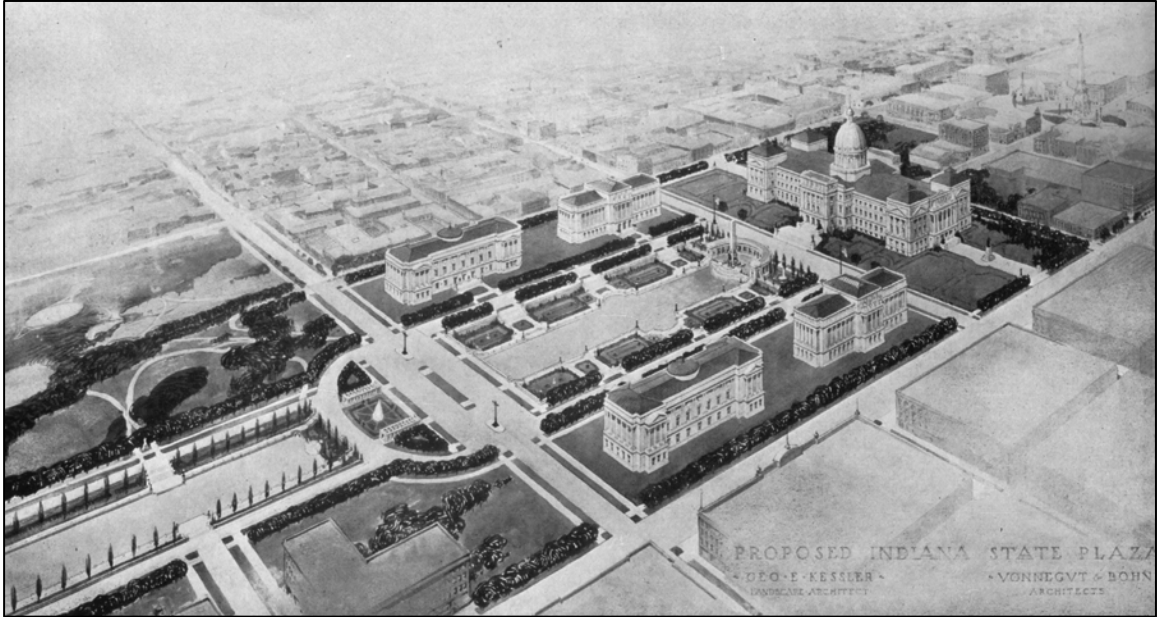
The medical community of Indiana wholeheartedly backed Dr. and Mrs. Long's gift to Indiana University. The *Indianapolis Medical Journal* reported that the legislation "secures a hospital for teaching purposes as well as being a great State Charity."¹⁶ In February 1911 the Indiana State Medical Association announced that the hospital proposal was "the most important medical news for Indiana" in recent months.¹⁷ The national publication, the *American Journal of Nursing*, also announced the construction of the teaching hospital and cited its benefits for the working class and Indiana University medical students.¹⁸

As noted, initial reports about the proposed Robert W. Long Hospital proved supportive, especially in the early months of 1911. The announcement of the hospital proposal coincided with fledgling state plans for a centennial celebration in 1916. The state subsequently formed the Indiana Centennial Celebration Committee to select a site for a plaza and its coinciding celebratory state buildings. The committee's powers were extremely limited, however as the committee only had the "power to select a site for such a centennial building, and to bind the state for options on such site. It was not empowered

¹⁶ Samuel E. Earp, "The Robert W. Long Hospital of Indiana University," *Indianapolis Medical Journal*. 14 (1911), 65.

¹⁷ *Journal of the Indiana State Medical Association*, 4 (15 February 1911), 89.

¹⁸ *American Journal of Nursing*, Vol. 11: 1911, 576.



An artistic rendering of George Kessler's proposed Plaza Plan reveals the grand nature of his vision for the expansion of Indiana's state government facilities. Steeped in City Beautiful movement trends, the plan included wide boulevards, statuary, fountains, and Neoclassical-inspired buildings. West Street is the major thoroughfare running north and south in the picture. Military Park is just north of the plaza, along the west side of West Street. From: Indiana Centennial Celebration Commission, "Suggestive plans for a historical and education celebration in Indiana in 1916" (1911), 83, Indiana State Library.

to make a purchase.”¹⁹ The committee also consulted with esteemed landscape architect George Kessler, who had been working with the Indianapolis Board of Park Commissioners for several years. Kessler had drawn up plans for an extensive plaza that would encompass much of the land west of the statehouse for the expansion of state government buildings. State, city, and local leaders believed this plaza plan would be part of Indiana’s centennial celebrations and that the Long Hospital building could be incorporated into it. The hospital would thus be part of larger plans “to beautify the state Capitol grounds and the city of Indianapolis.”²⁰ If the state centennial plaza plan was successful, Military Park would not be used for the Long Hospital site.

Indiana University trustees largely put the hospital plans on hold throughout much of 1911 and awaited word from the state’s centennial commission. Dr. Jameson, former dean of the Medical College of Indiana turned president of the Board of Park Commissioners, also supported the plaza plan proposal, which would leave Military Park intact, and believed that it could be accomplished, citing only minor difficulties. Charles W. Jewett, an Indianapolis lawyer who served on the state centennial committee, also encouraged President Bryan to support the plaza plan. He wrote that the plaza plan may give the hospital the “best possible setting and portion.” However, little progress was made with the plaza plan and university trustees became weary of the idea. By November

¹⁹ *Laws of the State of Indiana 1911*, 100–101; “Long Hospital plans not tied up by Assembly Act,” *Indianapolis News*, 7 November 1911.

²⁰ “Military Park for Long Hospital, work to commence at once,” *Indianapolis Medical Journal*, Vol. 14: 1911, 571.

1911, Indiana University trustees, based on the bill's recommendations, selected Military Park as the site of Long Hospital.²¹

Public outcry at Indiana University's confirmation of Military Park as the site of Long Hospital was strong and furious. As a result, Mayor Samuel Lewis Shank created a committee to identify other possible sites around the city for the hospital. The mayoral committee consisted of Dr. Henry Jameson, Joseph B. Kealing, of the corporation counsel; and Dr. T. Victor Keene, Indianapolis Board of Health. They quickly devised suggestions for alternative sites. Indiana University Trustees and staff quickly dismissed the mayoral committee's site options as being too far from downtown, isolated from the population, and difficult to access. Proposed sites included land near City Hospital, deemed "low, poor ground" by Emerson, and the previous campus of the Indiana State School for the Deaf. The school had been housed on East Washington Street, just outside of downtown, in two Greek Revival-style buildings constructed around 1850. In 1905 work began on a new school campus north of downtown. James Fesler, Indiana University trustee, wrote President Bryan that at first he was not entirely opposed to this

²¹ Dr. Henry Jameson to Dr. Bryan, 20 June 1911, Dr. Henry Jameson folder, President Bryan Correspondence, IU-Bloomington Archives; Charles L. Jewett to Dr. Bryan, 23 October 1911, IU School of Medicine Office of the Dean, 1903-1949, Box 1, IUPUI Archives; "Long Hospital Plans not tied up by Assembly Act," *Indianapolis News*, 7 November 1911; "Decries fight over hospital," *Indianapolis Star*, 14 November 1911; "Pick Military Park for Long Hospital," *Indianapolis Star*, 4 November 1911.

suggestion, but he worried about the noise that could emanate from the nearby Pennsylvania Railroad tracks.²²

Military Park's location became the strongest factor in its persistent nomination as the site of Long Hospital. Indiana University trustees pushed for a site within walking distance of downtown and Military Park's location just west of downtown proved more attractive than almost every other site proposed by the mayor's committee. Therefore, the location which made Military Park important to the working class neighborhood near it also made it ideal for a teaching hospital.

In the meantime the university grew impatient with delaying hospital construction. Indiana University trustees agreed to allow city and state officials time to find another location for the hospital, only because they awaited word from the state centennial commission and to obtain a city building license. An old city ordinance added another potential delay in the building progress, but in November Indiana University trustees, urged by the medical faculty, passed a resolution to "obtain plans immediately" in regards to construction of the building.²³ Indiana University officials were tired of waiting for their hospital and by the end of November increased their pressure on the city. The trustees had turned down both the site west of the City Hospital and the former School for the Deaf site and gave the city until January, 1912, to find a suitable substitute site.

²² "Trustees expected to select Military Park," *Indianapolis News*; Bodenhamer and Barrows, eds., 746–747; Charles Emerson to Dr. William Bryan, 18 November 1911, Charles P. Emerson folder, President Bryan Correspondence, IU-Bloomington Archives; James Fesler to Dr. Bryan, 14 November 1911, Fesler, James W. 1909–1913, President Bryan Correspondence, IU-Bloomington Archives; "University trustees condemn Shanks idea," *Indianapolis Star*, 29 November 1911.

²³ "Pick Military Park for Long Hospital," *Indianapolis Star*, 4 November 1911; "Trustees expected to select Military Park," *Indianapolis News*, 2 December 1911.

As a result of the medical school's persistent denial of the mayoral committee's suggestions, the university became the focus of much public criticism. On 17 November 1911 an editorial appeared in the *Indianapolis News* that looked quite unfavorably at the stubbornness of the medical school towards the hospital's location. The editorial claimed that the proposed site would be located near a new park and boulevard system on the White River. The writer scoffed at the medical school's position that the site was too far from downtown and cited other Indianapolis hospitals that were located further from the city than the proposed site. St. Vincent's Hospital in particular was first located near Union Station, but soon relocated about twenty-five blocks north of downtown. The editorial concluded, "We feel that if the trustees will think about it a bit and overhaul their geography they will conclude that the proposed location is not too far from the rush and bustle of things."²⁴

Publicly, the university rallied around its decisions despite any negative press. Indiana University medical faculty first asserted that Long Hospital would provide greater benefits to the working class than Military Park as a community park and breathing space. Dr. John F. Barnhill, close friend of Dr. Long and clinical professor and medical school treasurer, proclaimed that the hospital could serve all of Indiana's lower classes in need of health services, while only individuals living near Military Park benefited from it as a park space. In Progressive era fashion, Barnhill reiterated the obligation of the hospital as a means of social uplift and he asserted, "The university, whose duty it is to erect and operate the hospital, has no other wish than to serve as many as possible throughout the state who may need hospital service." Barnhill, who had

²⁴ "Plan to save Military Park," *Indianapolis News*, 17 November 1911.

helped Long formalize his proposal, focused on its potential to help all Indiana patients in need. He realized that Indiana lagged behind other states without a current teaching hospital, as health care reform in the early 1900s placed more emphasis on hospital access. American medicine, finally catching up with European standards, required larger, modern hospitals that housed costlier equipment and offered surgical procedures that had become more sanitary and successful.²⁵

Indiana University President Bryan furthered Barnhill's sentiments. In an interview for the *Indianapolis News*, Bryan described the scientific progress made in medicine in recent years that had transformed the medical profession. He stated that no other area of study had made "greater advances" and that better educated physicians would be necessary to continue making strides in germ theory and disease prevention. He also related that the hospital would be available to all citizens of the state and that many county homes were already at capacity and with limited means of helping the disadvantaged with medical conditions. With belief that a university-sponsored, modern hospital could greatly improve the lives of the state's working class and assist established government run programs, Bryan cited that many individuals who were dependent on state county homes could be cured through care at the teaching hospital, and as a result made independent productive citizens. President Bryan further questioned the city, "Is this Indianapolis? Is Indianapolis prepared to go before the state and country with the death of . . . a hospital for the poor upon its hands?" President Bryan reminded readers of the delays the project has endured throughout 1911, from the failed state plaza plan incorporation to inadequate site suggestions from the mayor's committee. President

²⁵ "Decries fight over hospital," *Indianapolis Star*; John Whiteclay Chambers II, *The Tyranny of Change: American in the Progressive Era, 1900–1917* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1980), 89.

