

McLean County Museum of History

Franklin Park Collection

Processed by
Stephanie Pierson

Spring 2013

Collection Information

VOLUME OF COLLECTION:	1 Box
COLLECTION DATES:	1857-2013
PROVENANCE:	Gift
RESTRICTIONS:	None
REPRODUCTION RIGHTS:	Permission to reproduce or publish material in this collection must be obtained in writing from the McLean County Museum of History
ALTERNATIVE FORMATS:	None
OTHER FINDING AIDS:	None
LOCATION:	Archives
NOTES:	None

Historical Sketch

Franklin Park (also known as Franklin Square) was donated by David Davis, William F. Flagg and William H. Allin, April 26, 1856, and was named after current Bloomington mayor Franklin Price. The purpose of the park was “to be used as a place of public resort, pastime, and recreation for citizens and strangers forever...no building whatever to be erected on it.” The 2.7-acre park spans the 300 and 400 blocks of E. Walnut and E. Chestnut Streets and the 900 blocks of Prairie and McLean Streets. About 30 houses surround the park, many retaining their original architectural features. Styles include Queen Anne Victorian, Georgian Revival, Romanesque,

Bracketed Italianate, and Richardsonian. Franklin Park was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1976 and was made a local historic district in 1979.

In the years following the park's donation, citizens called for the city to make improvements, requesting for trees to be planted and sidewalks to be installed. The park's appearance improved with the erection of a 49-foot marble monument in 1868, dedicated to soldiers of McLean County who died in the Civil War. It was commissioned to Haldeman Marble Works for \$15,000. The side of the monument read, "McLean County's Honored Sons; Fallen – But Not Forgotten" with the names of approximately 700 soldiers. Unfortunately, the monument disintegrated quickly, and falling pieces became a safety hazard. Governor Joseph Fifer lobbied to have the monument torn down and to build a new one in Miller Park. It was removed in 1914, and the base is currently located in the Briarwood neighborhood in Bloomington.

Franklin Park was home to many notable Bloomington citizens, including U.S. Vice President Adlai E. Stevenson I; Illinois Governor Joseph "Private Joe" Fifer and his daughter Florence Fifer Bohrer, the first woman to serve in the Illinois Senate; and Frank Funk, a U.S. congressman and Progressive Party candidate for Illinois governor in 1912. Many prominent figures visited these residents or delivered speeches on the square, including William Jennings Bryan, Ulysses S. Grant, Roger Ingersoll, Carl Sandburg, Clarence Darrow, and Theodore Roosevelt.

Scope and Content Note

The Franklin Park Collection consists of one box with eleven folders. It contains newspaper articles, studies, assessments, proposals, booklets and personal writings.

Folder 1 contains newspaper articles written about Franklin Park in general. Folder 2 contains newspaper articles written about the Franklin Square monument. Folder 3 contains Pantagraph articles about Franklin Square written by Lolita Driver. Folder 4 contains a Franklin Square Preservation Study completed in June 1975. Folder 5 contains a Franklin Square Project completed in 1978. Folder 6 contains a Franklin Square survey completed in 1985. Folder 7 contains a contract between the Franklin Square Association and the Mennonite hospital, and an application to the National Register of Historic Places. Folder 8 contains booklets from tours of Franklin Park. Folder 9 contains miscellaneous materials related to Beulah Locher, who resided in Franklin Park. Folder 10 contains an essay written by Mirga Irene Rimavicius. Folder 11 contains miscellaneous personal writings on Franklin Park, and Folder 12 contains miscellany.

Folder Inventory

Folder 1: Newspaper Articles

- 1.1 "Franklin Square," Pantagraph, June 26, 1857, p. 3 c. 1
- 1.2 "Franklin Square," Pantagraph, August 25, 1857, p. 3 c. 3
- 1.3 "Local Matters: Franklin Square," Pantagraph, October 1, 1857, p. 3 c. 1-2
- 1.4 "Franklin Square," Pantagraph, May 8, 1871, p. 4 c. 2
- 1.5 "Franklin Park," Pantagraph, August 25, 1883, p. 1 c. 7
- 1.6 "The Franklin Park Improvement," Daily Leader, July 27, 1885, p. 4 c. 6
- 1.7 "Talk about the Parks," Daily Leader, April 8 1890, p. 3 c. 4
- 1.8 "Park Improvements," Pantagraph, May 24, 1890, p. 4 c. 5
- 1.9 "Civic Matters Up before Woman's Club: Want Franklin Park Restored to Former State," Pantagraph, March 11 1909, p. 7 c. 3
- 1.10 Untitled, Pantagraph, February 27 1989, p. A3
- 1.11 "Franklin 'Square' Bloomington's first park," Pantagraph, March 24, 2013, 2 pages
- 1.12 "Old Time Resident Writes about the Stipp Property," Sunday Bulletin, date unknown

