

## CHAPTER V

### COMPLETION 1926-1935

The course taken following the dedication, November 11, 1926, was no smoother than previously. In fact, eight-and-a-half more years elapsed before the Liberty Memorial was completed.

Two weeks after the dedication November 26, 1926, when Liberty Memorial Association officers were elected at their Board meeting, R. A. Long expressed the desire of being relieved of the presidency. He said that the Memorial was practically completed "with the exception of the north wall."<sup>1</sup> The office of Chairman of the Board was created for Mr. Long and he was given a rising vote of thanks. George S. Carkener was then elected president of the Liberty Memorial Association.<sup>2</sup> Earlier in that same meeting a letter from the Kansas City Chapter of the A.I.A. had been read, urging "prompt execution" of Edith Magonigle's design or "a design of equally appropriate and successful archaic character, without which the Monument as a whole fails to fulfill its entire symbolic purpose."<sup>3</sup>

Also, at the November 26, 1926, meeting, a piece of Unfinished Business was reopened. It was brought to the attention of the Board that Mr. Magonigle's nomination on June 14, 1923, of his wife as "sculptor for the mural relief, had not been definitely acted upon." So it was that three-and-a-half years after the question had been

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<sup>1</sup>"Minutes," 1232.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 1233.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 1232.

raised, the motion was voted upon and the Board of Governors officially rejected Mrs. Edith Magonigle as sculptor for the relief.<sup>4</sup>

A special meeting was called for December 22, 1926, to consider Mr. Magonigle's response (December 16, 1926) to the rejection of Mrs. Edith Magonigle by the Board of Governors. "Termination of all further expense [involving Mr. Magonigle]" in connection with the Memorial was the subject of "considerable discussion." It was a complex problem and the Board agreed that the matter of terminating Magonigle's contract needed advice from an outside lawyer.<sup>5</sup>

Under the headline, "WHO IF NOT THE MAGONIGLES?", the Kansas City Star, December 22, 1926, printed in its entirety a lengthy letter from H. Van Buren Magonigle to the Board of Governors of the Liberty Memorial Association. In it, the architect spoke eloquently of the "trained mind and hand, and artistic soul" of Edith Magonigle. Through his letter, Magonigle appealed "to that fair spirit of collaboration between the association and the architect." What, he asked, was the reason for rejecting his nomination? Was scale or skill deficient?; that the artist was a woman?; that the artist was the architect's wife?; or the theme not appropriate or artistic?; or were funds not available? Magonigle even concluded his trenchant letter by suggesting the possibility that another collaborator or another theme might be suggested!

The next day's newspaper reported that a three-hour session of the Board of Governors had "failed to formulate a reply to the recent

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 1234.

letter from H. Van Buren Magonigle."<sup>6</sup> On that same day, the Kansas City Journal carried the headline "LEGAL ACTION BY MAGONIGLE A POSSIBILITY . . . in an effort to force the board of governors to accept the north wall frieze designed by his wife, Mrs. Edith Magonigle."<sup>7</sup> At the meeting of the Board of Governors, January 7, 1927, the matter of the frieze was set aside and it was agreed to invite Mr. Magonigle to Kansas City to confer on completion of the Memorial on the north.<sup>8</sup>

To understand how this impasse had come about, a review of the relations between the architect and the owners is needed. Although information from newspapers, the verbatim minutes of the Liberty Memorial Association and the correspondence files would seem to make such reconstruction possible, some questions remain unanswered.

It will be remembered that in the original newspaper announcements of Magonigle's winning the competition for the Liberty Memorial, June 29, 1921, the architect had named those who would be his aides as: George Kessler, landscape architect; Mrs. Edith Magonigle to be in charge of the painting; and Robert Aitken, Memorial sculptor.<sup>9</sup> It

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<sup>6</sup>Kansas City Times, 23 December 1926.

<sup>7</sup>Kansas City Journal, 23 December 1926.

<sup>8</sup>"Minutes," 1242. Magonigle and the Kansas City Board did meet on 9 and 10 January 1927. According to the Kansas City Post, 9 February 1927, "A tentative plan" for treatment of the Memorial's north side seemed to have met with approval but without any mention of the controversial frieze. In fact, nothing substantive involving the New York architect occurred after the dedication 11 November 1926.

<sup>9</sup>Kansas City Times, 29 June 1921. Three years later, 24 August 1924, under the Kansas City Journal-Post's headline, ". . . Will Make

is clear that from the beginning, the New York architect had determined that his wife, who herself was an artist of considerable stature, should have an important role in creating the Liberty Memorial. How that role changed from being "in charge of the painting" to being proposed as the creator of the 400-foot "drawing in stone" is not clear. However, it would seem that the repeated rejection of Edith Magonigle and her articulate delineation of the "Procession of Civilization," to which she would devote some nine years had little to do with her competence or her design.

From the beginning there were real problems with Mr. Magonigle's choice of those with whom he would and could not work. There were early signs of friction and apparent conflicts of personality. Recorded on December 11, 1922, in connection with choosing "firms for designing and engineering, testing materials," etc., Magonigle had declared, "I do not see how I can work with strangers [with Kansas Citians] . . . I hope you are not going to embarrass me in my work . . . do not let us start out from the very inception of this thing . . . by tying me by one leg and then say, 'Now fly.'" He further declared:

I want not only the engineering, but the sculpture and the painting and everything done by people whom I know everything about, and who will work in smoothly with me. I cannot work with strangers. It is not practical and it is not to the best interests of the work . . .<sup>10</sup>

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City Known All Over the World," it was reported that the war museum and Legion building would "be decorated with mural paintings to be the work of Mrs. Magonigle . . . with \$20,000 [to be spent] on these decorations."

<sup>10</sup>"Minutes," 476-477.

Earlier in the same meeting, Magonigle's reduced, less costly plan for the Liberty Memorial had been accepted by the Board of Governors with comments specifically about the magnificence of "that unbroken wall with the bas-relief." A Board member had exclaimed, "one of the most beautiful things is the wall with the figures on it."<sup>11</sup> So it would appear that the idea of the sculptural frieze, which later became a monumental stumbling block, originally had been well received. The new plan had the very real advantage of bringing building costs within available Liberty Memorial Association funds. However, it is also very clear that the Board of Governors, including Mr. Long, had been much aggrieved with Magonigle's apparent disregard for money.<sup>12</sup>

Lack of harmony between the owners and their architect continued. It will be remembered that at the meeting on June 1, 1923, when it was reported that:

Mr. Magonigle desires to appoint his wife as one of the sculptors, himself as the sculptor of the sphinxes and some other noted sculptor of the guardian angels at the top of the shaft . . .

a number of the Governors had been dismayed. Vice Chairman J. C. Nichols added another discordant note in voicing his disapproval.