Bryan implored the city to provide an adequate location for the hospital and invoked language that echoed the sentiments of the City Beautiful movement. He believed the hospital could be “splendidly beautiful” in its own right and a “chief ornament of the city.”²⁶ His plan for a successful medical school rode on being able to build a teaching hospital.

Dean Emerson also weighed in publicly. He explained the massive reforms that had transformed the nature of medical school programs and the associated expenses now customary to opening a quality school. Similar to President Bryan, Emerson noted that the survival of the medical school was dependent on building a teaching hospital. Emerson beseeched *Indianapolis Star* readers to think about the larger repercussions of having a medical school that would “not be merely a local institution, but will be one of national importance. Such a medical center would be one of the great assets of state and city.” The dean believed that Indiana’s central location within the United States would also boost attendance and influence. A strong attendance, he argued, would also stimulate Indianapolis’ economy, as students would live in the city. He worried that nearby states were already ahead of Indiana, which included Missouri, with three state hospitals for the poor. Emerson related, “Lack of local support can easily allow our neighboring states to overcome our present advantage and occupy the position which we could fill.” Emerson believed that local and national prestige was on the line for the medical school and the city. Geography proved vital to not only the physical hospital’s location, but also to that of Indiana as a potential national medical center.²⁷

²⁶ “Decries fight over hospital,” *Indianapolis Star*, 14 November 1911; “What will Indianapolis do for Long Hospital?” *Indianapolis News*, 5 December 1911.

²⁷ “Shows hospital needs of school,” *Indianapolis Star*.

The wider state medical community also encouraged the medical school's decision to push for a decision from the city. Albert E. Bulson, Jr., editor of the *Journal of the Indiana State Medical Association* wrote Emerson a strong letter of support shortly after Emerson's article appeared in the *Indianapolis Star*. Bulson believed the city of Indianapolis was being self-centered and he warned Emerson that the "people of Indianapolis have an idea that they own the entire state." Bulson noted tensions that existed between those located outside of the state capital who felt neglected by state government. He further supported the hospital as it would help patients from all over the state and he hoped that the controversy would "interest the medical profession all over Indiana to such an extent that our legislators will pay some attention to things that emanate outside of Indianapolis."²⁸

The editors of the *Indianapolis Medical Journal* also publicized that postponement of construction of Long Hospital further delayed treatment for Indiana's poorest citizens. The medical community earnestly promoted the hospital's potential to improve the lives of the working class by providing free or affordable treatment. In early January 1912, an editorial in the journal stated that the Indiana University trustees had been "patient and fair" while awaiting a location, but that the city of Indianapolis should not delay any longer selecting an alternate site. The article continued: "The hospital is needed now, several hundred in charge of the State could be made well persons . . . Delay means the further suffering, increased disability and death of persons who can be saved by treatment at Long Hospital."²⁹ The medical community rallied behind the university

²⁸ Albert E. Bulson, Jr. to Dr. Charles P. Emerson, 25 November 1911. Charles P. Emerson correspondence, IU School of Medicine, Office of the Dean, IUPUI Archives.

²⁹ "The Long Hospital site," *Indianapolis Medical Journal*. 15 (1912), 17.

and brought to light the lack of available state-sponsored medical care to the working classes and the superior treatment that would be accessible in the hospital.

While Indiana University trustees and faculty voiced concern about the location of the mayor's committee alternative sites, they secretly remained unsure about Military Park for the hospital's location. They desired a logical location within the city of Indianapolis, a site close to downtown, public transportation, and with space to expand the medical school in the future. Military Park fit these categories and it remained a worthy location in the eyes of the medical school or at least until something better was provided by the state or city. However, some medical professionals harbored reservations about the park, as demonstrated by James Fesler. He admitted to President Bryan that he feared Military Park was often swept with "offensive odors" as a result of its close proximity to industrial complexes.³⁰ In addition, medical school faculty and the trustees believed the controversy would in the end work out in their benefit. The controversy gave them a variety of sites to choose from and thus the medical school could get the best possible location. Dr. Emerson in a letter to President Bryan stated, "The spirit of opposition to the Long Hospital site, while still as active as ever, perhaps more so, is somewhat different from that present while you were last here, in that the present desire seems to be not merely to stop the use of Military Park but to offer a better site."³¹ The medical school looked upon the controversy as a means to greater presence in Indianapolis.

³⁰ James W. Fesler to Dr. William L. Bryan, 14 November 1911.

³¹ Dr. Charles P. Emerson to Dr. William L. Bryan, 18 November 1911, Charles P. Emerson folder, President Bryan Correspondence, IU-Bloomington Archives.

Publicly, though, the Indiana University trustees and medical school staff kept the plight of the working class at the pinnacle of their argument, similar to the sentiments of their opponents, the lineage societies, park commissioners, mayoral committee, and others. Indiana University officials weighed the level of public good which Military Park as a hospital site would stimulate above its role as a park, and the university never acknowledged the park's historical significance.³² Behind the scenes, university officials remained focused on acquiring a location for the teaching hospital, hoping to get the best space available. Location enhanced the significance of Military Park to university officials, and to those who would champion the site for its proximity to a working class neighborhood.

³² Despite the lack of public attention give by Indiana University to the park's historical significance, a copy of the Indiana Daughters of the Revolution resides in President Bryan's correspondences at the IU-Bloomington Archives. President Bryan received the resolution, but apparently never publicly responded to it.

Chapter Two: Hand-picked Legacies

In late 1911 and early 1912 Indianapolis newspapers reported a slew of negative stories concerning the potential placement of the proposed Robert W. Long Hospital in Military Park. Local headlines read: “Holds Military Park is sacred” or “Urge preservation of Military Park” and “To preserve Military Park.” Publicized support and denunciation surrounded the Long Hospital proposal as citizens debated the best use of the park as determined by notions of Progressive reforms.¹ Patriotic veterans and lineage societies saw the park’s function as a reminder of the sacrifices made by the soldiers of the 1860s to reunify the United States. These individuals and groups recognized the park as a historically significant space that offered examples of moral behavior for the benefit of all members of society. Progressive era ideas about the role of American history in shaping immigrants and the lower classes stimulated preserving historic sites and encouraged monument building.

The military tradition of Military Park, embodied in its name and landscape, embedded Civil War history related to Indianapolis into the city’s built environment. War relics adorned the paths of the park and visitors entered the park between objects championed as monuments. The park served as a reminder of Indiana’s role in the war and for veterans and lineage societies Military Park represented the sacrifices made by Indiana’s soldiers. The hospital proposal prompted fear among veterans and lineage societies that Indiana’s medical leaders would bury and eradicate the park’s past under

¹ “Holds Military Park is sacred,” *Indianapolis Star*, 24 December 1911; “Urge preservation of Military Park,” *Indianapolis Star*, 8 December 1911, “To preserve Military Park” *Indianapolis News*, 22 January 1912; “Long Hospital plans not tied up by Assembly Act,” *Indianapolis News*, 7 November 1911; “Pick Military Park for Long Hospital,” *Indianapolis Star*, 4 November 1911.

the foundation of a new hospital. When news of the proposal to place Long Hospital in Military Park reached various lineage groups and veterans, they responded with a public outcry. The rhetoric of the patriotic individuals and groups defined the emotional and historical value of the park to the city and state.

Military Park's martial association began with its establishment as a ground for military drilling. The park's function as an encampment for Civil War soldiers solidified its connection to significant events in Indiana's military history. In 1861 Governor Oliver P. Morton responded to President Abraham Lincoln's call for troops with the promise of ten thousand soldiers from Indiana.² Men promptly enlisted and sites throughout Indianapolis, such as Military Park, hosted newly formed regiments. The Thirteenth Indiana Infantry Regiment, under Captain Jeremiah C. Sullivan, was one of the first to muster in. In honor of Captain Sullivan the park became known as Camp Sullivan. In addition to the Thirteenth Regiment, General Lew Wallace, later revered author of *Ben Hur*, also mustered his famed Zouave regiment at Military Park. An Indianapolis newspaper later described Camp Sullivan as "where the hero and the veteran learned the first 'right, left' of the science of tactics."³ Soldiers first adapted to the routines and traditions of military life within the park's boundaries, which created a lasting bond between soldiers and civilians with the landscape.

Veterans demonstrated the importance of Military Park for them personally as it became a destination for remembrance and reunion in the years following the war. The Thirteenth Indiana Infantry Regiment held yearly reunions at Military Park on the date of

² George S. Cottman, *Indiana: Its History, Constitution, and Present Government* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1925), 125.

³ "The Military Park," *Indianapolis Journal*, 21 May 1868.

their mustering anniversary, the Fourth of July. In 1911 a local Indianapolis newspaper reported that approximately seventy veterans of the Thirteenth Regiment attended the reunion in the park. The Grand Army of the Republic (GAR), the largest national organization of Civil War veterans often held national meetings in the city. GAR programs for national encampments listed Military Park, with a description of its role in the Civil War, as a site of interest for visiting veterans.⁴

Captain Wallace Foster, a Civil War veteran, who as part of the Thirteenth Regiment once camped at Military Park. Publicly stressing the importance of Military Park as a cultural landscape within the city, Foster adamantly called for preservation of the park based on his own experiences in the war. He defended the park's relevance to history and morality, and labeled it the "city's most sacred historic grounds" with a "sacred, patriotic history." Foster states that the park is:

. . . the only ground in our city left as an object lesson of the brave boys who encamped there fifty years ago, of the many thousands who learned their first military lesson on these grounds and who sacrificed their lives to save the Union. It does not seem right that the state or city should give up this ground when those in whose memory it has been held are unable to protest against its desecration.⁵

Foster, as one of a dwindling number of surviving members of the Thirteenth Regiment left in Indianapolis, advocated for a public memory that was quickly slipping away as fewer and fewer veterans were alive in 1911. Further, by this time, all other physical spaces associated with Indianapolis' war time past—Greenlawn Cemetery, the burial ground of many soldiers; and Camp Morton, an encampment grounds and Confederate prison camp—had been obliterated by housing developments and new streets.

⁴ With the Veterans in '93: 27th National Encampment, GAR. Indianapolis, IN, September 4–9.

⁵ "Holds Military Park is sacred," *Indianapolis Star*, 24 December 1911.

Similarly, Foster voiced the opinion of solidarity from the remaining veterans of the Thirteenth Regiment. Foster noted that all of the veterans who attended the last reunion “were in favor of holding annual reunions there, as they regarded it [Military Park] holy ground.”⁶ Veterans, who once camped at the park before heading into battle, quickly defended the preservation of the green space in light of its connection to patriotism and its role in preparing soldiers for battle. They quickly deemed the area, in their opinions, as sacred space, as a lasting testament to the sacrifices of lives and service to country. Further, Captain Foster urged all civic organizations and patriotic societies to petition the state of Indiana to preserve the park.⁷

Local residents also formed emotional attachments to Military Park as a result of its role in the Civil War. Immediately following the encampment of soldiers in the 1860s, residents associated the site with departed family and friends. Later generations would also express similar sentimental emotional connections in regards to the park’s military history.

