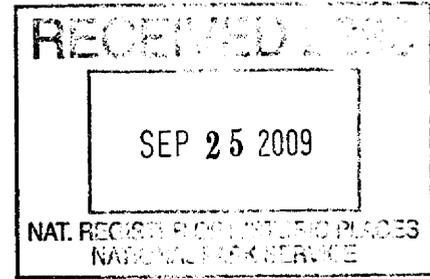


United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name **Indian statue**
other names/site number **"Black Hawk" statue**

2. Location

street & number **Lowden Memorial State Park** Not for publication
1411 North River Road
city or town **Oregon** vicinity
state **Illinois** code **IL** county **Ogle** code **141** zip code **61061**

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Cherie E. Zabel *DSHPO* *9.21.09*
Signature of certifying official Date

Illinois Historic Preservation Agency

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau American Indian Tribe

Name of Property **Indian/"Black Hawk" statue**

County and State **Ogle County, IL**

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:	Signature of the Keeper	Date of Action	
<input type="checkbox"/> entered in the National Register <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.	<u>Barbara Wyatt</u>	<u>11-5-09</u>	
<input type="checkbox"/> determined eligible for the National Register <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.			_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined not eligible for the National Register			_____
<input type="checkbox"/> removed from the National Register			_____
<input type="checkbox"/> other (explain):			_____

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing
_____	_____ buildings
_____	_____ sites
_____	_____ structures
<u>1</u>	_____ objects
<u>1</u>	_____ Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register **NA**

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.) **NA**

Name of Property **Indian/"Black Hawk" statue**

County and State **Ogle County, IL**

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION AND CULTURE/work of art

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

RECREATION AND CULTURE/work of art

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

NA: work of art

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

Foundation **Concrete**

Roof **(none)**

Walls **(none)**

other **Concrete (statue)**

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

(See Continuation Sheets)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

Art

Period of Significance **1911**

Significant Dates **1911**

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation **NA**

Architect/Builder **Taft, Lorado Z.**

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

(See Continuation Sheets)

Name of Property **Indian/"Black Hawk" statue**

County and State **Ogle County, IL**

9. Major Bibliographical References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

(See Continuation Sheets)

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.

previously listed in the National Register

previously determined eligible by the National Register

designated a National Historic Landmark

recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____

recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data

State Historic Preservation Office

Other State agency

Federal agency

Local government

University

Other

Name of repository **Department of Natural Resources, Illinois State Archives, Springfield, IL;
Lorado Taft Papers, University Archives, University of Illinois, Urbana, IL**

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property **Less than one acre**

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone Easting Northing Zone Easting Northing

1 **16 306878 4656200** 3 _____

2 _____ 4 _____

See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

The land under the base of the statue including the below-ground entrance.

Boundary Justification

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

The boundary includes the original and only location of the statue.

Name of Property **Indian/"Black Hawk" statue**

County and State **Ogle County, IL**

11. Form Prepared By

name/title **Ted Hild** consultant for

organization **Illinois Department of Natural Resources** date **May, 2009**
Office of Realty and Environmental Planning

street & number **One Natural Resources Way** telephone **217-524-3759**

city or town **Springfield** state **Illinois** zip code **62702-1271**

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:
Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name **Illinois Department of Natural Resources**

street & number **One Natural Resources Way** telephone **217-785-0075**

city or town **Springfield** state **Illinois** zip code **62702-1271**

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

**Indian/Black Hawk Statue
Ogle County, Illinois**

Section 7 Page 1

Section 7. Description

Lorado Taft's statute of an American Indian is located on the east bluff of the Rock River in Lowden State Park approximately one mile north of the city of Oregon in the north central part of the state. The full-length figure stands with folded arms and is wrapped in a blanket. The visage, turned about forty-five degrees from the line of the shoulders and facing southwest, peers from between two thick braids of hair as if to contemplate the river valley and hilly land that make up the topography of northwestern Illinois. The statue is forty-eight feet four inches tall and rests upon a pedestal measuring fourteen feet eight inches. Roughly four feet of the pedestal is above ground while the larger part extends to bedrock.¹ Its color is grayish white. The base, which had one step of approximately eight inches, is faced with limestone laid up in ordinary mortar. There is shrubbery in front of the limestone, and the entire ensemble is surrounded by a three feet high, black metal fence. There are interpretive signs inside the fence on the front and on the left side.