We have had rather a delicate situation to handle with the local architects. It is considerable responsibility for Mr. Magonigle to come in now and wish to have his wife appointed as sculptor.<sup>13</sup>

The ruckus with disgruntled Kansas City architects was a sore subject, and the prospect of the New Yorker thrusting his wife into a major role as a sculptor of the Liberty Memorial frieze was one most of the

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<sup>11</sup>Ibid., 447.    <sup>12</sup>Ibid., 448-449.    <sup>13</sup>Ibid., 694.

Board members could not and would not accept!

The same negative attitude appears in the Liberty Memorial Association records December 14, 1923, when the minutes of June 14, 1923, were amended with a lengthy addition:

I am also surprised at Mr. Magonigle's naming himself as the sculptor for the sphinxes to be placed at one of the entrances. This is equally indelicate as his naming his wife as sculptress. He is not a sculptor of the first rank. Nobody pretends he is. He is an architect, and that is what we employed him for, and he has no business asking us to employ him as a sculptor.

Board member F. P. Sebree's addition continued:

. . . he would violate his contract by disqualifying himself to give the Board that independent, impartial judgment and advice on the kind of work to be done and whether it was well done or not . . . if she is employed, who will say whether the nature of her work is suited to the Memorial?<sup>14</sup>

With that kind of opposition by some members of the Board of Governors, the rejection of Edith Magonigle and her championing husband was not surprising. It would seem that the New York architect had misjudged the Kansas City owners who were paying for the job and had overestimated his own influence.

However, Mrs. Edith Magonigle and her "Procession of Civilization" frieze were not without support. Quite the contrary! The New York Times Magazine, August 22, 1926, under the title "EAST AND WEST MEET IN PEACE MEMORIAL, Imposing Monument and Kansas City Records 6,000 Years of History and Depicts America as Heir to the Ages,"<sup>15</sup> described in detail the "Sculpture Uncompleted" with photographs of Edith Magonigle's

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<sup>14</sup>Ibid., 778.

<sup>15</sup>"East and West Meet in Peace Memorial," New York Times Magazine, 22 August 1926, 18-19.

copyrighted drawings. (Fig. 21) In an article in the September 1926 issue of the Journal of American Institute of Architects, J. Monroe Hewlett had high praise for the Liberty Memorial as a whole. His particular accolade, however, was for the frieze. Hewlett declared, "As compared with the picture frieze, all the other elements sink into insignificance . . . the theme is the history of humanity."<sup>16</sup> In this article a dramatic and often published drawing of the Liberty Memorial by Hugh Ferriss appeared.<sup>17</sup> (Fig. 22)

A barrage of "pro-Edith Magonigle" articles appeared in the fall of 1926. The October Western Architect carried an article by Arthur T. North which called for completion of the Memorial:

The great wall is now built, ready for the sculptor's mallet and chisel. The cartoons are made, ready for transferring to the wall . . . The frieze is strictly architectonic . . . In truth the Acropolis at Kansas City — fortunate Kansas City!<sup>18</sup>

The Literary Digest, American Architect, and World Review all published Liberty Memorial articles with heavy emphasis on the frieze, "a

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<sup>16</sup>J. Monroe Hewlett, "A World War Memorial," Journal of the American Institute of Architects 14 (September 1926): 394. Edith Magonigle's "Procession of Civilization" was sometimes referred to as "March [or History] of Civilization." At the Board meeting, 14 December 1923, when Aitken's contract for "the four guardian figures" and Magonigle's contract for "the two sphinxes" were approved, the subject for the sculptural frieze was discussed. Mr. Carkener did not like the idea of going back to ancient Egypt — "the Revolutionary War would probably be far enough." "Minutes," 787.

<sup>17</sup>J. Monroe Hewlett, "A World War Memorial," Journal of the American Institute of Architects 14 (September 1926): 388.

<sup>18</sup>Arthur T. North, "The Passing Show: The Acropolis at Kansas City," Western Architect 35 (October 1926): 132-133.

work of art and fine idealism."<sup>19</sup>

Editor Henry H. Saylor wrote a glowing description of the Liberty Memorial as the lead article in Architecture, January 1927. In it, a photograph of the final model was published along with the competition rendering of the same view of the north facade. (Fig. 23) The author pointed out, "In his development of the design the architect has progressively cut away the architectural verbiage that tended to obscure the simple truth of his statement." Whether or not Mr. Saylor's observation, "There is an uncanny inevitability about the frieze . . . an integral element of the architecture," was read by any of the Board of Governors of the Liberty Memorial, their decision remained unchanged.<sup>20</sup>

It would seem that Liberty Memorial Association President R. A. Long had hoped for another outcome. In a personal letter to the architect, October 13, 1926, Mr. Long had said:

I would be very happy indeed, if the Board of Governors could bring themselves to believe that the frieze suggested is the one that we should most seriously consider, . . . I see nothing to lead me to believe that the members will bring themselves to that state of mind.

Earlier in the same forthright letter, Mr. Long had commented:

Old Fellow, you are about as undiplomatic as a person could well be, . . . some of our Board were informed . . . that you were

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<sup>19</sup>"Kansas City Memorializes," Literary Digest, 11 September 1926, 24-25; Irving K. Pond, "An Essay in Collaboration," American Architect, 5 October 1926, 285-287; and Edith Magonigle, "East Is East -- and West Is West," World Review, 25 October 1926, 81-82, 97.

<sup>20</sup>Henry H. Saylor, "The Liberty Memorial, Kansas City," Architecture 55 (January 1927): 1-6.



very dictatorial and hard to get along with, . . . and as we have traveled along, the situation has grown worse.<sup>21</sup>

Also, it must not be overlooked that from the beginning there had been serious money problems. Apparently disappointment that Magonigle's winning design far exceeded the specified costs and could not possibly be constructed as presented could not be forgiven. A majority of the Board of Governors of the Liberty Memorial Association had finally had all of H. Van Buren Magonigle they could stand!

In the months following the dedication, November 11, 1926, J. C. Nichols headed the committee to bring the Liberty Memorial to completion so that, in his words, Kansas City could have "one of the finest developments in the world, right in front of the Union Station door." Indeed, the Vice President looked beyond the Memorial's unfinished condition to predict that with "sufficient funds . . . it can surpass anything that any of us have as yet hoped for the Memorial and its setting."<sup>22</sup> It was a year later when J. C. Nichols reported to the Board of Governors, November 15, 1927, that there had been "many meetings during the last year . . . in relation to development of the grounds."<sup>23</sup> Mr. Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., had made two trips to Kansas City and, in conjunction with Mr. S. Herbert Hare, had made a "very careful study of the problem . . ." The eminent Massachusetts landscape artist had declared that the Liberty Memorial could be "one of the greatest things in the entire country." It was anticipated

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<sup>21</sup>R. A. Long to H. V. B. Magonigle, 13 October 1926.