These civilian emotional ties were first publicized through the auspices of the Indiana Sanitary Fair. The U.S. Sanitary Commission formed at the beginning of the war to organize civilian donations of food, clothes, medical supplies, and other items for the war effort. Two women from Chicago organized the first sanitary fair and commission in 1863.⁸ The Indiana Sanitary Commission followed suit and held the fair in tandem with the Indiana State Fair at Military Park in early October 1864. A variety of booths

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Rejean Attie, “‘A Swindling Concern’: The United States Sanitary Commission and the Northern Female Public, 1861–1865” (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1987), 284.

appeared in the park that sold food and collected goods for the soldiers. Other stands, as fundraisers, sold authentic war relics, such as regimental flags “disfigured by the bullets of the rebels.”⁹

The Indiana Sanitary Fair gave civilians the opportunity to fondly remember the lives of soldiers who mustered at Camp Sullivan. One organizer, caught up in the spirit of the fair and known only by the initials S. M. H., sentimentalized a vision of the park and its uniformed inhabitants. The memory begins with scenes of camp life: “My window commanded a view of Military Park—the present location of the great State and Sanitary Fairs. Three and a half years since, as I sat there one evening watching the soldiers engaged in all the worried occupations of camp life—drilling, cooking, eating, dancing, wrestling, reading, writing letters on boxes and drum heads. . .” The reminiscence continues and builds to a parade of women, men, and children who bring a meal to the waiting soldiers. The individual remembers the meal as “the last one for three years, to some—the last one forever, to others.” The organizer ends the recollection with a sign of “*promised reunion*” as a rainbow arches over the picnic.¹⁰

The organizer’s melodramatic reminiscence associates Military Park as the last safe and secure encampment for soldiers departing for the battlefield. For civilians awaiting the return of soldiers, the park was a landscape associated with the uncertainty of war and the last memory of their loved ones safe and sound. Through the Sanitary Fair, the park transformed from a Union camp to a gathering space that showed support for the war. S. M. H. vividly connects the park to the reality of war, the precarious nature of

⁹ Indiana State Fair of 1864, Box 1, Folder 5, Papers of John Dillon Brown, Indiana State Library.

¹⁰ Indiana Sanitary Commission, Sanitary Fair Bulletin, 5 October 1864, Indiana State Library, 9, emphasis in original.

battle, and the difficulty faced while waiting for friends and family to return from the front.

After the Civil War, towards the end of the nineteenth century, monuments made from war relics graced the park's landscape. Upon the conclusion of the war, Indianapolis resident George Merritt, who lived near the park, petitioned the Indianapolis government to beautify Military Park. Merritt, raised in the Quaker faith, did not join the Union army, but instead actively worked for the Indiana Sanitary Commission and visited and cared for wounded soldiers at battle site camps and hospitals.¹¹ Although Merritt focused on the park's beautification, monuments made of war relics readily identified the space with events of its historical past.

The war relic monuments included a centrally-located cannonball monument, composed of one-hundred-pound shells, and pairs of retired one-hundred-pound Parrott cannons framed all three entrances to Military Park. The cannons were quite prominent, each positioned on stone piers, pointed upward with stacks of cannonballs arranged at the bases.¹² The war relic monuments' installation may date to 1898, as the Indianapolis Board of Park Commissioners first noted the existence of the cannonball monument and retired cannons in that year's annual report. The commissioners simply asserted that the monuments gave the park "a distinctly military appearance." A few years later, in 1901, Board of Park Commissioners noted the condition of one of the monuments is far from

¹¹ James R. O'Day, "George E. Kessler and Indianapolis Park System: A Study of its Historical Development during the City Beautiful Era, 1895–1915" (M.A. thesis, Ball State University, 1988), 45; Indianapolis Public Schools, "Naming the George Merritt School, 12 December 1912, Indiana State Library; Miles Piernan, "Military Park ceded to State by Congress in 1927, linked with stirring memories, now playground," *Indianapolis Star*, 30 July 1922.

¹² Military Park postcards, Box 20, Jay Small Postcard Collection, Indiana Historical Society; Annual Report Board of Park Commissioners 1898, 4.



Retired cannons with cannonballs frame the entrance to Military Park and the cannonball monument is visible in the background. Historical postcard in author's possession, c.1910.

adequate. As part of the year's work in the park, the commissioners reported: "the stone base of the cannon ball monument, having gone to pieces, a new one was placed in position early in the summer."¹³ The park commissioners' report did not elaborate about the first placement of the war relic monuments, yet forty years after the war, they felt compelled to spend funds to erect and care for these monuments.

The construction of war relic monuments in the park by the close of the nineteenth century publicly proclaimed the park's military association. In addition, nearly fifty years after the close of the Civil War, the *Indianapolis News* readily linked war veterans and their memories of battle with the park. Amidst glowing praise of Military Park as a playground for children, the reporter paused to describe the sight "when old soldiers get together on its shaded benches to talk of stirring days that were. . . ."¹⁴ The role of the park in the Civil War, even decades later, remained renowned in Indianapolis' public discourse.

The Indianapolis chapter of the Daughters of the Revolution (DR), whose members traced their genealogy to American Revolutionary soldiers, strongly disagreed with the Long Hospital proposal and published a resolution which lambasted the state and the city for its destruction of Civil War related sites in Indianapolis. The DR's mission aimed to "perpetuate the patriotic spirit of the men and women who achieved American Independence; to commemorate prominent events connected with the War of the

¹³ Annual Report of Indianapolis Board of Park Commissioners for 1898, *IndyParks*, 4; Annual Report of the Indianapolis Board of Park Commissioners for 1901, Indiana State Library, 7.

¹⁴ "Military Park is new Camp Sullivan," *Indianapolis News*, 20 July 1916; "Holds Military Park is Sacred," *Indianapolis Star*, 24 December 1911; "With the Veterans in '93: 27th National Encampment, GAR Indianapolis, Indiana Sept. 4-9," *Indiana Historical Society*, 8; W. M. Herschell, "Military Park , once trod by soldiers, now the developing ground of baby aliens seeking to become athletic Americans," *Indianapolis News*, 23 July 1910.

Revolution; to collect and preserve the rolls, records and historic documents relating to that period; to encourage the study of the country's history. . . ."¹⁵ In Indianapolis the Anthony Wayne Chapter of the DR embraced the latter clause probably in-part due to a lack of Revolutionary War related sites in Indiana, as they expressed profound interest in the preservation of local Civil War history.

Lineage societies became popular by the 1890s and championed pedigree and family lines as signs of morality and prestige. The most influential and popular women's lineage society was the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR). Flora Adams Darling was a founding member of the DAR in 1890 in New York. Darling subsequently feuded with other DAR leaders and the internal row led to the creation in 1891 of a similar "strictly lineal" society, the Daughters of the Revolution. At a time when the United States witnessed the largest influx of immigrants in the country's history, lineage societies flaunted the exclusivity of their native roots. Most societies included members from the middle and upper classes, who offered up monies for the restoration of historical house museums and construction of monuments and memorials.¹⁶

In Indiana, chapters of the DAR had supported various monument projects. Two specific projects included the Pigeon Roost Massacre monument and the Chief Menominee monument. In 1902 the Ann Rogers Clark Chapter from Jeffersonville led the society's support of the Pigeon Roost Massacre monument in Scott County. In 1812,

¹⁵ Mrs. E. E. Moffitt, "The N. C. Society Daughters of the Revolution and its Objects," *The North Carolina Booklet* (October, 1906), 146–147.

¹⁶ Flora Adams Darling, *Founding of the Daughters of the American Revolution and the Daughters of the Revolution* (Philadelphia: Independence Publishing Company, 1901), microfiche, Indiana State Library; Patricia West, *Domesticating History: The Political Origins of America's House Museums* (Washington: Smithsonian Institute Press, 1999), 43–44.

in events motivated by strained relations between American Indians and white Americans as a result of the War of 1812, a white settlement was attacked by Indians. The DAR viewed the event as tragic and resolved that “sixteen white people were murdered in cold blood and without cause.”¹⁷ A few years later, in 1909, the Wythongan Chapter of the DAR supported the construction of a monument to Chief Menominee in Marshall County. In a unique juxtaposition to the Pigeon Roost Massacre, where the American Indians were described in a blatantly vicious light, the Chief Menominee monument admitted the faults of American policies towards the forced removal of Potawatomi Indians. However, the sympathy given to the Potawatomi cause was viewed through the popular idea of the noble savage and the white man’s burden; at the monument’s dedication the Indians were described as “ignorant and helpless.”¹⁸

Lineage societies, therefore, encouraged the rise of nationalistic fervor common in the early twentieth century. The growing numbers of immigrants arriving in the United States spurred strong nationalistic feelings from middle and upper class citizenry. These Progressives believed that American history and nationalistic messages were meant to educate the lower classes and non-natives about American morality and identity. The Pigeon Roost Massacre monument perpetuated American rights to land and superiority over the American Indians. Similarly, the Chief Menominee monument, while admitting an error of judgment by the American government, insisted that Indians were dependent on the United States. Lineage societies often supported local causes for the benefit of exemplifying history for a smaller, local audience and the occasional visitor.

¹⁷ “Indiana State Conference,” *American Monthly Magazine*, 21(December 1902), 470.

¹⁸ “The Unveiling of the Pottawattomie Indian Monument near Plymouth, Indiana, September 4, 1909,” *American Monthly Magazine*, 35 (November 1909), 1063–1066.

Furthermore, these societies popularized specific versions of American history to educate and elevate the position of American identity, often focused on the lower classes and new immigrant communities.¹⁹ The Indiana DR found an opportunity to elevate history for the morality of the public in the controversy of Long Hospital and Military Park.

In December, 1911, the Anthony Wayne Chapter of the DR, a self-labeled “patriotic body,” resolved in fervent language: “Whereas, the State has erected a noble shaft in this city to the ‘Silent Victors’ while as yet it has not dedicated one acre of ground, nor erected the humblest of marker to indicate to the stranger or to posterity just where the boys in blue were encamped, who helped make pages of history that has preserved us as a nation.”²⁰ The women of the DR, while in favor of the “noble shaft,” a reference to Indianapolis’ Soldiers and Sailors Monument, also saw the monument as an affront to authentic historical sites left unattended by state and city governments. Military Park, as a tangible space directly related to the Civil War and its soldiers, proved equally if not more important to the historical education of Indiana’s citizenry. Seven days after the Anthony Wayne Chapter published their resolution the overarching state body of the DR endorsed it and openly solicited support from GAR posts and civic leaders in the local newspaper. The state body of the DR even sent President Bryan of Indiana University a copy of the resolution.²¹

¹⁹ Michael G. Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory: the Transformation of Tradition in American Culture* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991), 218–221; Mike Wallace, “Visiting the Past: History Museums in the United States” in *Presenting the Past: Essays on History and the Public*, Susan Porter Benson, Stephen Brier, Roy Rosenzweig, eds. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986), 140.

²⁰ “Urge preservation of Military Park,” *Indianapolis Star*.

²¹ “State D. of R. opposed to hospital in park,” *Indianapolis Star*, 15 December 1911; Resolution, Long Hospital folder, President Bryan Correspondence, IU-Bloomington Archives.