The statue and pedestal are made entirely of reinforced, poured-in-place concrete. The thickness of the concrete varies from eight inches to three feet. The concrete was poured in one continuous pour for twenty-four hours a day for ten days under sub-freezing conditions in December, 1910. The base, however, had been poured earlier a month earlier and given time to cure in order to support the 100-ton statue. The statue has a hollow, cylindrical core six feet in diameter running from the level area inside the folded arms forty-one feet down into the base. The bottom of the core is accessible from a stairway leading down from an opening in the ground a few yards away from the back. For years the stairway was left open and vulnerable to the public, weather effects, and vermin. A steel cover was added in 1945. The opening at the top of the core has always been capped or sealed although moisture has been able to penetrate it at various times.

The bulk of the statue is ordinary concrete, but it was made with an outer layer comprised of screened pink granite chips to give it a lively cast and luster. This layer was two to three inches thick and was poured the

¹ Recent measurements were made during the summer of 2008 as part of the most recent study of conditions. Anne T. Sullivan, *Report of Conditions with Recommendations Lorado Taft's Blackhawk Statue*, Report prepared by Thornton Tomasetti Inc., for the Dillon Foundation, Sterling, Illinois, December, 2008.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

**Indian/Black Hawk Statue
Ogle County, Illinois**

Section 7 Page 2

same time as the ordinary concrete after a method had been devised to allow the two types of concrete to bond without blending. Section 8, Significance, provides a more detailed description of the statue's construction.

A recent examination concluded that the main body of the statue from the shoulders and folded arms down is in stable condition except for a few delaminated places. The area of the folded arms, however, shows spalling, failed patches from early repair attempts, and evidence of extensive delaminating.² Despite these current conditions, the presence of cracks, patches, mis-matched repairs, and the invisibility of the pink granite covering, the level of detail has not been obscured. The intent of the sculptor and the effect of the statue upon the viewer are undiminished.

Setting

The statute is in Lowden State Park, which encompasses an area of approximately 210 acres and at one time contained an additional sixty-six acres that are now owned by Northern Illinois University. The park is notable for the scenic beauty of its dramatic river bluffs and forested uplands. The statue is on the brow of the bluff and is crowded by trees on three sides. The area directly in front of the statue is clear of all but low foliage to assure an unobstructed view from the upstream and downstream reaches of the river and from the lower-lying uplands across the river to the west. A loop road runs through the park, and where this road approaches less than 100 feet from the statue it has been widened to create a parking lot for about forty automobiles.

Condition and repair history

In consideration of the relative newness of the technology of cement and the climatic conditions in which the statue existed, it is no surprise that the statue required maintenance and periodic repairs like any other exposed structure. As early as 1925 alarmed visitors reported the damaging effects of northern Illinois' freeze-thaw cycle. An observer found that the concrete was "badly disintegrated and in many cases large spalls have been broken off," and urged immediate action since, "if exposed to the weather in its present condition for

² Sullivan, pp. 3-4.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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**Indian/Black Hawk Statue
Ogle County, Illinois**

Section 7 Page 3

another winter, restoration may be extremely difficult and costly.” The sculptor, who at that time still retained control over the property and the statue, was unable or unwilling to address the issue.³

The first episode of extensive repairs took place within months of the State of Illinois’ acquisition of the property in 1945 when it was turned into a state park. With money earmarked in the funds appropriated for the purchase the Department of Public Works, the agency that managed state parks at that time, hired John Prasuhn to make repairs. Prasuhn had been in charge of the construction of the statue thirty-five years earlier and consequently was familiar with it. He filled the cracks and unfortunately sealed the opening at the top of the core, which encouraged moisture inside by reducing ventilation. He also covered it with Ceresit, a waterproofing sealant for masonry, which had been used in the original construction. The product may or not have been helpful during its useful life.⁴ Originally the base of the statue was faced with limestone, laid up randomly with rounded corners. Because it was failing, Prasuhn removed it altogether along with the top eight inches of the poured concrete leaving it with the appearance of a plain, concrete block. The removal of the top material required re-sculpting the bottom of the blanket and the left toe, which protruded from the bottom of the blanket⁵

Subsequent improvements were made with the installation of floodlights in 1947 and also with new landscaping in 1952 around the statue that called for a stone wall, stone steps, and some patching of the statue, none of which posed any threat to the statue’s integrity.⁶ In any case by the early 1970s the statue was ready once again to undergo repairs to rectify deteriorating conditions.

³ Charles A. Reid to Lorado Taft, March 10, 1925, “Indian Statue” file, Box 14, Lorado Taft Papers, Record Series 26/20/16, University Archives, University of Illinois-Urbana-Champaign. Reid represented the Chicago office of the Wertz Company, an engineering and contracting firm with a specialty in masonry restoration.