<sup>22</sup>"Minutes," 1263.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., 1262.

that Mr. Olmsted would "spend a great deal of time with Mr. Magonigle in New York City working closely together."<sup>24</sup>

Real money problems remained, but Mr. Nichols was confident "the city would vote bonds necessary for the grading and approaches . . . the money must be found."<sup>25</sup> The Kansas City Star, however, described the dilemma by saying, "Present funds could not be stretched to provide both . . . the story in carved stone or the finishing of the great north approaches."<sup>26</sup>

The public was interested in their Kansas City Memorial. With spring, a Kansas City Times photograph showed:

The Twenty-Seventh and Main Widening Reveals the Bigger, Uglier Problem Untouched . . . all the hideousness of the rock and mud bank of the Main Street cut.<sup>27</sup>

November brought the news that Kansas City's Park Board had hired local landscape experts Hare & Hare, who would complete the work launched by the late George Kessler.<sup>28</sup> At the Annual Meeting of the Board of Trustees, November 20, 1928, Edward Buehler Delk, Kansas City architect, declared, "There is no greater single architectural composition in the world today," and S. Herbert Hare, landscape architect, "gave a very complete statement as to the planting and landscape treatment . . . to properly complete the Memorial."<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>24</sup>Ibid.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., 1263.

<sup>26</sup>Kansas City Star, 8 February 1927.

<sup>27</sup>Kansas City Times, 25 May 1928.

<sup>28</sup>Kansas City Journal-Post, 8 November 1928.

<sup>29</sup>"Minutes," 1280.

At a special meeting December 19, 1928, the Liberty Memorial's chief champion, R. A. Long, who had already "given about one-twentieth of the whole amount of money subscribed,"<sup>30</sup> withdrew the offer he had made nearly two years previously concerning the funding of the frieze. Because he had been so committed to "a completed Memorial . . . [with] a frieze on the north wall," R. A. Long had volunteered to pay himself:

. . . one-twelfth of the cost of carving a frieze on the North wall, provided the cost did not exceed \$180,000.00; and to pay one-sixth of the annual maintenance cost of the Memorial. . . provided the total cost did not exceed \$120,000.00 . . . for a period of five years . . . [Mr. Long] thought we ought . . . to determine the amount of money necessary . . . to carve a frieze . . . then go out and raise the money.<sup>31</sup>

"The long time . . . [which had] elapsed . . . and the inactivity in the interim" which had led to Mr. Long's decision to withdraw were surely a grave disappointment to the seventy-eight-year-old idealist. The "inactivity" continued. "LIBERTY MEMORIAL FEELS PINCH IN TREASURY OF CITY" was a headline the following spring for an article telling that funds necessary to retain Frederick Law Olmsted had not been authorized.<sup>32</sup>

The 1929 history, The Liberty Memorial in Kansas City, Missouri, gives valuable insights into the reasons for the delay. Perhaps the most significant portion of the handsome folio-sized booklet of some forty pages is the "ADDENDUM" securely mounted inside the back cover which advised the reader:

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<sup>30</sup>Ibid., 1282.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., 1281-1282.

<sup>32</sup>Kansas City Journal-Post, 17 May 1929.

In order that there may be no misunderstanding as to any references in this brochure to a frieze or a sculptor for a frieze, it is deemed advisable to state definitely that no frieze has been selected nor has the sculptor been chosen.<sup>33</sup>

Earlier in the brochure, the Liberty Memorial Association made careful explanation as to why "the Memorial is still incomplete." The first of the two reasons was that a ten percent increase in the total cost of construction had resulted from the need for deeper footings required by the geological conditions. This had necessitated a revised plan of construction. The cost of steps, terraces and approaches on the north as originally planned had come to nearly \$600,000. The decision had been made, therefore, that "the prudent course" was to construct only that portion which had already been completed and "to make a re-study of the treatment on the north with a view to reducing the cost."<sup>34</sup>

The other reason given for not finishing the Liberty Memorial was that treatment of the north was dependent on "grading and landscaping the eight and one-half acre tract known as Station Park." This area was under the jurisdiction of the Board of Park Commissioners and the work, therefore, was an obligation of the city.<sup>35</sup> In the same 1929 booklet there was an expression of the determination of the Board of Governors "to complete the structure by appropriate approaches leading up from the north, and to provide for the carving of a great frieze on the north wall." Also, a matter of record was the Board's intention:

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<sup>33</sup>McPherson, Liberty Memorial, 1929, [41].

<sup>34</sup>Ibid., 19.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., 20.

. . . to retain the services of the most eminent landscape architect available to collaborate with Mr. Magonigle in solving the complexities of architectural and landscape treatment in a manner which will win the enthusiastic endorsement of all interests and provide for the Liberty Memorial a setting unsurpassed in any known memorial.<sup>36</sup>

Notwithstanding this public affirmation of Mr. Magonigle's position, on December 20, 1930, the Board of Governors adopted specific procedures for terminating his contract. The balance of the New York architect's fee was to be paid and he was to be notified that the Liberty Memorial Association had dispensed with his services.<sup>37</sup> At the same meeting, \$2,000 was authorized to cover the cost of preparing a grading and landscaping plan to recommend to the Ten-Year Plan.<sup>38</sup>

H. Van Buren Magonigle promptly returned the check of final settlement sent to him, March 7, 1931, saying that according to contract, further architectural, sculptural, or landscaping work on the Liberty Memorial had to be under his direction and that he stood ready to complete his work and contract.<sup>39</sup> The New Yorker's readiness was apparently of no concern to the Kansas City Board. The Board of

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<sup>36</sup>Ibid.

<sup>37</sup>"Minutes," 1319.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid. It would be funds made available from Ten-Year Plan bonds which would make completion of Liberty Memorial approaches and landscaping possible -- thus, the necessity of preparation of "a plan of grading and landscaping . . . in order that a proper sum might be recommended . . ." "Minutes," 1322. At the Board meeting 2 April 1931, an American Legion representative pledged their full support "in carrying the Bond election . . . to improve the surroundings of the Liberty Memorial" and urged that unexpended Memorial Building funds "in conjunction with the bond issue . . . be devoted to complete the Memorial on the north" and also made a request that an American Legion building be erected.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., 1320, 1322.

Governors of the Liberty Memorial Association met on April 2, 1931, to reaffirm their action.