The DR emphasized the significance the park to city and state history by relating the destruction of other Civil War sites in Indianapolis. One of the earliest cemeteries established in Indianapolis, Greenlawn Cemetery, also known as City Cemetery, eventually lost prominence to Crown Hill Cemetery, which was dedicated in 1864. However, Greenlawn Cemetery was the burial ground for both Union and Confederate soldiers. In 1890 Greenlawn Cemetery closed to new burials and the city began developing sections of the cemetery for streets. The city eventually transferred the soldiers' graves to Crown Hill Cemetery. However, an 1868 fire had destroyed the records that contained the location of many soldiers' graves, which rendered full relocation impossible to complete.²² The DR categorized this desecration as "shocking to the sensibilities of our enlightened community." They also cited the plight of the former Camp Morton, once located north of downtown Indianapolis. Camp Morton first housed the Indiana State Fair in the late 1850s and became a Union camp and Confederate prison during the war. After the war, the site reverted back to fair grounds, but developers bought the site in 1890 and subsequent building began thereafter. The DR lamented that "Camp Morton is . . . unrecognizable in the group of houses and streets now occupying its site."²³ The potential disturbance of Military Park would omit any trace of Civil War related sites from the landscape of Indianapolis.

While Indianapolis had neglected most of its Civil War related sites, a location associated with the War of 1812 had recently been honored and protected. The Battle of Tippecanoe loomed large in the history of Indiana, credited at that time for making the state safe for white settlement. The battle between American forces and Tecumseh's men

²² Bodenhamer and Barrows, eds., 392–393.

²³ "Urge Preservation of Military Park," *Indianapolis Star*.

proved a key victory for the United States and largely demoralized the American Indians, who then fought for the British in the War of 1812. After the battle the site was largely neglected, but in 1836 General John Tipton, who also fought in the War of 1812, donated the battlefield to the state of Indiana. This donation did little to preserve the battlefield until the Indiana General Assembly began appropriating funds for a fence and ground maintenance in the 1870s. Local citizens in the Lafayette area were not satisfied by merely marking the battlefield with a fence and in 1892 formed the Tippecanoe Battlefield Monument Association with the aim of erecting a large-scale monument at the site. The association turned to the state and federal government for funds and an endorsement of the importance of the Tippecanoe Battlefield. They believed the site important enough to Indiana's history and social morality that the site deserved government backed sponsorship. The association's goal was eventually realized in 1907 when the General Assembly and United States Congress appropriated funds for a monument and later established a Tippecanoe Monument Commission.²⁴

The dedication of the Tippecanoe Battlefield monument proved steeped in the attitudes of Progressives that American history was meant to teach the values of democracy and American patriotism. The monument was dedicated on 7 November 1908. Governor Frank J. Hanley spoke at the dedication and elaborated about the monument's importance: "In the act of conception, building and dedication we bespeak our gratitude and voice our hearts' desire to be like them [the soldiers] in purity in

²⁴ Gen. R. P. DeHart, ed., *Past and Present of Tippecanoe County, Indiana* Vol. 1 (Indianapolis: B. F. Bowen and Company, 1909), 98. This county history is even dedicated to the "heroes of the Battle of Tippecanoe by whose blood and sacrifice the white race was enabled to settle and develop the Great Northwest, including Tippecanoe County, Indiana." *Laws of the State of Indiana, 1907* (Indianapolis: Wm. B. Burford, 1907), 67.

purpose, in loftiness of courage, and in the exalted character of service rendered.” The monument thus marked the location of revered events and individuals and whose courage and dedication to country were fit for emulation. In addition, Governor Hanley believed that the battle would forever be a lesson in patriotism and that “children of a later generation” while recording the names of those involved in the battle would “grow still with awe.”²⁵ The state of Indiana set a precedent that encouraged monument building at historic sites that defined American history as valuable and good.²⁶

The patriotic outcry against the destruction of Military Park continued into January of 1912, as the male counterpart of the DR, the Sons of the Revolution (SR) followed suit and published their own resolution against the Long Hospital proposal. Founded in 1876 the National Sons of the Revolution preceded the DR, and expressed similar notions about encompassing all manner of American history. SR society literature states,

Besides the genealogical usefulness of the Society, it strives to forward practical patriotism through preserving historical documents and manuscripts, providing memorials and contributing to monument and memorial funds of the General Society, influencing legislation to prevent desecration of the flag and to preserve things hallowed by association with deeds of American patriotism.²⁷

The mission of the Indiana SR encompassed a broad purpose to retain and preserve all aspects American history, beyond the apparent limited scope of their obvious interest in

²⁵ DeHart, 113, 115.

²⁶ The state of Indiana also appropriated funds for the construction of the Pigeon Roost Massacre and Chief Menominee monuments: *Laws of the State of Indiana 1903* (Indianapolis: Wm. B. Burford, 1903), 25–26; *Laws of the State of Indiana 1907*, 623.

²⁷ William Allen Wood, *The Book of the Sons of the Revolution in Indiana*, No. 2 (Indianapolis: Sons of the Revolution of Indiana, 1903), 100–101.

the American Revolution. In addition, the society readily promoted patriotic practices and messages, in line with other lineage groups of the Progressive era.

Throughout the patriotic discussion of Military Park's historical significance, the DR, Captain Foster, and the SR each professed the lessons of the park as necessary to the moral education of Indianapolis' citizenry. Moral education and concerns about citizenship often proved in the forefront of lineage societies missions. The influx of immigrants and rural to urban migrants, which caused sprawling slums in many U.S. cities, appeared to upper- and middle-class reformers as ill-educated masses. Lineage societies believed that public examples of American heroism and ideals of democracy laid forth by the events of American history could shape the uneducated into dutiful American citizens. These societies championed their status as American natives, the exclusionary basis of membership, as reason to encourage and promote a specific picture of American history and life for the uneducated.²⁸ Ten years earlier, the SR's chaplain, Rev. Allen B. Philputt, in an address also published in the *Indianapolis Star*, boldly asserted, "But it is our duty . . . to help keep alive an interest in the story of the great struggle for liberty, to encourage young people to study the history of their own country and the heroism of its founders, and to give hearty support to the best citizenship and the highest national ideals. There is increasing need that emphasis be laid on these things."²⁹ Philputt clearly endorsed Progressive notions that the SR and like-minded upper- and middle-class citizens should endorse American history as a vehicle to produce worthwhile, responsible citizens.

²⁸ Wallace, 141.

²⁹ Allen B. Philputt, "The Genius of Washington," in *The Book of the Sons of the Revolution*, 104–105.

The controversy between Long Hospital and Military Park became a viable platform for DR, SR, and Captain Foster to promote American history and its usefulness in the early twentieth century. The DR showed concern for visitors to and residents of Indianapolis as “it [state government] has not dedicated one acre of ground, nor erected the humblest marker to indicate to the stranger or to posterity just where the boys in blue were encamped, who helped to make pages of history that has preserved us as a nation.” The DR decreed the importance of Military Park as a site relevant for future generations and tourists.³⁰ Similarly the SR noted that the landscape, if obscured like Camp Morton, would “break the last material link that connects our city with the days of Lincoln and Morton” and become “a mere reminiscence and name in the pages of history.”³¹ The DR and SR, in true Progressive fashion, believed that the park, as a cultural landscape, embodied a nationalistic message which deserved preservation and publication.

In line with the DR and Captain Foster, the SR resolution focused on the historical significance of Military Park as a sacred space. The SR denoted the park as the “last material link” to the Civil War in the city and as a site “thus hallowed that remains untouched by the hand of commercialism and utilitarianism,” an allusion to the disturbance of Greenlawn Cemetery and Camp Morton. The resolution implored the Indiana state government to actively pursue preservation of Military Park as a memorial. The SR further pushed the state to craft legislation to build a memorial hall in a small portion of the park that would “provide for the preservation of the park for all future time as a memorial.” The SR recognized the inherent value of Military Park as a historic site that should be preserved for posterity. The memorial hall would then house “Indiana’s

³⁰ “Urge Preservation of Military Park,” *Indianapolis Star*.

³¹ “Military Park urged for memorial hall,” *Indianapolis Star*.

battle flags and other memories of that conflict.” The SR sought the preservation of place and, subsequently, the preservation of a specific moral-laden history.³²

Captain Wallace and the veterans of the Thirteenth Regiment hoped to see Military Park “preserved for the rising generation,” while the SR encouraged the preservation of history through a memorial hall within the park boundaries. Through designation of the soldiers as heroes with “noble endeavors,” the DR, Captain Foster, and the SR upheld the park as a space dedicated to the values of a united country. The SR boasted that the park’s role in the war and the “heroic part borne by Indiana” made its preservation a “peculiar interest for every citizen of the state.” Each group voiced concern that the destruction of Military Park would erase the lessons of the Civil War, its participants, and their sacrifices to the future citizens of and visitors to Indianapolis.³³

The patriotic individuals and groups who adamantly disapproved of the proposal to place Long Hospital in Military Park did approve of the hospital itself. The DR asserted, “We . . . are not unmindful of the generous and potentially beneficent gift of the Robert W. Long Hospital.” Captain Foster pointed to other more attractive sites in the city for the hospital and the SR called the hospital a “grand contribution to humanitarianism.” These groups recognized the philanthropic, legitimate need for Long Hospital and its potential benefits to the state’s poor and to the healthcare profession. Captain Foster even hailed the use of Military Park as a child’s playground, which co-existed successfully with the park’s history, and called for the park’s preservation for both recreational and historical reasons. These patriotic supporters of Military Park were not unmindful of

³² “Military Park urged for Memorial Hall,” *Indianapolis Star*, 22 January 1911.

³³ “Urge preservation of Military Park,” *Indianapolis Star*; “Military Park urged for memorial hall,” *Indianapolis Star*; “Holds Military Park is sacred,” *Indianapolis Star*.

other popular Progressive era ideals towards the use of civic space. They also valued Long Hospital, as it would provide health care for the states working class.³⁴

However, foremost in their collective minds were the events of the Civil War, its sites in Indianapolis, and the emotional connections created by those who encamped in the park before marching off to war. They desired the city and state's recognition of the importance and value of Military Park as a memorial site to Indiana's Civil War soldiers. They called for public declarations of Military Park as a memorial, in accordance with the park's commemorative monuments. The patriotic lineage societies and veterans believed that the historical struggle undertaken by Civil War soldiers associated with Military Park was the most meaningful aspect of the site. The Long Hospital proposal created the platform necessary for a segment of society to promote a specific view of Military Park's history, as they believed it would inspire patriotic and nationalistic views among those, particularly the working class, who experienced the landscape.

³⁴ "Urge preservation of Military Park," *Indianapolis Star*; "Military Park urged for memorial hall," *Indianapolis Star*; "Holds Military Park is sacred," *Indianapolis Star*.

Chapter Three: A Community Breathing Space

In 1910 Indiana historian Jacob Piatt Dunn declared that the city of Indianapolis, with its wide boulevards and lack of slums, had no need for city parks.¹ Despite Dunn's optimism, his contemporaries, members of the Indianapolis Board of Park Commissioners and landscape architect George E. Kessler, continued pursuing a unified city park system. At its founding in 1895, the Indianapolis Board of Park Commissioners gained jurisdiction over Military Park, and from the beginning the board grappled with an expansive city and plans to make large unified city parks that offered a variety of amenities for city residents.

