

The Story of the North Canton Veterans Memorial

Shortly after World War II, Herbert W. Hoover Sr. commissioned American sculptor Rene Paul Chambelin to create a permanent memorial plaque to honor the Hoover men and women who served in the military during World War II.

The acclaimed sculptor created 7x6-foot bronze plaque, bearing the names of 834 Hoover employees. The plaque was dedicated on July 3, 1947.

For 62 years, the plaque hung in a shaded alcove in the brick wall, just west of the former East Maple Street Hoover plant gate. Until 2008.

In the upheaval that followed the sale of The Hoover Company, many worried the plaque might be lost or destroyed. James Repace, at that time president and business manager of IBEW Local 1985, voiced these concerns to TTI, the new owner of Hoover. TTI responded by conveying ownership of the plaque to Repace, who plans to donate it to the city.

The original plan was to simply relocate the plaque from the brick wall alcove to nearby Bitzer Park, where it would be displayed appropriately. The city park is located on the southeast corner of the square.

The site was chosen because the history of the Village of New Berlin and, later, the City of North Canton has flowed through the junction of Main Street and Maple Street. North Canton residents continue to celebrate Memorial Day with a parade that ends with a ceremony in Bitzer Park.

The original good idea, buoyed by creativity and public support, blossomed into a handsome, lighted memorial to honor greater North Canton veterans who served from the Civil War to the present. A life-size sculpture of a World War II soldier saluting his comrades, will be positioned towards the front of the monument. The statue was created and donated by North Canton resident and sculptor Don Lundstrom.

The professionally restored Hoover plaque is to be mounted on the central pane of the memorial. Smaller plaques, approximately 2x3-feet, are to be mounted on side panels and engraved with the names and dates of wars from 1861 to the present. Individual names will not be inscribed in the smaller panels. However, bricks, which are to be incorporated into the patio leading to the Memorial, are available for personalized engraving. See the inside of this brochure for information.

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