The second notification stated that the balance due would be paid on request. Mr. Magonigle's reply to Mr. Carkener, President of the Liberty Memorial Association, was dated August 29, 1931, and referred to "your favor of July 25, 1931."<sup>40</sup> The architect's four-page letter carefully reviewed provisions of the Competition Program, the contract, and the copyrighted booklet Liberty Memorial in Kansas City, Missouri, 1929, all supporting the mutual responsibilities of the owners and architect. Systematically, Mr. Magonigle recorded verbatim quotations: first, from the Liberty Memorial Association's minutes, February 10, 1927; next, a letter from Mr. Carkener, June 7, 1929; and then, details from a report under the "Ten-Year City Improvement Plan." All of these, Magonigle declared, called for completion of "Our Liberty Memorial . . . including the frieze in accordance with the original Program and Contract."

On the practical side, he pointed out that "there is a good deal of architectural service still to be rendered . . . available for the \$3,000 unpaid balance of the fixed architectural fee . . . Why not save at least this much of the people's money?" Without specific reference to his wife, Mr. Magonigle assured the Board that the design for the 400-foot frieze, the product of "nine years of laborious research and the exercise of high artistic genius was complete . . .

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<sup>40</sup>Magonigle to George S. Carkender, 29 August 1931. This carefully phrased response was actually Magonigle's second letter, replacing one dated 22 August 1931, which he had asked to have returned. The architect's conciliatory efforts had come far too late.

ready for inspection . . . [or] to submit to a jury of qualified experts." It was a quietly eloquent and logical appeal by the architect of the Liberty Memorial to be allowed to complete his work. Nothing came of his petition.

Haskell and Fowler in their book City of the Future, (1950) state: "Before and after the memorial was finally built it was involved in many cross currents and criticisms. Many Kansas Citians felt let down with a memorial less imposing than their dreams."<sup>41</sup> Also, there had been a swing away from the type of memorial like the Liberty Memorial which "bore no tinge of utilitarianism,"<sup>42</sup> toward the concept of "living" memorials of various kinds. However, the most conspicuous reason for "the wave of criticism" was that for more than eight years, the monument, a memorable image, a veritable Kansas City symbol, had to stand atop a rough hill, behind a stark and brooding wall.<sup>43</sup> In the 1930s, it was a combination of talents plus funds from bonds of the Ten-Year Plan which made completion possible. Kansas City architects Wight & Wight with landscape architect S. Herbert Hare, employed by the Liberty Memorial Association, in cooperation with landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. of Brookline, Massachusetts, employed by Kansas City under Park Department auspices,

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<sup>41</sup>Haskell and Fowler, City of the Future, 117.

<sup>42</sup>J. C. Nichols' words as printed in the Liberty Memorial Association, "Memorial Service to the Memory of Robert Alexander Long," Kansas City, Missouri: Spencer Printing Co., 1934, Liberty Memorial Museum Library and Archives.

<sup>43</sup>Haskell and Fowler, City of the Future, 117.

coordinated their efforts in the work that brought about design and realization of landscaping, approaches, fountains, and the sculptural frieze on the north for the Liberty Memorial.

Economy-based simplification and reduction had drastically altered Kansas City's World War I monument. The Liberty Memorial which was finally completed in the mid-1930s was far different from the grandiose concept of H. Van Buren Magonigle's competition renderings of 1921. The severity of measures necessary to bring completion costs within the limits of available funds was especially evident in the treatment of the area to the north of the Memorial. The north hill of the Liberty Memorial before the major landscaping program (1932-1935) was the unattractive expanse that greeted those emerging from the Union Station, and it gave a negative impression of Kansas City and its War Monument. Something had to be done. The original elaborate plans for automobile access were changed to modest steps and walks for pedestrian approaches.

At a meeting April 29, 1932, J. C. Nichols reported that Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr. had said earlier that treatment of the eight-and-one-half acres surrounding the Liberty Memorial was "the most difficult problem he had ever encountered" and that Mr. Olmsted had been reluctant to undertake the work.<sup>44</sup> However, the Ten-Year Plan bonds provided \$450,000, of which \$100,000 would be immediately available for "grading around the Memorial and to build Kessler Road."<sup>45</sup> The two plans for treatment on the north, one which had been

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<sup>44</sup>"Minutes," 1340.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid.



suggested by Mr. Magonigle with oval paths and the other less costly plan suggested by Mr. Hare and Mr. Dunn, Kansas City Parks Department Superintendent, "with broad steps and direct walks" were reviewed. It had been announced definitely that H. Van Buren Magonigle, "the original architect" for the Memorial, was no longer retained.<sup>46</sup>

The Park Board intended to grade the west side of Main Street immediately. "On account of the difficulty of the problem" Mr. Nichols urged securing the best possible talents. At the same meeting, April 29, 1932, approval was given to the \$1,000 fee for a preliminary study by Mr. Olmsted. The whole problem was seen as requiring the joint efforts of Mr. Olmsted and an architect. The President was authorized to select or to appoint a committee to select "a local architect."<sup>47</sup>

At a special meeting of the Board of Governors, June 10, 1932, Mr. C. C. Peters, Chairman of the Committee on Architect, reported a meeting with Mr. Thomas Wight about the proposal made by the firm of Wight & Wight. He also mentioned "some discussion" with Keene and Simpson. Authorization was given to the Committee on Architect, "to effect an arrangement not to exceed \$2,000 and not to exceed four percent of the actual cost of structural work."<sup>48</sup> On June 21, 1932, the firm of Wight & Wight was selected.<sup>49</sup> Local landscape architects Hare & Hare were selected to do a preliminary study prior to Mr. Olmsted's visit.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>46</sup>Kansas City Journal-Post, 13 April 1932.

<sup>47</sup>"Minutes," 1341.

<sup>48</sup>*Ibid.*, 1343.

<sup>49</sup>*Ibid.*, 1362.

<sup>50</sup>*Ibid.*, 1344.

It would seem that the Liberty Memorial in its unfinished condition was a disappointment, even an embarrassment, to Kansas Citians. On June 23, 1932, the Kansas City Star, in a news article headed "Hill of Beauty a Goal," described it all too clearly.

The bleak, unfriendly north aspect of the Liberty Memorial, with its end abutments seemingly afloat in the air, the all too narrow east and west sides, as they now exist in the untreated site-- these [are the] major faults of the great but unfinished memorial . . . .

Unpromising as the prospect was, help was on the way in the person of Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., whom a newspaper called a "nationally known landscape architect and city planner, at the top of his exacting profession, as was his father, the senior Olmsted."<sup>51</sup> This was Mr. Olmsted's third visit to Kansas City. This time with assurance that the Park Department was ready to do a \$100,000 job removing surplus rock and earth, and that the Liberty Memorial Association was ready to spend approximately \$200,000, there was hope of a worthy setting finally for the \$2,000,000 Memorial.