⁴ Caleb W. Christopher, “Lorado Taft’s Indian Statue ‘Black Hawk,’” Unpublished paper, School of the Art Institute of Chicago, 1998, p. 13. Christopher located a 1927 report on waterproofing conducted at the University of Minnesota concluding that all waterproofing at that time was unreliable. Ceresit is a white ammonium oleate invented in 1908 and is still available, although it may be assumed that the formulation has changed somewhat in the decades since 1945.

⁵ Robert Marti, “Historic Structures Report and Restoration Study Lorado Z. Taft/Blackhawk Monument (1911),” Unpublished report, April 11, 1986, Site files, Lowden Memorial State Park, Oregon, Illinois, pp. 7-14.

⁶ “Lowden Memorial-Black Hawk Statue vouchers 1945-47” file, Division of Parks and Memorials 1890-1978, Department of Conservation Record Group 244.002, Illinois State Archives and various correspondence between state officials and the Chicago firm of Atkinson and Fitz, summer-fall, 1952, “Lowden Memorial” file, Parks and Memorials 1921-1957, Department of Conservation Record Group 244.002, Illinois State Archives.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

**Indian/Black Hawk Statue
Ogle County, Illinois**

Section 7 Page 4

In 1973 the state Department of Conservation, the agency descended from the Department of Public Works, determined that the continued cracking was not serious. Nonetheless curators decided on a major project to clean and repair the entire statue. The state sought the technical expertise of the Portland Cement Association, which recommended a “gentle sandblasting,” followed by a scrub-down with detergent. The statue could then undergo “bagging,” which is the application of a slurry of cement, water, and fine sand that is laid on with a rubber float or a burlap bag.⁷ This treatment filled the cracks and gave the statue a uniform color, but covered the original outer pink granite concrete layer. The pink layer had become mottled, broken up, and disfigured by cracks and spalls. Curators at the state decided to trade-off the damaged original material for a better, uniform appearance.

In 1986 the state hired curator Robert Marti to investigate conditions and make recommendations for a new round of repair and conservation. Marti concluded that many of the cracks began as flaws from the original concrete pour; the crack across the nose, for example, was probably the result of a cessation of the pour. He also noted that Prasuhn’s capping of the opening at the top of the core had allowed water from rain, snow and ice to pool in the area behind the folded arms. In accordance with Marti’s recommendations, cracks were cleaned out and filled with a suitable epoxy compound and the whole statue was waterproofed again. Following other recommendations the limestone façade was replaced along with the shrubbery in the course of a multi-year project.⁸

In 1990 and 1998, a team from St. Louis-based Washington University Technology Associates, Inc. studied the statue and concluded that the original concrete pour undertaken during adverse temperature conditions and the lack of air circulation were the sources of the gravest problems. In a new restoration project conservators cleaned and refilled cracks with resin, injected resin into the voids created by delaminating,

⁷ Albert Litvin, Portland Cement Association, to Thomas A. Campbell, Department of Conservation, April 5, 1973, “Lowden State Park” file, Parks and Memorials 1958-1978, Department of Conservation Record Group 244.002, Illinois State Archives. Litvin dealt with construction methods in the Association’s Research and Development Laboratory.

⁸ Marti, *passim*; Christopher, pp. 15-16; “Site inventory,” Site files, Lowden Memorial State Park.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

**Indian/Black Hawk Statue
Ogle County, Illinois**

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performed a general cleaning, and installed a new ventilator with a hatch at the top of the core opening.⁹ A waterproofing seal was applied again in 2005.¹⁰

Without precise descriptions of past repairs it is impossible to say when and where a particular repair occurred. The most recent study concludes that

many generations of repair have been made to the area of the statue where the arms cross on the west/front elevation. So many repairs have been made that we question how much original material actually remains. Various repair campaigns result[ed] in differing colors and textures within the patches. In some cases we observed smooth patches (without the exposed aggregate); in other areas we noted a dark pink patch material which may date to the WUTA/Objects Conservation era of repairs. We know that that team went to great lengths to match the aggregate and matrix. Unfortunately, over time the patches no longer match adjacent surfaces.¹¹

Despite the obvious evidence of repaired cracks, mis-matched patches, and the chronically poor condition of the arms, analysts agree that the statue is “in remarkably stable condition” and that “it would be fair to say that the design, details and shape of the statue remain with remarkable clarity.”¹²

Integrity

The statue’s setting possesses high integrity. Minor landscaping measures taken by the State of Illinois such as the installation of a parking lot (sufficiently set back from the statue), concrete walkways, and a low fence to protect the site from erosion and visitor traffic have not interfered with the statue’s place on top of the wooded bluff over the Rock River. In regard to the statue itself there is some expected deterioration shown by cracks. Aside from the replacement of the exterior ground entrance, the replacement of the invisible trap door in the folded arms, some re-shaping of the top of the base, and the “bagged” finish, nothing has affected its integrity

⁹ Washington University Technology Associates, Inc., “Report to the State of Illinois Capital Development Board,” Unpublished report, 1990, referenced in Christopher, pp. 16-17. The St. Louis company had its origins in the Washington University physics department where materials analysis led to advanced techniques for sculpture preservation.

