

PROPHETSTOWN'S

MILITARY

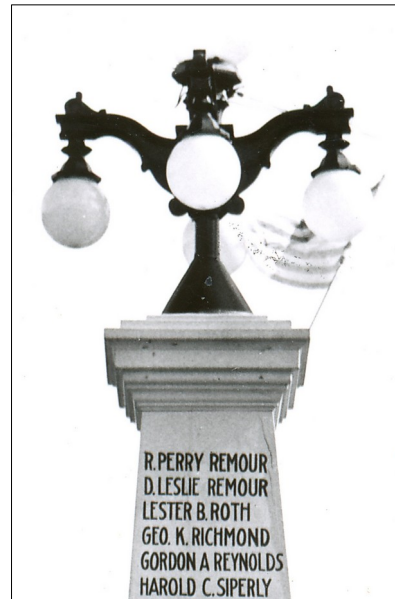
MONUMENTS

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Military
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by

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Prophetstown's Military Monuments



On October 2, 1919, Prophetstown held a homecoming at which time our WWI Monument was dedicated. It stood in the intersection of Washington and 3rd Streets. It has been generally assumed that the next monument was built to honor those who served in WWII, most likely built during the early 1940s. Some assumed the new monument was built around the original monument, because the lights of the original remained on top of the new one. That, however, was not true.



It was noted in an Echo article that the original monument was constructed of wood and was replaced in 1923 by the one seen above. Obviously, the lights of the original were used in the second, one.

In 1923, Ted Dixon, a local contractor was hired to build the new monument and have it done by July 4th. He started in May and finished in time. Then a special celebration was held at which Gov. Small was supposed to participate. Something happened to keep him from it, so others were called upon. Harry Wright, State Senator, H. H. Waite and R. W. Besse were involved in the ceremonies. The names to be placed on the new structure were to be engraved on bronze plaques. However, that never materialized, due to the cost. Instead, they were painted on wooden frames and attached to the main structure. They deteriorated and were removed shortly after the war, due to their poor condition. Some say the names were removed to the basement of City Hall.

In 1950, the City Council voted to have the monument removed, due to complaints from truckers, who were irritated that it interfered with them trying to turn at that corner. The State had been concerned about this problem, because it stood in the middle of Illinois Route 78. Furthermore, the monument became a place for U-turns. Bill Pritchard said that his mother made a U-turn there, the door on his side flew open and he fell out. He was about 3 years of age. This, of course, was before seat belts. Of course, our young people cruised Washington Street, using the monument for a U-turn

A fellow named Taylor Curry was hired to remove the monument. Many have wondered, through the years, where the removed monument ended up. A few years ago, Darren Majeski told us he recalled seeing the monument's location. He saw it laying top down on the bank near the City salt bin. The lights were still on it. Evidently, Curry and crew had taken it there and pushed it over the bank. I cannot even imagine how the city fathers allowed that to happen. It would be wonderful to resurrect that monument and place it in Eclipse Square. So we contacted a prof. at Augustana, who has ground penetrating radar. What we found out is that, given the amount of junk dumped there, it would be difficult to even located the monument, or what was left of it. And, noting the fact that it would cost around \$1,000 to do the radar survey, we decided against the venture. Somewhere under here lies the second military monument.



Actually, that intersection at 3rd and Washington has an interesting history, even before the monuments. In the picture below (looking East from West 3rd), note the large wooden item in the intersection. It was a City well, used to fight fires, before the town had a central water supply. It was dug in the 1880s. Eventually, a pressure pump was installed here, with handles like they had on a railroad hand car. Using this, a group of men could pump a sizable stream of water to fight a fire. To facilitate horses, which were the main mode of transport back then, a watering tank was placed there at a later date. It came in handy as a spot for the local boys to cool off in the summer time. When the city central water supply was installed about 1904, the well was no longer used for fighting fires, but a local businessman, Sam McBride, who owned a feed barn here, installed an iron drinking fountain there. We do not know how long that lasted.



This is how Washington Street looked in the 1940s.