The land that became Military Park had an established history as a communal meeting place. It was the site of the Indianapolis's first Fourth of July celebration in 1822, a year after the city's founding. Nathaniel Bolton, early resident of Indianapolis and state librarian, attended the gathering and later described that the "whole population for many miles turned out to celebrate." According to Bolton the event included a public dinner with a barbequed deer "emblematical of the recent settlement of the country."² The site thus became a civic space, claimed by individuals who celebrated their country and their new city.

¹ Jacob Piatt Dunn, *Greater Indianapolis: the History, the Industries, the Institutions, and the People of a City of Homes*, Vol. 1 (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co., 1910), 423.

² Nathaniel Bolton, "Early History of Indianapolis and Central Indiana," *Indiana Historical Society Publications* 1 (1897), 164. This history is adapted from a published lecture first delivered by Bolton, Indiana state librarian, in 1853 to the Indiana Historical Society. For other sources on Military Park as the site of the first Fourth of July Celebration, see Dunn, 48 and B. R. Sulgrove, *History of Indianapolis and Marion County, Indiana* (1884; reprint, Evansville: Unigraphic, Inc., 1974), 47.

The function of Military Park throughout the mid nineteenth century adhered to popular transcendental notions of pastoral land. The anonymous author of a hand-drawn map of the area around Military Park recalled, “This was our playgrounds when we were youngsters, and a lovely patch of woods, it was too way back in ye oldin time 1848 to 60.”³ Similarly, the Sanitary Fair organizer S. M. H. lamented the loss of the “peaceful spot when only the sounds heard were the sweet-voiced warblers in the trees, or the shouts of happy children sporting on the grass.”⁴ Prior to the Civil War, Military Park belonged to the frivolous joys of children at play in a wooded setting, and not solely as a locale for military drilling. Park-like activities characterized the space long before the official title of public park was extended to the land. Urban dwellers utilized the natural landscape that provided recreational space in the city.

Immediately after the Civil War, when George Merritt proposed that the space known as Camp Sullivan should officially become a park, the encampment of soldiers had severely altered the landscape from its idyllic pre-war setting. Soldiers needed firewood to cook and the trees of Military Park were cut down and burned. In October 1862 Caleb Smith, then Secretary of the Interior under Lincoln, wrote to General Lew Wallace about the “vandalism” in Camp Sullivan. He stated that the “soldiers . . . are destroying [sic] many valuable trees.” In addition, the soldiers’ mules “girdled and consumed the bark of forty large trees in a single night.” One encamped soldier later described the park as “full of mules and wagons, and cracker boxes, and ammunition, and

³ “Map of Area north, east, and south of Military Park, c. 1860,” Bass Photo Collection, Indiana Historical Society.

⁴ Sanitary Fair Bulletin, 5 October 1864, Indiana State Library, 9.

the paraphernalia of war. It was dirty, and sordid, and unkempt.” By the end of the war many of the park’s trees died and it resembled a “deserted barnyard.”⁵

In 1866 the state of Indiana permitted Merritt, who lived near the park on West Street, to proceed with improving the former encampment site for the benefit of its citizens. Through personal funds and monies raised by residents living near the park, Merritt personally and financially directed the task to clear Military Park of its encampment remains and to construct a park landscape. His dedication earned him the nickname as Indianapolis’ “father of parks.”⁶ An *Indianapolis Journal* article from 1868 describes many of the alterations to the landscape, which included grading, planting trees and vines, and digging a pond. The pond followed the order of landscape architects of the era as an “imitation of nature, irregular and varied in outline.” Though on a small scale, Merritt’s desire for a city park mimicked the taste of the day and brought “natural” elements into the urban landscape. The *Indianapolis Journal* stated, “May the Military Park . . . yield as much happiness and earnest endeavor for the good of others as has resulted from the ill-kept and uncultivated Military Grounds.”⁷

At the time of Merritt’s transformation of the Military Park, the city of Indianapolis contained few green spaces. The original plat of Indianapolis included three

⁵ Caleb Smith to Lew Wallace, 16 October 1862, Caleb B. Smith Papers 1849–1862, Indiana Historical Society; “The Military Park,” *Indianapolis Journal*, 21 May 1868; Indianapolis Public Schools, “Naming the George Merritt School,” 12 December 1912, Indiana State Library; Annual Report Indianapolis Board of Park Commissioners for 1904, Indiana State Library, 14.

⁶ Annual Report Board of Park Commissioners 1904, 14; “George Merritt is dead in west,” *Indianapolis Star*, 25 September 1912; Miles Piernan, “Military Park ceded to state by Congress in 1827, linked with stirring war memories, now playground,” *Indianapolis Star*, 30 July 1922; “George Merritt as a man of public spirit,” *Indianapolis News*; 31 October 1903, 28.

⁷ “The Military Park,” *Indianapolis Journal*.

open spaces, University Square, the Governor's circle, and the western city market area. Designers envisioned University Square as the site for a major state academic institution, which never materialized. The circle remained covered with "a delightful grove of sugar trees" until the construction of the governor's mansion and then the Soldiers and Sailors Monument.⁸ The western city market space served as an open gathering space throughout the early nineteenth century, but was eventually built over. Military Park resided near the former market location.⁹ By the 1860s, the only other green space in the city included Crown Hill Cemetery, a large park-like burial ground, designed in the tradition of the rural cemetery movement.

In 1910 according to historian Jacob Piatt Dunn "all park purposes of the period before 1870 were served by the Military Reservation, the State House and Court House Squares, and University Square."¹⁰ However it was during the latter part of the nineteenth century that a new appreciation arose in Indianapolis towards public green spaces. As the city neared the twentieth century, its rapidly expanding population necessitated an updated and expanded park system. Progressive reformers often demanded the formation of government agencies to perform expanded social services. In Indianapolis, the formation of the Indianapolis Board of Park Commissioners in 1895 proved pivotal and marked the city's acknowledgment and endorsement of the importance of developing parks and recreational spaces in the city. The city and state's virtual neglect towards public green spaces caused private individuals, such as George Merritt, who served considerable time on the board, to personally fund park construction and promote their

⁸ Bolton, 161.

⁹ William Sullivan, "Map of Indianapolis," 1836.

¹⁰ Dunn, 423.

intrinsic recreational benefits.¹¹ The creation of a Board of Park Commissioners acknowledged the city's acceptance of parks as legitimate spaces that encouraged reform with positive, moral influences on the urban populace.

By 1896 Indianapolis contained six parks—Garfield Park, Military Park, University Square, St. Clair Square, Elmwood Park, and Brookside—with total park acreage at approximately 116 acres. Garfield Park was the largest with 89 acres, but Military Park at 17 acres was the second largest in the city. As Indianapolis' population neared 160,000 individuals, the lack of a large park system became apparent. The board, understanding the potential need for park building in and around Indianapolis, sought the guidance of reputable landscape architects, Earnshaw and Punshon of Cincinnati, and Olmsted and Eliot of Brookline, Massachusetts, the firm founded by the most notable landscape architect of the nineteenth century, Frederick Law Olmsted. With consultation, the park board proposed a gradual plan for a system of parks and parkways in Indianapolis. In the following years, the park board embraced ideals of progressive reformers and espoused the virtues of park building, by asserting that parks “promote a higher moral tone to all classes of people, place before them the ennobling works of nature, and are places where they may learn much, which carried to their homes makes them brighter.”¹² Parks, as imitations of nature, and not the disorderly city, were seen as places that encouraged moral development to all manner of citizens.

The park board's vision for Indianapolis parks reverberated with the contemporary reform ideals of landscape architecture. The park board stated:

¹¹ “Resigns from Park Board,” *Indianapolis News*, 14 September 1906, 1.

¹² Annual Report Indianapolis Board of Park Commissioners 1896, *IndyParks*, 10; Annual Report Indianapolis Board of Park Commissioners 1897, *Indy Parks*, 29.

The work of making a park is one immense study, and all that is done is with a view of the future, twenty to fifty years hence. The growth of the trees and shrubbery, the creation of romantic dells, the re-establishment of perfectly natural landscapes, the designs for all permanent improvements such as roads, walks, bridges, dams, buildings, etc. must be done with one end in view—that of a harmonious finish in the future.

The Board of Park Commissioners envisioned impressive, long-lasting parks in Indianapolis and received encouragement from the public, who “generally appreciated our work.” In addition, the board recognized the importance of smaller parks, such as Military Park, and expected high results from its effects on citizens: “Our city needs more small parks, about like the present squares, in congested parts of the city, and in such places they do better general conditions than do lectures, laws, and anything else.”¹³ A small park contributed greatly to the lives of those living in dense areas and provided repose from pollution and noise. As described by local booster Max R. Hyman in 1902, all of Indianapolis benefited from an estimated \$400,000 spent to improve city parks and park space. He proclaimed, “In every section of the city the eye is delighted by the park like vistas that stretch in every direction.”¹⁴ Indianapolis park commissioners began implementing their plans of integrating new and existing parks.

The dutiful attention paid to the park by the Board of Park Commissioners illustrates the values and expectations placed upon recreational landscapes and Military Park received ample attention by the board. By the late 1890s the park included twenty-two flower beds with “blooming and foliage plants.” The park also boasted cement and gravel walks and roadways, an enlarged pond, electric lights, playground equipment, and watering service from the fire department. For many years in the early 1900s the

¹³ Annual Report of the Indianapolis Board of Park Commissioners 1901, Indiana State Library, 14–15.

¹⁴ Max R. Hyman, *The Journal Handbook of Indianapolis: An Outline History* (Indianapolis: Indianapolis Journal Newspaper Co., 1902), 90.



Children play on swings during a summer day in Military Park. Other playground equipment is shown in the background. From: *Souvenir, Song Book and Official Programme, Fourth International Convention of the Epworth League in Indianapolis, Ind.*, 1899, p. 11.

roadways were paved with crushed oyster shells, obtained from local restaurants, creating a smooth, never-muddy surface. In 1901 the park's regular maintenance involved grass cutting, removing old trees, planting new trees, and beautifying the canal bank with flowers. A rhododendron bed doubled in size. The Indianapolis Water Company improved the bank along the Central Canal and planted wild roses and Norway maples. Built in 1903, the park shelter house, made of artificial stone with a Spanish clay tile roof, cost \$6,000 and operated as a lending library for the children who lived near the park. The men's restroom was constructed in the shape a large tree stump. The park commissioners arranged band concerts on Sundays in the summer time. In the winter a toboggan run, at one-hundred twenty feet long, was constructed.¹⁵ The park offered its visitors the promise of athletic play, aesthetic beauty, sanitation with modern amenities, musical entertainment, and even literary knowledge.