So, after a delay of some six years, with funds now available and landscape and architectural experts in charge, activity resumed. Mr. Olmsted, called the "General" in the Kansas City Star, was accompanied by a New York associate, Percival Gallagher, who was to remain in Kansas City until "the difficulties have been whipped." Kansas Citians involved in completing the project for the north approach were: S. Herbert Hare, consultant of the Memorial governors; William D. Wight, architect; David E. Long, Park Department Board President;

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<sup>51</sup>Kansas City Star, 23 June 1932.

W. H. Dunn, Superintendent of Parks; and J. V. Lewis, field engineer. J. C. Nichols was Chairman of the Liberty Memorial Association Committee for developing a final plan for completing the Memorial.<sup>52</sup>

Mr. Olmsted explained the many problems:

All the major structures and even thoroughfares in the neighborhood are on a different axis. Main Street, the Union Station, the Memorial itself . . . Then there is the new Post Office and the jutting out office building [Business Men's Assurance Building] between it and the memorial grounds.<sup>53</sup>

Even at this stage, the carved frieze for the north wall continued to be a problem. Earlier that spring, President George S. Carkener had "intimated" that because of limited funds "sculpturing of an historic frieze . . . may be abandoned," and "that other parts of the Memorial approach problem were more important."<sup>54</sup> Mr. Olmsted declared, therefore, that, "The landscaping, then, must be suitable to the north wall with or without a frieze."<sup>55</sup>

"Tentative approval" by the Park Board for a plan presented jointly by Liberty Memorial Association committeemen along with W. D. Wight and Percival Gallagher was announced, July 1, 1932.<sup>56</sup> J. V. Lewis, Park Board Field Engineer, was instructed to familiarize himself "on dressing down the west wall of the Main Street cut." With

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<sup>52</sup>Ibid.

<sup>53</sup>The Business Men's Assurance Company had taken over the Sweeney Building in 1929.

<sup>54</sup>Kansas City Star, 13 April 1932.

<sup>55</sup>Kansas City Times, 24 June 1932.

<sup>56</sup>Kansas City Times, 1 July 1932.

Park Department labor and supervision, following Olmsted's plans, the Main Street wall would "be dressed into a series of benches, utilizing the natural rock ledges as bases for the benches."<sup>57</sup> "The impression of power," the Memorial's striking feature was to be emphasized by planting the rugged hillside with trees and shrubs. "Pleasant walks" through the wooded groves were planned.<sup>58</sup>

The north side of the Memorial was to be the scene of "the greatest development." On Pershing Road, a plaza backed by an ornamental wall about 150 feet from the street would bear the Liberty Memorial history and the names of the five World War leaders present for the 1921 dedication.<sup>59</sup> Over the next year-and-a-half, plans for the Wall of Dedication were amplified. It was to be ninety feet long and ten feet high. Bronze portrait medallions of the five Allied leaders and two bronze buffaloes (sculpture in the round) were added.<sup>60</sup> W. D. Wight emphasized the importance and appropriateness of

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<sup>57</sup>Ibid. "Beautifying the Main Street side of Liberty Memorial Hill" progressed rapidly. A photograph in the Kansas City Times, 20 August 1932, showed the "jagged mass of rocks . . . being graded into a series of benches supported by natural rock ledges." The work was supervised by W. H. Dunn, Superintendent of Parks.

<sup>58</sup>Kansas City Times, 1 July 1932.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid.

<sup>60</sup>"Minutes," 1393. According to the Kansas City Times, 24 March 1933, Wight and Olmsted had originally been opposed to the plan of portraits of the five Allied leaders since they felt it should be "a memorial to [all] soldiers . . . not just great military leaders."

Walker Hancock of Gloucester, Massachusetts was the sculptor of the bronze medallions — "the portraiture is considered excellent," according to Mrs. William D. Wight, "Story of the Great Frieze and of the Dedication Wall," Typescript, 30 May 1962. In the L. M. M. Library and Archives.

the pair of "huge greenish bronze buffaloes," true symbols, "not only of the West, but of America." Mr. Wight suggested that the country was "[too] full of griffins, satyrs, Chinese monsters, and lions."<sup>61</sup> Could this comment have been a reference to exotic animals in Edith Magonigle's rather esoteric sculptural design? It was probably for reasons of economy that Mr. Wight's plan for buffaloes never materialized.

From the Wall of Dedication on the Pershing Road plaza, steps at either end were to lead to:

The first terrace . . . a great lawn . . . dressed and trimmed not unlike the south approach to the William Rockhill Nelson Gallery of Art. Walks will lead to a flight of steps (160 feet wide) directly in front of the memorial wall . . . ornamented with a huge panel of figures [which] can be . . . read from the Union Station.<sup>62</sup>

It is obvious that Kansas Citians were eager to see a transformation in "bald" Liberty Memorial Hill. No doubt they were pleased to read in the Kansas City Times, March 24, 1933, that the "ugly nose" of the hill at Main Street and Pershing Road, which seemed to so unbalance the Memorial, was to be shorn away. Readers were also informed that the entire concept of planting for Liberty Memorial grounds was one of studied informality. Many maple trees massed on the right and left would glow in autumn colors and frame the frieze and the lofty shaft above.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>61</sup>Kansas City Star, 25 January 1934.

<sup>62</sup>Kansas City Times, 1 July 1932. The similarity to the grounds of the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art (originally called the Nelson Gallery of Art and the Atkins Museum of Fine Arts), opened 11 December 1933, is not surprising. The building was designed by Wight & Wight, the grounds by Hare & Hare.

<sup>63</sup>Kansas City Times, 24 March 1932.

Another north wall feature which a journalist saw as changing "the rigid, forbidding face of the monument" to one that would be "warm and animated . . . like music, like poetry" was a pair of "rude basins like the bowls of mountain springs, . . . water will pour in heavy muscled founts."<sup>64</sup> As they were actually constructed, the fountains which flanked the flight of steps ninety feet wide leading down from the forecourt below the great north wall with its sculptured frieze, gave the effect of handsome, but well disciplined waterfalls and geysers.<sup>65</sup>

Plans were progressing. On November 29, 1932, Wight & Wight requested the payment of the second \$1,000 on their contract. Mr. W. D. Wight had presented sketches of plans which included the proposed frieze on the north wall. He had estimated the cost of the work would be \$200,000, which did not include the architect's fee. The Board of Governors requested further cost reductions and authorized Mr. Wight to go to New York City to consult with sculptors. Approval of these plans was to await the city's approval of the Olmsted plans for grading and landscaping.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>64</sup>Kansas City Times, 16 January 1934.

