

Few people are well informed about this tiny park that sits west of the bronze Commodore Perry statue at the foot of Louisiana Avenue. Fewer still know much, if anything, about the statue of the soldier standing there.

Back in the 1800s, people in Perrysburg seemed to be busy doing other things and there was no clamor for a public park. But there was sentiment for a suitable monument honoring the many young men from this area who so readily took part in and died in the Civil War. In fact, Wolford Post, G. A. R. (Grand Army of the Republic), a local Civil War veterans group, had the idea as far back as 1882. It never got far until near the end of the century, and by that time we had fought still another war -- the Spanish-American War in 1898.

Even so, the idea nearly died out when the citizens of the township, of which Perrysburg was then a part, voted down the proposition of taxing themselves to pay for a monument. But this defeat sparked enough public-spirited citizens into action that they started a campaign to get people to make private donations to raise the necessary monies. In addition, the township authorities gave \$300 to the cause.

It is not certain how many people over the years worked on fund raising and site selection for the monument, but at its completion, Jonathan Duhamel was the committee president, and D. K. Hollenbeck, the secretary. And

among the sites considered, "Corn Cob Hill", as the park site was then called, was the favorite because of its commanding view of the river. The "Corn Cob Hill" name came about because corn was once shelled there and lowered by hopper to a grain elevator on the riverbank below.

By 1901 the good citizens of the area, along with special efforts by Wolford Post, had raised the \$1,800 needed for the statue, which was designed and built by Eckhardt Monument Company of Toledo. It was of hammer-dressed Vermont granite, standing 27-1/2 feet high.

The figure on the pedestal is a flag bearer, or color-bearer, in a Civil War uniform. An inscription below says, "A tribute to the soldiers and sailors of Perrysburg Township, 1901". Emblems of the various branches of the military are on each of the four sides of the supporting base.

The question then was where to put it. During the fund-raising campaign a group of men happened to have purchased the lot where the statue now



**John Hood's home at
337 West Second Street**

stands. The lot extends from Front Street all the way down to the riverbank. In turn, the lot was purchased by John Hood, a retired farmer who was born in Scotland and who lived for a time in the home he built at 337 West Second Street.

Henry Hood and his wife, Elizabeth (Douglas) Hood, emigrated from Edinburgh, Scotland to the United States, in 1832. The Hood family was part of a group of immigrants who, in Buffalo, New York, in 1833, accidentally met up with Captain David Wilkison of Perrysburg. Wilkison, then in command of the lake schooner, *Eagle*, induced them to come and settle here. They did and liked the location so well that they wrote back home encouraging others to come, meanwhile squatting for a time at what was called the "Scotch Settlement" on or near ground by Fort Meigs.

The Hoods had seven children: James, George, Henry, William, Thomas, Jane, and John. Henry Hood and his children successfully developed and farmed land in Hull Prairie and also assisted in the development of the area, specifically the local school and the appropriately named, Hood Presbyterian Church. The Hood Presbyterian Church was incorporated January 20, 1877, with John Hood serving as one of the trustees.

The Hood family moved on to a wild land at Hull Prairie where young John grew up. He worked hard and never attended school, but from the family

farm he eventually amassed a comfortable amount of money and retired at age 55, making his home here.

Hood lived in the house on West Second Street house beginning in the late 1800s. It is fairly simple, vernacular Victorian frame building with a stone foundation and a gabled roof. Exactly when it was built is in question, but it quite likely was well before Hood moved in since it contains log beams with bark on them. Finished dimension lumber was certainly available in the late 1880s.

John Hood lived frugally and was known as a kind and charitable man who sought anonymity for his benevolence. He paid \$1,200 for the lot overlooking the river and then quietly donated it to the Village.

His desire for anonymity was almost fully realized in that for many years the park was commonly just called Monument Park, site of the area's Soldiers and Sailors Monument for which it was intended.

At the unveiling ceremonies on May 24, 1902, about 1,000 people were on hand, including school children and the Toledo Railway & Light Company band which strung incandescent lights from the company's power line to the bandstand.

This was a thrill, for electric lights were new to people here. Civil War General I. R. Sherwood of Toledo was the main speaker.

Shortly after his death in 1905, the county auditor claimed that the 80 year-old man owed back taxes of as much

as \$19,000 and left an estate valued at more than \$80,000, a large amount then. The auditor alleged that Hood had earlier "plead with tears streaming down his face that he was poor." Whether true or not, the tax claim was settled for some \$13,400, the largest such delinquent tax collection in county history at the time.

Not much attention was given to landscaping the park until six years later, and over the years since then, various organizations, garden clubs, individuals, and the City of Perrysburg have helped make the place attractive with planted trees, shrubs and flowers.

One large blue spruce tree planted at the entrance to the park in 1976 when Perrysburg celebrated its 160th birthday, is the town's official Christmas tree.

The statue is registered in the Smithsonian's American Art & Sculpture Catalog #IAS-OH000072.

When visiting Hood Park, don't fail to read the bronze plaque (donated by Historic Perrysburg, Inc.) behind the statue at the river overlook. It tells of all the history that has taken place within view of there.

Things You Should Know About Perrysburg, Ohio

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HOOD PARK At The River Overlook



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