The potential of a grand system of parks and parkways in Indianapolis was not fully envisioned until 1908 when the board hired nationally acclaimed landscape architect George E. Kessler to create an expansive city park system. Born in Germany in 1862, Kessler immigrated to the United States as a young child. His family lived in Missouri, Wisconsin, and Texas before they returned to Germany upon the death of Kessler's father. Kessler attended a private school for landscape gardening in Weimar and toured much of Europe studying landscape design. He returned to the United States in 1882. By

¹⁵ Annual Report Board of Park Commissioners 1897, p. 14; Annual Report Board of Park Commissioners 1901, p. 7–8; Annual Report Indianapolis Board of Park Commissioners 1903, *IndyParks*, 7–8; Annual Report Board of Park Commissioners 1904, p. 15.

the time the Indianapolis board hired Kessler, he had worked on park systems and projects in Kansas City, St. Louis, Denver, and Cincinnati.¹⁶

In his first report to the board, Kessler discussed the latest concerns to park system designers. He instantly recognized that Indianapolis, with its growing population, had outgrown its current parks, and required a broader, more complete park plan to meet future needs. Kessler championed the idea of interconnected parks within a city that created wide boulevards leading to open spaces for recreation. He understood the value of small parks in congested city corridors and for larger parks that extended on the edges of the city. Kessler believed Indianapolis needed a link from downtown to the White River. He stated, “The first and most important improvement to your city as a whole is that along the line of White River. It is proposed to improve both banks of the White River from Riverside Park to the south limits of the city, with a continuous driveway upon each side of the stream.” He equated this suggestion to contemporary European riverside improvements, which he had learned first hand from his European education.¹⁷

Furthermore, Kessler, in cooperation with the Indiana Centennial Celebration Commission, saw an added opportunity for the city in the beautification of the near west side that incorporated Military Park. Kessler focused on Indianapolis as a capital city and believed that improvement of the area around the capitol would elevate the city in

¹⁶ William H. Wilson, *The City Beautiful Movement in Kansas City* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1964), 40–54; Kurt Culbertson, “George Edward Kessler: Landscape Architect of the American Renaissance” in *Midwestern Landscape Architecture*, ed. William H. Tishler (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 99–116.

¹⁷ Indiana Centennial Celebration Commission, “Suggestive plans for a historical and education celebration in Indiana in 1916” (Indianapolis: Burford Printing, 1912), 83; Annual Report of the Indianapolis Board of Park Commissioners 1908, Indiana State Library, 18, 22–23; Annual Report of the Indianapolis Board of Park Commissioners for 1909, Indiana State Library, 18–19.

national opinion. He additionally proposed a “plaza extending westward from the State House, adjoining Military Park and reaching directly to the river for connection either north or south. There would immediately be formed a fine and direct connection to the Riverside Park from the heart of the city.” Kessler later called this lack of connection a “glaring failure in the previous development of the city.” He and the park board also recognized that the city would eventually expand its state government facilities, and his plaza plan offered a way to beautify the west and prepare for later construction. More importantly to Kessler, the proposed plaza plan potentially offered an anchor for the entire system of Indianapolis parks. This new vision for Indianapolis parks, a wide boulevard along the White River and a plaza plan that included the area due west of the State House and Military Park, promised to heighten the city’s physical landscape to the “past glories of the more recent great American expositions.”¹⁸

The park commissioners and George Kessler, while claiming that a park system could bring national exposure to the city, also believed that a city park system encouraged civic betterment through pleasant surroundings and improved sanitary conditions. Most early twentieth-century cities, despite the progress of city form design, still contained many unsanitary elements. Industrial plants and factories spewed toxic fumes into the air, waterways were used as unofficial trash dumps, and congested housing conditions and inefficient trash removal prompted concerns about public health. Indianapolis suffered from air pollution caused by factories and water pollution in the White River and the Central Canal, both located near Military Park. Indianapolis faced these problems and officials believed that public parks could help eradicate, or at least

¹⁸ Annual Report Board of Park Commissioners 1908, p. 22–23; Annual Report Board of Park Commissioners 1909, p. 18–19.

alleviate, the noxious conditions of urban dwelling. The Indianapolis Local Council of Women noted that for the years of 1911 and 1912 “the public was forced to reconsider many health questions . . . public playgrounds, smoke, dust and especially unclean hands in the market and groceries.”¹⁹ Progressive reformers, recognizing the advancements of sanitation and germ theories of modern medicine, desired higher standards of sanitation and air quality within their cities. The realities of general living conditions for west side residents further necessitated Military Park’s existence as a source of healthy green space to the nearby neighborhoods.

The west side neighborhoods around Military Park at the beginning of the twentieth century housed mostly working-class families, which included a variety of immigrants, many from eastern European countries. Political unrest in Eastern Europe spurred immigrants to the United States. This wave of immigration further congested Indianapolis’ downtown neighborhoods, particularly on the west side. In 1910 immigrants comprised about nine percent of Indianapolis’ population. Despite this relatively low immigration percentage, in comparison to other midwestern cities such as Chicago or Cleveland, Indianapolis’ immigrant communities remained prominent through their proximity to one another and their impact on the city’s built environment. By 1919 three ethnic churches surrounded Military Park: Greek Orthodox, built in 1919; Romanian Orthodox, built in 1911; and Bulgarian Orthodox, built in 1915. Most members of each denomination lived within walking distance of the park, and church

¹⁹ Commercial Club Year book and Directory, 1912, Indiana Historical Society, 23; *History of Indiana Local Council of Women 1892–1924* (n.p., 1924), 20.

services had been held in nearby houses before the construction of the churches.²⁰ A prominent member of the Bulgarian immigrant population, Christo Nizamoff, remembered that the Bulgarian Orthodox Church stood at the site of the present-day Herron School of Art on the campus of Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis just west of Military Park on New York Street. He recalled that before 1915 the services were conducted in the native language.²¹

Ethnic groups around Military Park indeed retained their ethnic identities. The high concentration of immigrant families and communities caught the attention of a city newspaper, which highlighted their varied cultures. In 1910 the *Indianapolis News* described a typical summer scene in the park: “Under the trees and around the pump one may see, any summer day, children of almost every hue and tongue—no shade or nationality is barred.” The majority of children were “Hungarians, Macedonians, Roumanians, Lithuanians, Bulgarians, Turks, Greeks, Italians, Hebrews, Syrians”²²

²⁰ James J. Divita, “Demography and Ethnicity” in *Encyclopedia of Indianapolis*, eds. David J. Bodenhamer and Robert G. Barrows (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 55; Bulgarian Orthodox Church Historical Marker, 49.1995.1, Indiana Historical Bureau; Greek Orthodox Church Historical Marker, 49.2003.2, Indiana Historical Bureau; Romanian Orthodox Church, 49.1998.1, Indiana Historical Bureau. The Bulgarian Orthodox Church congregation formed by 1907 and their original services were held in a coffee shop on West Washington Street, south of Military Park. The Greek Orthodox congregation originally formed in 1910. The Romanian Orthodox Church held its services prior to 1911 at 625 W. Washington Street.

²¹ Christo Nizamoff, “Oral History Interview by F. Gerald Handfield,” 13 March 1986, Indiana Historical Society. In the interview, Nizamoff refers to the structure built on the site of his former church as the Indiana University School of Law building, which, after extensive renovation, opened in 2006 as the new home of the Herron School of Art.

²² W. M. Herschell, “Military Park, once trod by many soldiers, now the developing ground of baby aliens seeking to become athletic Americans,” *Indianapolis News*, 23 July 1910.

Indianapolis newspapers were not the only local entity curious about the city's newcomers. Organizations grew in Indianapolis as concerns about local housing conditions for immigrant communities increased. The Charity Organization Society (COS) was established in 1880 and provided aid to the local poor and assisted with finding employment. In 1911 the COS joined with the Immigrants' Aid Association (IAA) to further improve the lives of Indianapolis' new arrivals. The IAA opened a settlement house, called the Foreign House, in October, 1911, to further assist immigrant communities on the west side. Settlement houses were typically run by middle or upper class women. These women bought a house in a working class neighborhood, studied the local residents, and hoped to educate locals about American trends in hygiene, customs, and values.²³

In 1910 social workers for the COS, in partnership with Indiana University's Department of Economics and Social Sciences, systematically evaluated various Indianapolis neighborhoods with largely working class residents. The workers identified District 5, from Washington Street north to New York Street and Military Park, as a crowded mix of nationalities, with about one quarter of the population being foreign-born. Housing in this area consisted of small houses crowded onto small lots or dark apartments within commercial structures. One worker reported, "The houses . . . are either single or double cottage. They are crowded very close together, little or no space being available for yards. We found dark, gloomy rooms in every house . . . This darkness was caused, not by lack of windows in the houses themselves, but by the fact

²³ "Charity Organization Society" and "Immigrants' Aid Association," *Encyclopedia of Indianapolis*, 402, 727.

that the houses are crowded so closely together.” In addition to cramped, sunless housing, nearly half of the residences did not have sewers, plumbing, or city water.²⁴

Farther south of District 5, the COS workers documented the Foreign District, south of Washington Street, but within walking distance of Military Park. Housing conditions in the Foreign District were described as much worse than in District 5. Many single immigrant men lived in this district and in many of the houses or apartments up to eight men lived in one poorly ventilated room. Often these men were relatives, friends, or at least acquaintances, who quickly accepted new arrivals from their homelands. After detailing the conditions of the Foreign District, a worker asserted, “The property owners should be prevented from renting old dilapidated, unsanitary houses, and to a certain extent at least, it should be their duty to prevent overcrowding. Until some such radical steps are taken, living and housing conditions among the foreigners will continue to be a disgrace to the people of Indianapolis.”²⁵ Clearly, many residents who lived in neighborhoods near Military Park suffered from unsanitary housing conditions that lacked modern utilities. Without reform, landlords remained able to provide poor housing for maximum profit.

The reality of Indianapolis’ housing conditions became clear to the Indianapolis Board of Park Commissioners. The board exhibited continual concern for the city’s quality of life. Kessler reported to the board in 1908, “As cities become more congested and vacant property is more and more eliminated, the necessity becomes urgent for open

²⁴ L. M. Campbell Adams, “An Investigation of Housing and Living Conditions in Three Districts in Indianapolis,” (M.A. thesis, Indiana University, 1910) in *Indiana University Studies*, vol. 1 (July, 1910–July, 1913), 121–126.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 133.

spaces providing recreation and fresh air for all and playgrounds for the youth who are otherwise turned upon the crowded streets in constant danger of their lives.”²⁶ Parks therefore represented safe areas throughout the city that allowed children to grow and play. In 1911 the board declared to the mayor of Indianapolis that parks “insure a proper and healthful city growth.”²⁷

The progressive proponents of the City Beautiful movement included urban parks and the playground movement as part of public health reforms. Parks became “breathing spots” and politicians promoted their ability to soothe society’s physical and moral ills. Along with architecture and civic buildings, playgrounds and parks played a significant role in the City Beautiful movement.²⁸ In 1912 the board stated, “All progressive American cities are coming to realize that a system of parks, recreation centers and playgrounds, is not a luxury but a vital and important factor in a normal development.” Parks and playgrounds became an outlet for city officials concerned with overcrowded housing. City officials used parks, which enabled exercise, as a solution to concerns about the well-being of the working class.²⁹ Military Park, situated in a working-class area, subsequently entered into civic leaders’ discussions of the ideal built environment.

Playgrounds became an additional buffer against the noise and dirt of America’s swelling cities, as they provided children with safe and open places to play, learn, and grow. Wholesome environs, free from vice, would produce upstanding children turned

²⁶ Annual Report Board of Park Commissioners 1908, p. 18.

²⁷ Annual Report Board of Park Commissioners 1911, p. 10.

²⁸ Jon A. Peterson, *The Birth of City Planning in the United States, 1840–1917* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), 162–163.