<sup>65</sup>For a detailed description of the Liberty Memorial fountains, see Sherry Piland and Ellen J. Uguccione, Fountains of Kansas City (Kansas City: City of Fountains Foundation, 1985), 132-134 and Plate 6. I disagree, however, with the authors when they say that Edith Magonigle's design for the frieze, "borrowed heavily on well-known sculptural works of the past." More to the point was Thomas Kimball's 1923 praise when he said, "The particular character of the bas relief . . . has not been executed for more than two thousand years . . . There is nothing like it in the world." "Minutes," 720. Solid foundation on historical tradition is not "borrowing"!

<sup>66</sup>"Minutes," 1359.

Modifications in the plans "including steps, frieze, foundations, terrace walls, and architect's commission" which brought their cost to \$180,000 were explained by Mr. Wight at the meeting, March 29, 1933. There was complete agreement between Wight & Wight and the Olmsted Brothers on architectural plans for the completion of the Liberty Memorial structure. The Board of Governors of the Liberty Memorial Association, therefore, did:

authorize George S. Carkener, our President, to order the completion . . . whenever he has received from the city, assurances that the remainder of the money derived from bonds, voted for the development of Liberty Memorial hill in accordance with said plans as prepared by Olmsted Brothers [were available].<sup>67</sup>

The next day, March 30, 1933, at the meeting of the Committee on Architect, J. C. Nichols explained that removal of twelve to fifteen thousand yards of dirt would be necessary. Since costs of structural work would consume all the funds of the Association, costs of grading could properly be assumed by the city through the Ten-Year Plan. With Wight & Wight and the Olmsteds in accord on architectural, grading, and landscaping plans, the Park Board approved those plans and agreed to proceed with grading and landscaping and continue "as rapidly as funds could be provided."<sup>68</sup>

On April 18, 1933, architect William D. Wight was back from New York. He had visited three prominent architectural firms and had met with several eminent sculptors. Mr. Wight presented the following estimates which had been submitted by four sculptors:<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>67</sup>Ibid., 1362.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid., 1363.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid., 1365. Of the four sculptors' names as recorded

Leo Friedlander	\$37,000
Charles Keck	\$52,000
Albert T. Stewart	\$34,000
Edmond Amateis	\$23,000

Mr. Wight said that Edmond Amateis' name had been on all the lists which he had secured and recommended his selection. It was Edmond Romulus Amateis, the low bidder, who was chosen to "humanize"<sup>70</sup> the monument.

The Kansas City Times, March 24, 1933, carried a photograph with the title "THE PROPOSED PLAN FOR COMPLETING THE NORTH FACE OF THE LIBERTY MEMORIAL" and described plans in the accompanying article. W. D. Wight's plans for the frieze and his emphasis on certain changes underscored what may have been seen as shortcomings in Magonigle's design. The size was to be different--nineteen feet high (not thirteen feet) and 145 feet long (not 400). Also, it would be set lower on the wall. This would require replacing the six-inch Indiana limestone with stone ten inches thick. (Magonigle had planned on a higher position for the frieze and had had a panel of eight-inch stone installed there.)

Instead of "an incised drawing" of a nearly continuous proces-

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in the "Minutes," only Amateis' was complete and spelled correctly. That the others were misspelled with the first names either missing or incorrect, suggests that little attention was given to anyone except Amateis with his drastically lower fee.

<sup>70</sup>Kansas City Star, 9 May 1933.

Jacques Schnier in Sculpture in Modern America, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1948, included Amateis in a list of those who followed the lead of sculptor Paulanship.



sion of some 500 figures, the new plan would consist of a large central figure and related groupings. Mr. Wight declared that such a design would "stop the movement" and "not flow."<sup>71</sup> Those characteristics were indeed desirable because Magonigle's relatively narrow 400-foot frieze with his wife's flowing procession of non-stop figures placed high on the wall might have turned out to be a sort of ornamental border which would have underscored the wall's length and flatness. The Kansas City architect emphasized that he and the sculptor would work together closely in choosing the frieze's theme.

By June 19, 1933, Mr. Amateis' drawing for the frieze had Mr. Wight's "hearty approval" and was ready to be viewed by representatives of a number of war organizations and certain individuals including Paul D. Gardner, Director of the Nelson Art Gallery (Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art), and Wallace Rosenbauer, of the Kansas City Art Institute faculty. The theme of the frieze was the contrast between the horrors of war and the fruits of industry and peace. Recommendations were made that stone should be purchased from the Indiana Limestone Company, concrete from the Ready-Mixed Concrete Company and cement from the Brockett Cement Company.<sup>72</sup>

Over the next two months various changes were made:

. . . pursuant to some suggestions from members of war organizations. The changes consisted of the elimination of the money changers, the ravished women, and the jackal; the substitution of an eagle for the vulture and three soldiers for the money changers and the ravished women.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>71</sup>Kansas City Times, 24 March 1933.

<sup>72</sup>"Minutes," 1368.

<sup>73</sup>*Ibid.*, 1372.

In addition, there was the request for the inclusion of a machine gun<sup>74</sup> and that the central figure which some felt "bore too closely a resemblance to the crucifix" should be changed. In spite of some objections to "characters or symbols other than those relating to the twentieth century," on August 10, 1933, the general design for the frieze was adopted unanimously.<sup>75</sup>

Then came decisions for inscriptions. Among proposals were a passage from Revelations for the "Curse of War" side and various excerpts from the Psalms for the "Blessings of Peace" side. A committee was appointed October 31, 1933, and was instructed to "call upon certain of the ministers of the city." The matter of inscriptions was still being discussed December 4 when quotations by Presidents Lincoln and Theodore Roosevelt were added along with lines from "America, the Beautiful."<sup>76</sup>

On January 9, 1934, at Mr. Wight's recommendation, it was agreed to replace inscriptions at the east and west ends of the great north wall frieze with "two emblems representing the source of government . . . a conventional flag design with a sword." Another change was authorized, which was an inscription in raised letters fourteen-and-one-half inches high and extending the total 150 feet of the frieze reading:

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<sup>74</sup>The machine gun suggested by veterans does not appear in the sculptural frieze on the North Wall.

<sup>75</sup>"Minutes," 1375.

<sup>76</sup>Ibid., 1392.