Folder 2: Monument

- 2.1 July 4, 1881 Anniversary Celebration Programme
- 2.2 Lithograph of Franklin Park monument by Haldeman Marble Works and photocopy (original clipping from unknown source)
- 2.3 Overview of monument from 1870-71 Bloomington city directory, p. 14-15
- 2.4 Speech given by Hon. Lawrence Weldon at the dedication, Pantagraph, June 18, 1869, 2 pages
- 2.5 "Dedication of the Soldiers' Monument," Pantagraph, June 18, 1869, p.4
- 2.6 Notice on monument's deterioration, signed by A.H. Haller, Daily Leader, March 22, 1873, p. 3 c. 3
- 2.7 "A Decaying Relic," Weekly Leader, January 15, 1892, p. 3 c. 5
- 2.8 "A Crumbling Monument," Pantagraph, April 13, 1898, p. 7 c. 3
- 2.9 "Big Cannon Is Here," Daily Bulletin, January 12, 1900, p. 1 c. 1-2
- 2.10 "Franklin Park Is at Its Prettiest Now," Daily Bulletin, August 7, 1904?, p. 5 c. 5
- 2.11 "Build New Soldiers' Shaft In Miller Park: Advice of Former Governor Fifer," Pantagraph, May 20, 1909, p. 5 c. 4-5
- 2.12 "Soldiers Shaft Is Disfigured," Daily Bulletin, March 27, 1910, p. 4 c. 8
- 2.13 Poem written and read by Dr. A. E. Stewart at the Franklin Park dedication, Pantagraph, April 17, 1913, p. 7 c. 5
- 2.14 "Franklin Park Monument to Come Down," Pantagraph, 1914 (September?)
- 2.15 "To Tear Down Old Monument," Daily Bulletin, October 28, 1914, p. 4 c. 3
- 2.16 "Monument honored county's Civil War dead," Pantagraph, May 27, 2007, p. B4

Folder 3: Driver, Lolita – Pantagraph Series

- 3.1 "Franklin Park homes: Elegance then & now" January 16, 1972 p. C-3
- 3.2 "Hudson Burr home built in 1864," January 23, 1972 p. C-5 (photocopy)
- 3.3 "Castle on the square," January 30, 1972 p. C-1
- 3.4 "'Greeks' have street for it," February 6, 1972 p. C-3

- 3.5 "Colorful old homes on Franklin Park, south," February 13, 1972 p. C-3
- 3.6 "Park's political side" February 20, 1972 p. C-3 (2 copies)
- 3.7 "Franklin Park north famous in own right," February 27, 1972 p. C-3

Folder 4: Franklin Square Preservation Study June 1975

- 4.1 Neighborhood Preservation & Developmental Study for the Franklin Square Association June 1975 by Bruce L. Hutchings, AIA, 44 pages (3 copies)

Folder 5: Franklin Square Project c. 1978

- 5.1 Franklin Square Project – General Design Inc., Greenville, IL c. 1978, unpagged

Folder 6: Franklin Square Survey 1985

- 6.1 "Documentary Search and Architectural Survey of Franklin Square and East Jefferson Street Historic Districts," by Edward T. Safiran and David A. Walitschek, May 1985. Addenda added by Greg Koos, 1985. 24 pages, some double-sided

Folder 7: Franklin Square Association – Misc.

- 7.1 Mennonite Hospital Contract, September 30, 1978 4 pages
- 7.2 National Register of Historic Places Inventory – Nomination Form first draft, February 10, 1987, 10 pages

Folder 8: Tour Booklets

- 8.1 Architectural Historical Tour booklet, 2nd ed, 1988 (3 copies)
- 8.2 Old House Society of Bloomington-Normal Franklin Park House Tour booklet, October 11, 2008
- 8.3 Unnamed, handout for walking tour at Lincoln Festival, July 2016. 6 pp.

Folder 9: Locher, Beulah – Misc.

- 9.1 Letter from Blake Leach to Greg Koos, November 16, 1998, 1 page
- 9.2 Summary of tape made by Beulah Baker Locher with Darlene Clark in March, 1976, 5 pages
- 9.3 Monologue of Beulah Locher written by Blake Leach for Discovery Walk, October 1998, 4 pages
- 9.4 "Park's Political Side," Pantagraph, February 20, 1972 p. C-3 (see also item 3.6)
- 9.5 "At 90, Beula Locher surely not feeling it" & Beulah Locher obituary, newspaper unknown, photocopied on 1 page

Folder 10: Rimavicius, Mirga Irene – Illinois State University Research paper

- 10.1 "An Analysis of the Franklin Park Area Bloomington, IL," April 24, 1984, 22 pgs, 1 original and 1 photocopy, includes 12 photographs

Folder 11: Personal Writings – Misc.

- 11.1 Allison, Kathy – photocopied notecards written about houses surrounding Franklin Park, 4 pages, 4 cards per page

- 11.2 Blair, Ila, "Franklin Park," 3 pages
- 11.3 McClure, Helen, "History of Franklin Park," c. 1980, 7 pages
- 11.4 Essay – author and source unknown, 1 page

Folder 12: Franklin Park Cannon

From *Pantagraph* unless otherwise indicated.

- 12.1 Board of Supervisors Wednesday Morning Proceedings (agree to meet to determine site of cannon), 11 Sep 1879.
- 12.2 Untitled, brief into on cannon, 11 Sep 1879.
- 12.3 Board resolution to obtain cannon and place it in Franklin park, 11 Sep 1879.
- 12.4 Note that cannon is parts are spread about the park, 4 May 1880.
- 12.5 "Civil War Cannons do Disappearing Act," *Los Angeles Times*, 21 August 2015. Covers national trend but no local mention.

Folder 13: Miscellany

- 13.1 Multiple Listing Service listing for 316 E. Chestnut, 2013
- 13.2 Multiple Listing Service listing for 317 E. Chestnut, 2013
- 13.3 Flier, August 5, 1990 U.U. Brass Ensemble Summer Program.
- 13.4 Flier, August 19, 1990, 11th Annual Wordsfair Literary Festival
- 13.5 Flier, April 10, 2013 public meeting, Franklin Park Playground options.
- 13.6 email from Timothy Maurer attaching PDF copy of Franklin Square land donation agreement of Wm Flagg, William Allin and David Davis from April 25, 1856. 3 pp.