²⁹ Annual Report Board of Park Commissioners 1912, p. 10; Galen Cranz, *The Politics of Park Design: A History of Urban Parks* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1982), 61.

adults. Public playgrounds became a focus for the park commissioners and Kessler wrote to the board in 1910, “All American cities are now giving particular attention to children’s outdoor recreation, making investments in future good citizens.” Military Park played a pivotal role in the Indianapolis playground movement, as one of the first parks to include a playground area.³⁰

George Merritt personally funded the addition of playground equipment in Military Park and paid a matron to watch the children.³¹ With the inception of the Board of Park Commissioners much of the financial burden was lifted from Merritt.³² The playground area of Military Park resided to the west of the central fountain. The playground included at least several swings, slides, a merry-go-round, an “iron horse,” rings and ladders for climbing, “teeters,” and parallel bars. In 1901 the board noted that the toboggan slide “gave so much pleasure to the children last winter, [it] has been erected and in addition thereto, a small shed has been erected, in which there is a stove, making a very comfortable place for those who get cold.”³³

³⁰ Michelle D. Hale, “Let the Children Play!: The Indianapolis Playground Movement, 1894–1919” (M.A. thesis: Indiana University, 1997), 10–14; Sixteenth Annual Report of the Indianapolis Board of Park Commissioners for 1910, Indiana State Library, 14.

³¹ “George Merritt is dead in the west,” *Indianapolis Star*, 25 September 1912.

³² George Merritt resigned from the Board of Park Commissioners in 1906, but he had already lived in California for a few years because of poor health. As a result of his move and declining health, his voice was not heard throughout the debate about Military Park and Long Hospital. Merritt died on 24 September 1912. See “Park’s board tribute to George Merritt,” *Indianapolis Star*, 17 November 1912.

³³ Alfred M. Glossbrenner, ed., *Souvenir, Song Book and Official Programme, Fourth International Convention of the Epworth League in Indianapolis, Ind.* (Indianapolis: Levey Bro’s and Co. 1899), 11, 20; Herschell, *Indianapolis News*; Annual Report Board of Park Commissioners 1901, 7; Military Park, Bass Photo Collection.

Large numbers of residents patronized Military Park, and on summer days hundreds of children played together. Residents showed appreciation for the park's recreational amenities, particularly towards the development of their children. One working-class mother noted that the exercise her child received from playing at Military Park turned him from sickly and weak to robust and active. The *Indianapolis News* stated that the "children will be the sturdy manhood and womanhood of Indianapolis."³⁴ The park offered the opportunity for children to learn and grow through play, with hopes that the natural setting would instill morality and enterprise in the youths. The dedication of George Merritt and the park commissioners created a safe and welcoming all-seasons playground.

Indianapolis park commissioners and charity organizations believed in using public parks as a medium for social reform. City officials altered the urban landscape to incorporate wider boulevards and connected park systems. Civic leaders also understood the levels of pollution affecting the well-being of its citizens. Indianapolis incorporated breathing spots, nature, and playgrounds to compensate against the dirt and grime caused by industrialization and urbanization. Further, public parks offered a moral alternative to unsavory recreation found in crowded city streets.

After the Indiana General Assembly passed the Hospital Bill that accepted the gift of real estate donated by Dr. Robert Long in February, 1911, the proposal lay dormant for much of the year, while the state considered incorporating the hospital into the plans for Indiana's centennial celebration. Then in November, 1911, Indianapolis newspapers reported that the Indiana University School of Medicine had grown tired of waiting for a

³⁴ "George Merritt as a man of public spirit" *Indianapolis News*; Herschell, *Indianapolis News*.

response from the Indiana Centennial Celebration Committee. However, many civic leaders believed that Kessler's plaza plan held the answer to the hospital site debacle. They saw the plaza plan to the west of the State House as the perfect harmonious solution. Dr. Frank B. Wynn of the Commercial Club and the centennial committee reiterated that one of the plaza's four squares should incorporate Long Hospital. Wynn chided all parties involved in the discussion and noted a lack of state pride as the plaza plan and the building of Long Hospital appeared mired within state bureaucracy. He stated, "In deference to the movement for a state plaza, they [Indiana University trustees] have waited almost a year, hoping the state centennial commission and the park board of Indianapolis would come to an understanding." Wynn echoed Kessler's concerns about the poor setting around the State House and thought the plaza plan as the "ideal solution" for both the state and Indiana University. An editorial in the *Indianapolis Star* endorsed Wynn's idea and heartily approved the inclusion of the plaza plan in the debate. The editorial expressly stated that the plaza plan and the hospital would be "a vision of wonderful glory and benefit to Indians [sic]."³⁵ The plaza plan offered the promise of a beautified center of state government and healthcare, valued in the minds of City Beautiful proponents and progressive reformers as vehicles of civic pride and enlightenment to the masses.

Despite Wynn's prompting, Indiana University trustees ultimately believed the plaza plan would not move quickly enough to get the hospital constructed. Furthermore in November, 1911, "attorneys interested in the city park system" questioned the validity of the act passed by the Indiana General Assembly concerning the declaration of Military

³⁵ "To get hospital site and save Plaza plan," *Indianapolis News*, 11 November 1911; "Hospital and Park," *Indianapolis Star*, 23 November 1911.

Park as the site of the future Long Hospital. These allegations proved false, but state officials found another snag in the bid to place Long Hospital in Military Park. Governor Thomas Riley Marshall believed that the 1851 state constitution forbade the sale or lease of Military Park. Despite this glaring truth, the state could still choose to build the hospital in the park, while retaining ownership of the land.³⁶ The debate about the future of Military Park and the site of Long Hospital continued from November, 1911, until February, 1912.

Indianapolis mayor Samuel Lewis Shank openly supported the preservation of Military Park and was outraged about the proposal to place the hospital there. He believed that the construction of Long Hospital in Military Park would be a “disgrace to the entire city” and a “big shame.” He hoped to end the controversy by finding a comparable site to locate the new hospital, and created a special committee that included city officials and members from leading civic organizations to find alternative sites for the hospital in order to conserve the park. The mayor chose three men with varying motivations to see the hospital built outside of Military Park. The committee consisted of Dr. Henry Jameson, president of the Board of Park Commissioners; Joseph B. Kealing, of the corporation counsel; and Dr. T. Victor Keene, a member of the Indianapolis Board of Health.³⁷

Mayor Shank readily publicized the importance of Military Park in the words of Progressive era ideals about parks as tools for reform. He cited the necessity of Military

³⁶ “Long Hospital plans not tied up by Assembly act,” *Indianapolis News*, 7 November 1911; “Proposes grouping of three medical units,” *Indianapolis News*, 16 November 1911; “Pick Military Park for Long Hospital,” *Indianapolis Star*, 4 November 1911.

³⁷ “Shank seeks to halt Long Hospital plans,” *Indianapolis Star*, 6 November 1911; “Civic Organizations Discuss Hospital Site,” *Indianapolis News*, 22 November 1911.

Park to the health of the city's working class and as a breathing spot "where people could go and get a bit of fresh air." The *Indianapolis News* reported that his committee felt that "if possible the park should be conserved to the city for park purposes, not only in this particular case, but for all time, and as a part of the deal the state will be asked to make some arrangement by which Military park shall continue always to be a park." Shank believed that if the city and state could agree to save the park, further steps should be taken to solidify its perpetual preservation. Mayor Shank did not accept the notion that only part of the park would be used for the hospital, as many proponents from the Indiana University School of Medicine suggested. He recognized that inevitable expansion of the facility would eventually wipe out the remaining park land. In addition, he felt that the sight of hospital patients on the reduced grounds of Military Park would not encourage play and relaxation for park visitors.³⁸ The mayor's committee quickly went to work in November, 1911, in search of an alternate location for Long Hospital.

The Indiana state government also declared similar sentiments and desires towards the preservation of Military Park. Governor Marshall believed that the state legislature "could formally dedicate the park for perpetual park purposes." He hoped in November, 1911, that the park could eventually be formally preserved as an open space. The

Indianapolis News noted the extent of the governor's support:

Perhaps a hospital, with its necessity for quiet and its probable growth to occupy more for the park space is the least desirable building that could be erected in the park, but while the subject is up it would be well for the city to see that there is no possibility of erecting any other building in this place

³⁸ "Shank seeks to halt Long Hospital plans," *Indianapolis Star*; "Trade and civic bodies condemn park's site use," *Indianapolis Star*, 22 November 1911; "Proposes grouping of three medical units," *Indianapolis News*.

to destroy the usefulness of probably the most needed of the city's breathing spaces.³⁹

Marshall acknowledged the usefulness of Military Park as a park space more valuable as a small retreat for its working class neighbors than as the site of a hospital. The governor also understood that the hospital site would eventually expand and obliterate any remnants of the park. Marshall clearly supported Shank's ideas and the preservation of the park. However, there was little else the state executive could do since the original hospital bill named Military Park as the site, but wait for Indiana University's decision about accepting an alternative location.

Civic organizations, such as the Indianapolis Commercial Club (the predecessor to the Chamber of Commerce), Local Council of Women, and Indianapolis Board of Trade each supported the preservation of Military Park for recreational purposes. Local civic organizations believed that public parks were an essential part of a healthy city. The Indianapolis Commercial Club championed the "development of civic beauty and betterment."⁴⁰ More specifically they sought to address pollution from smoke and sewers, create connected parks and boulevards, and construct public playgrounds. Leaders proclaimed that a clean city necessitated that all citizens must engage in the maintenance of public health.⁴¹

In terms of the debate about Long Hospital and Military Park, a member of the Board of Trade promoted the park as a needed open space. The Commercial Club's

³⁹ "Civic organizations discuss hospital site," *Indianapolis News*; "Preservation of Military park," *Indianapolis News*, 24 November 1911.

⁴⁰ "Trade and civic bodies condemn park site's use," *Indianapolis Star*; Commercial Club Annual Report 1911, Indiana Historical Society, 32

⁴¹ "Optimism Rules Civic Workers Annual Banquet," *Indianapolis Star*, 9 February 1911.

official resolution on the controversy specifically stated Military Park's use "for park purposes only." These civic leaders asserted that the utility of Military Park was "probably the most needed of the city's breathing space."⁴² A member of the Indianapolis Board of Trade resolved to "do everything in his power to preserve this breathing spot for the people living in that part of the city, where it is most needed." Others echoed the Board of Trade member's emphasis on the park as a sanctuary of fresh air. The Local Council of Women strongly disagreed with the placement of Long Hospital in the park and passed a formal resolution against the proposal. They decreed, "Military Park is the only breathing spot in a highly congested and insanitary [sic] district, and furnishes a place of enjoyment and health to old and young, especially the children, who will be particularly deprived of such advantages."⁴³ These organizations recognized the obvious need of the park to adjacent crowded neighborhood that suffered in close proximity to some of the city's most noxious industrial sites. Each group acknowledged Military Park as a necessary public space utilized by local residents, whose health and welfare was greatly improved.

On 21 November 1911 a meeting of several civic organizations at the Commercial Club discussed the Long Hospital proposal. Joined together, delegates from the Commercial Club, Board of Trade, Indianapolis Trade Association, West Washington Street Merchants Association, the City Club, and West Side Civic League passed a

⁴²"Trade and civic bodies condemn park's site use," *Indianapolis Star*; "Preservation of Military Park," *Indianapolis News*, 24 November 1911; "Urge city to act," *Indianapolis Star*, 14 November 1911; "Civic organizations discuss hospital site," *Indianapolis News*, 22 November 1911; Commercial Club Year book and Directory, 25.