THESE HAVE DARED BEAR THE TORCHES OF SACRIFICE AND SERVICE —  
THEIR BODIES RETURN TO DUST BUT THEIR WORK LIVETH FOR EVERMORE.  
LET US STRIVE ON TO DO ALL WHICH MAY ACHIEVE AND CHERISH A JUST  
AND LASTING PEACE AMONG OURSELVES AND WITH ALL NATIONS.<sup>77</sup>

In work beginning in January 1934, the sculptural frieze designed by Edmond Amateis was translated from his "small plaster model" to the giant figures which would, in effect, complete the Liberty Memorial. Kansas Citians watched as Italian artisans, protected from winter weather by a rolling shed, "pointed" their way across the north wall.<sup>78</sup> When the work stood completed, the contrast of "the horrors of war with the fruits of industry and peace" was bold and immediate. (Fig. 24) Whether the original concept of the Liberty Memorial as "a symbol not of War, but of Peace" had been clearly stated would seem somewhat doubtful. The militant Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse and charging soldiers on the east do seem to make a stronger statement than the garlanded bulls and other symbols of peace on the west. Changes in subject matter, scale, and depth of carving from H. Van Buren Magonigle's somewhat literary "engraved" ornamentation surely altered the relation of the frieze to the whole architectural statement. It remains a matter of opinion whether or not the north facade of the Liberty Memorial had, like the New York Custom House, become the "background" for sculpture which Thomas Kimball had deplored nearly eleven years earlier.<sup>79</sup>

Two serious matters came before the Board of Governors of the

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<sup>77</sup>Ibid., 1409.

<sup>78</sup>Kansas City Times, 10 and 16 January 1934.

<sup>79</sup>"Minutes," 720-721.

Liberty Memorial Association at a special meeting, March 23, 1934. The first to be discussed was final settlement with Mr. Magonigle. In addition to authorizing a committee to take action in regard to a claim for \$1,098.56 which had been made by the architect in October 1931, the Secretary was instructed to "inquire if Mr. Magonigle would now accept the \$3,000 as the balance of his contract."<sup>80</sup>

The second subject for discussion at that meeting was a memorial service for their President of eight years, Honorary President for more than seven, Robert Alexander Long, who had died on March 15, 1934. It was agreed that a service under the auspices of the Liberty Memorial Association with participation by representatives of various war organizations should be held. At the service in Memory Hall, May 13, 1934, the sound of fountains, newly installed on the Memorial's north slope, could be heard by the more than 250 who had braved rain-soaked, unfinished approaches. They had come to pay tribute to R. A. Long, builder, philanthropist, and inspirer of the Liberty Memorial.<sup>81</sup> J. C. Nichols spoke glowingly of the man and of "The Memorial as Mr. Long Visioned It." R. A. Long had been a man who had, Mr. Nichols said:

From seven-thirty in the morning until midnight, through those gruelling weeks of toil . . . lifted our vision, . . . kindled our hope . . . [and] fought for America's greatest and most expensive War Memorial. Despite his advanced age, . . . he knew no fatigue . . . his imagination no bounds.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>80</sup>Ibid., 1410.

<sup>81</sup>Kansas City Times, 14 May 1934.

<sup>82</sup>Liberty Memorial Association, "Memorial Service," 1934.

Mr. Nichols, both a devoted friend and Liberty Memorial Association Vice President from the beginning, said he regretted that Mr. Long could not have been spared for the Memorial's completion "now under way." He concluded by saying that the life of such a great citizen would stand in bold relief in Kansas City's history even as "the angels aloft on the tower will stand guard, a glorious tribute to the men and women who served their city and country in time of peace as well as in time of war."<sup>83</sup>

All the intricacies of the sometimes tortuous completion of the Liberty Memorial from the beginning to the end are not easy to reconstruct. In the spring of 1935, when Kansas Citians were looking forward to the dedication of the Memorial frieze, marking the Memorial's completion, a Kansas City Journal-Post editorial writer looked back and pondered the "difficulty" and "mystery" of getting the job done.<sup>84</sup> One problem in the later phase seems to have been division of authority between the Liberty Memorial Association and Kansas City's Parks Department. As accelerated plans for completion were getting underway:

It developed that the Memorial committee had been waiting for the Park Board to perfect plans for its part of the work while the Park Board, at the same time, had been waiting for the Memorial committee to decide what form its share of the improvement will take.<sup>85</sup>

Careful delineation of territories and authority had been the conse-

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<sup>83</sup>Ibid.

<sup>84</sup>Kansas City Journal-Post, 15 April 1935.

<sup>85</sup>Kansas City Journal-Post, 13 April 1932.

quence. The Park Department, working from Olmsted's plans, was to build the stone wall along the Main Street cut from Penn Drive to a point about Twenty-sixth Street, leaving the balance to Pershing Road for the work of the Liberty Memorial Association, according to plans by Wight & Wight. Throughout, the Wight & Wight office was in "the closest cooperation with Olmsted Brothers and the Park Board."<sup>86</sup>

Another difficulty and probably the basic one in completion of the Liberty Memorial was a deficiency of money. The 1930s were depression years for the nation and Kansas City was not an exception. Unemployment was a grim and ever-present reality. Kansas City's post-war enthusiasm for raising the country's greatest memorial to hometown heroes had changed to an urgent demand that unemployed veterans should come first for jobs as work resumed at the Liberty Memorial.<sup>87</sup> Governors of the Liberty Memorial had limited funds to spend, something less than \$200,000, and there was much to be done. It is no wonder that a frieze would be considered only if it were "reduced and altered" with "frugal paring" of all costs.<sup>88</sup>

In the end, it was a flood of federal money for Civil Works Administration (CWA) projects in Kansas City and Jackson County which made a big difference in completion of the Liberty Memorial. In

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<sup>86</sup>Kansas City Star, 4 December 1932.

<sup>87</sup>Kansas City Journal-Post, 15 April 1932. Liberty Memorial Association President George S. Carkener did point out one positive feature in the desperate times saying that, "The time was advantageous for work on account of low costs." Kansas City Times, 9 April 1932.

<sup>88</sup>Kansas City Star, 4 December 1932.

December 1933, approximately \$85,485 went to more than 6,700 men who had been unemployed.<sup>89</sup> One thousand of these men were spreading earth and building walls and walks by hand.<sup>90</sup> "The Liberty Memorial hill is swarming with remembered forgotten men . . . put to work by the national administration," was the caption under a picture showing a large CWA signboard.<sup>91</sup>

Under Park Department direction, CWA workmen graded and made fills (plus using debris from the razed Park Hotel which had stood south of the BMA building) for Kessler Road, planned to skirt Memorial hill on the west. This was "a by-product of improvement of Liberty Memorial grounds."<sup>92</sup> It seems likely, as an article in the Kansas City Star, February 9, 1934, commented that "a lot of permanent improvements" would never have been built without government aid. By the spring of 1935 the Kansas City Times reported that:

Already more than 4 million dollars has been expended on the [Liberty Memorial] project. The money was obtained through contributions by the public, special tax assessments, bond funds and federal money for CWA and FERA services.<sup>93</sup>

The sculptor, Edmond Amateis, had come to Kansas City from New York in early March 1935 to see the finished frieze which had been

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<sup>89</sup>Kansas City Star, 16 December 1933.