⁴³ "Shank seeks to halt long hospital plans," *Indianapolis Star*; "Trade and civic bodies condemn park site's use," *Indianapolis Star*, 22 November 1911; "Urge city to act," *Indianapolis Star*.

resolution condemning the possible placement of Long Hospital in Military Park. The resolution stated that the move to build the hospital in the park was “unwise and unfortunate for the citizens of the entire state.” The resolution also decreed that one member from each of the organizations present would form a committee to find an alternate site for the hospital, in the hopes of assisting the committee already established by Mayor Shank.⁴⁴

City Beautiful movement ideals and trends of progressive reform of the early twentieth century strengthened the stance of city, state, and civic leaders as proponents of Military Park’s preservation. These opinions designated the overall purpose of Military Park as a park or “breathing spot” for the working classes, rather than as a memorial or a hospital. Located in a residential area bordered by industrial complexes, the park served its working class neighbors as a place of relief from crowded housing conditions and heavy air pollution. Kessler’s plaza plan, though ultimately defeated, further captured the essence of City Beautiful ideals to incorporate civic pride with elegant architectural details and open park space. Throughout this debate, city, state, and civic leaders did not utter a word of the park’s historical significance and its potential role in the nationalistic education of the masses; instead they championed parks as vehicles of reform against unsanitary or dangerous city elements for the physical and moral benefit of working class residents.

⁴⁴ “Civic organizations discuss hospital site,” *Indianapolis News*.

Conclusion

On 5 January 1912 an *Indianapolis Star* headline proclaimed: “Long Hospital Site Provided by Committee.” The article went on to state that Mayor Shank’s committee had obtained a \$40,000 option on a tract of land on the west side of Indianapolis, from North Street south to Michigan Street and from Hiawatha Street west to Elwood Street. The committee picked a site just north and west of Military Park. Indiana University trustees expressed support of the proposed site. Dr. Long also expressed his satisfaction about the committee’s selection. Other attributes of the site, as described in the article, included access to the Michigan Street car line, that Michigan Street was brick paved with city sewers installed beneath, and that sidewalks also existed throughout much of the area. The site was also only about a mile from the downtown circle.¹ The location of the site, which had played a major role in the trustees’ initial desire to use Military Park, had finally been replicated elsewhere. This new site’s location contained modern conveniences and at eleven acres was also large enough to allow for expansion.²

The location issue appeared resolved, but an editorial that appeared in the *Indianapolis News* a few weeks later openly criticized the Indianapolis City Council. As of 22 January 1912, the city council had not approved the \$40,000 for the option on the

¹ “Long Hospital site provided by committee,” *Indianapolis Star*, 5 January 1912. Neither Hiawatha Street nor Elwood Street exists in this area of Indianapolis today. Barnhill Drive is roughly the location of Hiawatha Street.

² Baist Property Atlas: City of Indianapolis, 1916. The medical school did expand and in 1919 neighboring Emerson Hall opened. The school grew steadily through the twentieth century and became part of the campus of Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis, founded in the 1960s.

new proposed site. The editorial stated that the city and state should share the burden of the \$40,000 and designate Military Park as a perpetual park landscape.³

The editorial further revealed a glimpse into public opinion towards the preservation of Military Park. Particularly in response to the simultaneous resolution passed by the Indiana Sons of the Revolution to place a memorial hall in Military Park, the writer believed that the park should remain intact. The “ill-considered” resolution would obstruct the park grounds, much as Long Hospital would have, but on a lesser scale, and the writer asserted, “What Indianapolis wants is that tract of ground as part of a park and not as something else.” The editorial argued that the Soldiers and Sailors Monument was the only military memorial needed in the city. Furthermore, the writer also acknowledged the historical significance of Military Park and decreed, “. . . let us preserve forever that beautiful open space with its associations of a camp of the young boys in blue who went forth to give their lives for their country fifty years ago.” Throughout the discussion of Military Park as the site for Long Hospital, this response and that of Captain Wallace, a Civil War veteran, were the only publicly-expressed opinions that readily linked the park’s practical purpose with its historical significance. All other groups that vocally opposed the hospital in the park displayed only concerns for their specific notions of what was appropriate use of the public space.⁴

A meeting between Governor Marshall and Indiana University trustees further solidified the exclusion of Military Park as the site of Long Hospital and supported the mayoral committee’s proposed tract. The governor proposed that the 1913 Indiana

³ “To preserve Military Park,” *Indianapolis News*, 22 January 1912; “Military Park urged for memorial hall,” *Indianapolis Star*, 22 January 1912.

⁴ “To preserve Military Park,” *Indianapolis News*.

General Assembly reimburse Indiana University for one half of the option on the new proposed site. Governor Marshall also suggested, apparently sharing similar sentiments as the 22 January editorial that the city of Indianapolis pay the other half owed for the site. The governor rationalized that Indianapolis should pay for part of the tract, as proportionally more patients to Long Hospital would undoubtedly come from Marion County. Indiana University trustees approved of the idea and President Bryan declared that building plans would begin immediately.⁵

By the end of February, 1912, the city agreed to the state's arrangement and fronted the money for the tract of land. Indiana University moved quickly to get construction started and hosted an architectural competition for hospital designs. On 23 February the *Indianapolis Star* announced R. P. Daggett and Company of Indianapolis as the winning firm to design Long Hospital.⁶ The hospital eventually opened in 1914.

The controversy about the site of Long Hospital was largely resolved by spring, 1912. The public discussion had lasted nearly a year, with the most heated debate occurring in November and December of 1911. Throughout the discourse, the welfare of the working class remained a prominent concern of involved parties. However, the voice of the working class was nowhere directly represented by state or city leaders, civic organization members, or lineage society members. As often happened in the Progressive era, reformers rarely asked the masses for opinions and input, even when reformers explicitly claimed their work was for the benefit of the working class. The working class residents who lived on the west side of Indianapolis did utilize Military Park on a regular

⁵ "University trustees order hospital plans," *Indianapolis News*, 8 February 1912.

⁶ "Named hospital plans judge," *Indianapolis Star*, 20 February 1912; "Architects chosen for Long Hospital," *Indianapolis Star*, 23 February 1912.

basis. The park in fact filled basic social needs for many working class individuals and families with limited financial means.

Military Park, particularly in the summer, functioned as free daycare or as a day nursery. In 1911, when the Charity Organization Society looked at District 5 near Military Park, they projected that about twenty-eight percent of women in the district worked. They guessed about sixty percent of these wage earning women had families.⁷ With many working mothers in the area, children were often sent to Military Park where they were looked after for no charge. George Merritt, as mentioned earlier, employed a matron to look after children who played at the park. When the park came under the control of the Board of Park Commissioners, they added a custodian and police officer to also attend to the safety and control of as many as 200 to 500 children on a busy summer day. The park reportedly “eases and saves the nerves of working mothers.” The park playground operated under a strict schedule in the summer time, as the matron, police officer, and custodian only allowed the children to play from 8:30 a.m. until 5:30 p.m. The children utilized both the park’s playground and its apparatuses and the open space for “field day” races and events. The watchful adults quelled disputes and distributed lunch money.⁸

This careful attention paid to the children allowed working-class mothers to take advantage of a free and informal daycare situation, while they earned much needed wages

⁷ L. M. Campbell Adams, “An Investigation of Housing and Living Conditions in Three Districts in Indianapolis” (M.A. thesis, Indiana University, 1910) in *Indiana University Studies*, vol. 1 (July, 1910–July, 1913), 125.

⁸ W. M. Herschell, “Military Park, once trod by many soldiers, now the developing ground of baby aliens seeking to become athletic Americans,” *Indianapolis News*, 23 July 1910; “George Merritt as a man of public-spirit,” *Indianapolis News*, 31 October 1903.

to supplement their families' incomes. Progressive-era working class families worked long and hard hours to make ends meet. The lack of affordable and available childcare made finding wage paying jobs outside the home nearly impossible for wives and single mothers. Working-class mothers developed their own social networks, and often they took in boarders, laundry, or piece work that added varying amounts of income. Women who worked outside the home often were domestic servants or factory workers and had a difficult time finding adequate child care.⁹ West side Indianapolis working mothers thus utilized a free urban amenity to their advantage. Military Park played an invaluable role in the survival of these working class families as a source of free child care.

Working-class men also found a specific purpose for Military Park. Many men who worked the night shift used the park for sleep and relaxation. Indianapolis charity settlement workers described the harsh conditions that many single immigrant men lived in: “. . . some of these [apartments] have no ventilation of outside air and are very dark. In the halls were ashes, garbage, coal, washings hanging on lines, etc.”¹⁰ With such inhospitable housing conditions, working class men often slept on the park's lawn from mid-morning to about mid-afternoon. According to the *Indianapolis News*, the Board of Park Commissioners allowed the practice and referred to Military Park as a “summer haven” for all to experience.¹¹ While the Board examined Military Park as a summer

⁹ Sarah Deutsch, *Women and the City: Gender, Space, and Power in Boston, 1870-1940* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 25–53.

¹⁰ “The Life of our Foreign Population,” Charity Organization Society, n.d. typewritten manuscript, 6–7, Indiana State Library. This source is attributed to John H. Holliday, who served on the board of the Charity Organization Society, but the author is referred to as “missus” by the individuals visited. Typically middle- or upper-class women were the ones who made house visits on behalf of a charity organization and it seems unlikely that Holliday, particularly as president of the organization, would have made these trips himself.

¹¹ Herschell, *Indianapolis News*.

refuge, working-class individuals utilized the public space for practical purposes and as a means to wage earning, recreation, and relaxation. To the working class, the public park contributed to survival.

While state and city officials and civic organization leaders pontificated about the ability of public parks to improve morality of city residents, the working class found practical uses for the space. Similarly, veterans and lineage societies believed that the park embodied nationalist messages that would also improve residents' moral well being. Lost in the Progressive era rhetoric about uplifting the masses and improving access to health care was the actual ways in which working class families and individuals, mothers and fathers, and children utilized the park. Instead the working class found avenues of survival through public spaces and services provided by Progressive reforms. However, Military Park, in the end, was preserved intact and remained vital to the working class, who utilized it daily.

The controversy involving Military Park and Long Hospital reveals that public urban space in the Progressive era city was coveted based on its potential to improve the moral and physical well-being of residents. Progressive reforms were varied and often reform ideas competed for legitimacy, funds, endorsement, and space. Throughout the public dialogue that appeared prominently in two Indianapolis newspapers, individuals determined Military Park as valuable based on whether it could suitably impart access to health care, spread ideals of American nationalism, or provide a safe space for healthful recreation.

Ultimately, state and city officials believed that the best use of Military Park was indeed as a park. Despite the attempts of the Indiana University School of Medicine to

promote Long Hospital as more valuable to the city and the state's lower classes, government officials steadfastly pursued all avenues to keep the park untouched. Governor Marshall, Mayor Shank, the Indianapolis Board of Park Commissioners, and the mayoral committee constantly promoted Progressive era ideas concerning public parks, and paid no attention to the wishes of the lineage societies. Even local civic organizations focused solely on seeing the park retained as a breathing space for the surrounding neighborhoods, and did not emphasize its historical significance. Strangely, government officials, civic organizations, and lineage societies all desired the same outcome: an intact Military Park. Yet, despite this similar goal, none of the groups joined forces or even acknowledged one another.

The Military Park and Long Hospital debate created a public exchange about the best use of civic space. In the end, Military Park remained a public park and Long Hospital was still constructed. Throughout the twentieth century and today each served the general public of Indiana and Indianapolis as these concerned parties had hoped. Let the final words come from the wise editorialist in the *Indianapolis News*: "We trust that we shall hear nothing more of this foolish recommendation of destroying Military Park."¹²

¹² "To preserve Military Park," *Indianapolis News*.

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