<sup>90</sup>Kansas City Star, 9 February 1934. In regard to "all this handiwork," the CWA engineer in charge commented that, "it is so inefficient it makes a contractor sick, but we have to do it to spread employment."

<sup>91</sup>Kansas City Times, 31 January 1934.

<sup>92</sup>Kansas City Star, 25 February 1934.

<sup>93</sup>Kansas City Times, 18 May 1935.

mechanically enlarged from his designs. The sculptor explained that because the north wall of the Memorial would be almost devoid of direct sunlight, he had found it necessary "to gouge more deeply the lines . . . at the edges of the figures." The central figure of Peace had a relief of nine and one-half inches and other figures, five and one-half inches.<sup>94</sup>

The September 1935 issue of the architectural journal, Pencil Points, carried two pages of Liberty Memorial photographs. One page showed the relief sculpture by Edmond R. Amateis in both natural and artificial light. The other page was a general view of the north side of the Liberty Memorial with this caption:

The Liberty Memorial, Kansas City, originally designed by H. Van Buren Magonigle, Architect. Alterations by Wight and Wight of Kansas City under whose direction the band of sculpture by Edmond R. Amateis was recently executed.<sup>95</sup>

The same issue of Pencil Points carried its regular feature, "THE UPPER GROUND, Being Essays in Criticism, by H. Van Buren Magonigle, F.A.I.A." Immediately following Mr. Magonigle's essay appeared a brief paragraph bracketed between black bars.

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Just as we go to press, word arrives of the sudden death of Mr. Magonigle on August 29 at Vergennes, Vermont, where he was visiting friends. It is with deep sorrow that we make this announcement. He was a man loved by his friends, respected by his

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<sup>94</sup>Kansas City Star, 8 March 1935.

<sup>95</sup>"Horrors of War Contrasted . . .," Pencil Points 16 (September 1935): 462.



adversaries. The profession of architecture has lost a rare spirit, one who has ever striven with all his might to uphold its highest ideals.<sup>96</sup>

The October issue of Pencil Points carried a tribute to "A Conscientious Artist" by Francis P. Sullivan. Facing Magonigle's photograph on the first page of the two-page article was the reproduction of the Elevation of H. Van Buren Magonigle's Winning Design in the Kansas City Liberty Memorial Competition. Mr. Sullivan began by saying, "Once or twice in a lifetime . . . in architecture at least, it is by a man and not mankind . . . that great ideals are brought into being, great projects conceived and fostered and great ends attained." As to Magonigle's work, the article continued:

His design is classical in its background and origin . . . In his later buildings he had already carried far a process of self-discipline that was progressively leading him to a greater and greater care to eliminate all that was not essential and to lay ever-increasing emphasis on the great general proportions and masses of his compositions . . .

. . . the buildings which he planned were widely scattered geographically . . . One of the most familiar and most admired of them, one which he himself might perhaps have chosen as representing his abilities at their height, is the Liberty Memorial in Kansas City, Missouri, still incomplete because it lacks one of its most important elements as he conceived it, the splendid sculptured frieze designed for it by his wife, in a spirit of such perfect harmony with the monument as to seem to have been created with it in a single impulse.<sup>97</sup>

It is absolutely inconceivable that Francis P. Sullivan and H. Van Buren Magonigle would not have been aware that Kansas City's Liberty Memorial had been completed. Of course, the frieze had not

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<sup>96</sup>"Just as we go to press . . .," Pencil Points 16 (September 1935): 485.

<sup>97</sup>Francis P. Sullivan, "A Conscientious Artist," Pencil Points 16 (October 1935): 521-522.

been completed with the design by his wife as the New York architect had conceived it. Perhaps to him the Liberty Memorial truly was "still incomplete." Even now, more than fifty years later, it does seem strangely ironic that H. Van Buren Magonigle's death followed so closely completion of the Liberty Memorial by other architects and another sculptor.

When the Liberty Memorial frieze was dedicated on the eve of Armistice Day, 1935, it was in a far different environment from previous Memorial dedications--in a nation ravished by the Great Depression and troubled by distant rumbles of war. Peace was the dominant note at the ceremony, Sunday, November 10 at 6:30 P.M. The dedicatory address was by General Malin Craig, Chief of Staff of the United States Army. Flags of the eleven victorious Allies, uniformed groups of veterans and armed forces, and "spectacular lighting effects" all contributed to the impressive ceremony on the broad north terrace where the Memorial itself formed a massive backdrop.<sup>98</sup> The high point of the evening was planned when the curtain of darkness was "drawn aside with a sudden snap of floodlight."<sup>99</sup>

In the Armistice Day parade the next morning, each unit first saluted the Washington statue in his role as General of the Continental Army and then saluted the most recent commander in wartime at the relief likeness of General John J. Pershing in the Wall of Dedication.<sup>100</sup> The marchers halted when they reached the Wall of Dedi-

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<sup>98</sup>Kansas City Star, 6 November 1935.

<sup>99</sup>Kansas City Times, 8 November 1935. <sup>100</sup>*Ibid.*

cation. There the bronze relief portraits of the five Allied World War leaders were presented to the public with words from the former National Commander of the American Legion. Following this presentation, the parade resumed and proceeded to the shaft of the Liberty Memorial, by way of Pershing Road and the still-to-be completed Kessler Road, for traditional Armistice Day services.<sup>101</sup>

The Fifteenth Annual Meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Liberty Memorial Association was held on November 19, 1935. It was the custom at the Annual meeting to present tributes memorializing those members who had died during the preceding year. As Chairman of the Committee on Memorial Resolutions, Mr. W. Laurence Dickey began his fourth and final eulogy of the 1935 meeting by saying:

. . . that on account of the creation by Mr. H. Van Buren Magonigle of what is generally regarded in the artistic world as an outstanding architectural achievement highly successful in the expression of the gratitude and devotion of our people to the participants in the World War, it was fitting that a resolution be adopted upon the death of Mr. Magonigle. . . . [who had] enriched our city by the witchery of his genius and the aspirations of a sensitive soul . . . [and] voiced for us in imperishable stone our allegiance to Peace and our gratitude and homage to those who gave their all that our nation might live on in peace and honor . . .

We honor him as the author of this outstanding work of art; we record his name and this tribute to his memory . . .

By a rising vote, the Board of Trustees of the Liberty Memorial Association adopted the sincere and eloquent expression of appreciation and thanks to H. Van Buren Magonigle, 1867-1935.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>101</sup>Ibid.

<sup>102</sup>"Minutes," 1439-1440.