¹⁰ Various correspondence and receipts, Site files, Lowden Memorial State Park.

¹¹ Sullivan, p. 7.

¹² Sullivan, p. 8, Christopher, p. 17.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

Indian/Black Hawk Statue
Ogle County, Illinois

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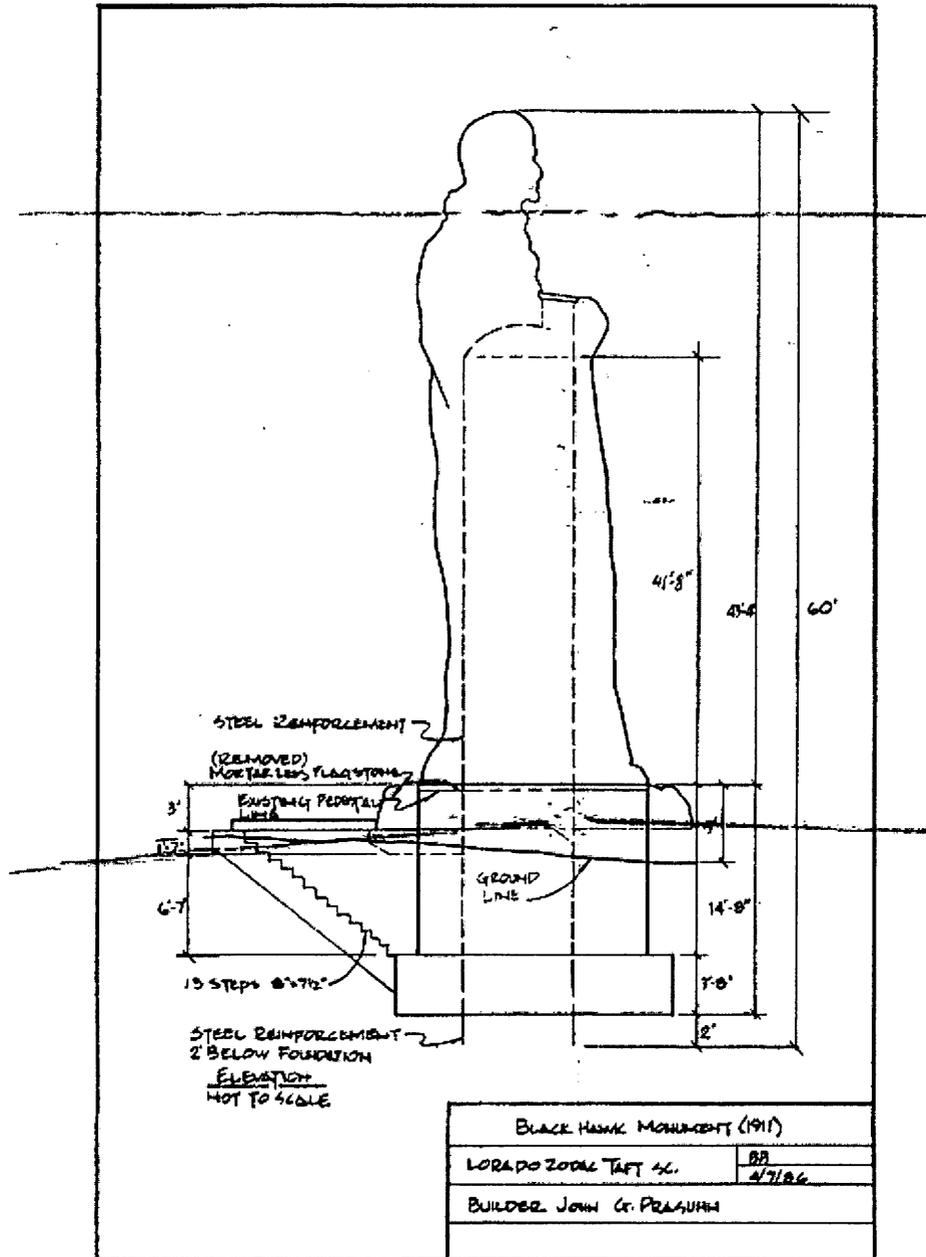


Figure 1: Statue in section drawn for 1986 Marti report.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

Indian/Black Hawk Statue
Ogle County, Illinois

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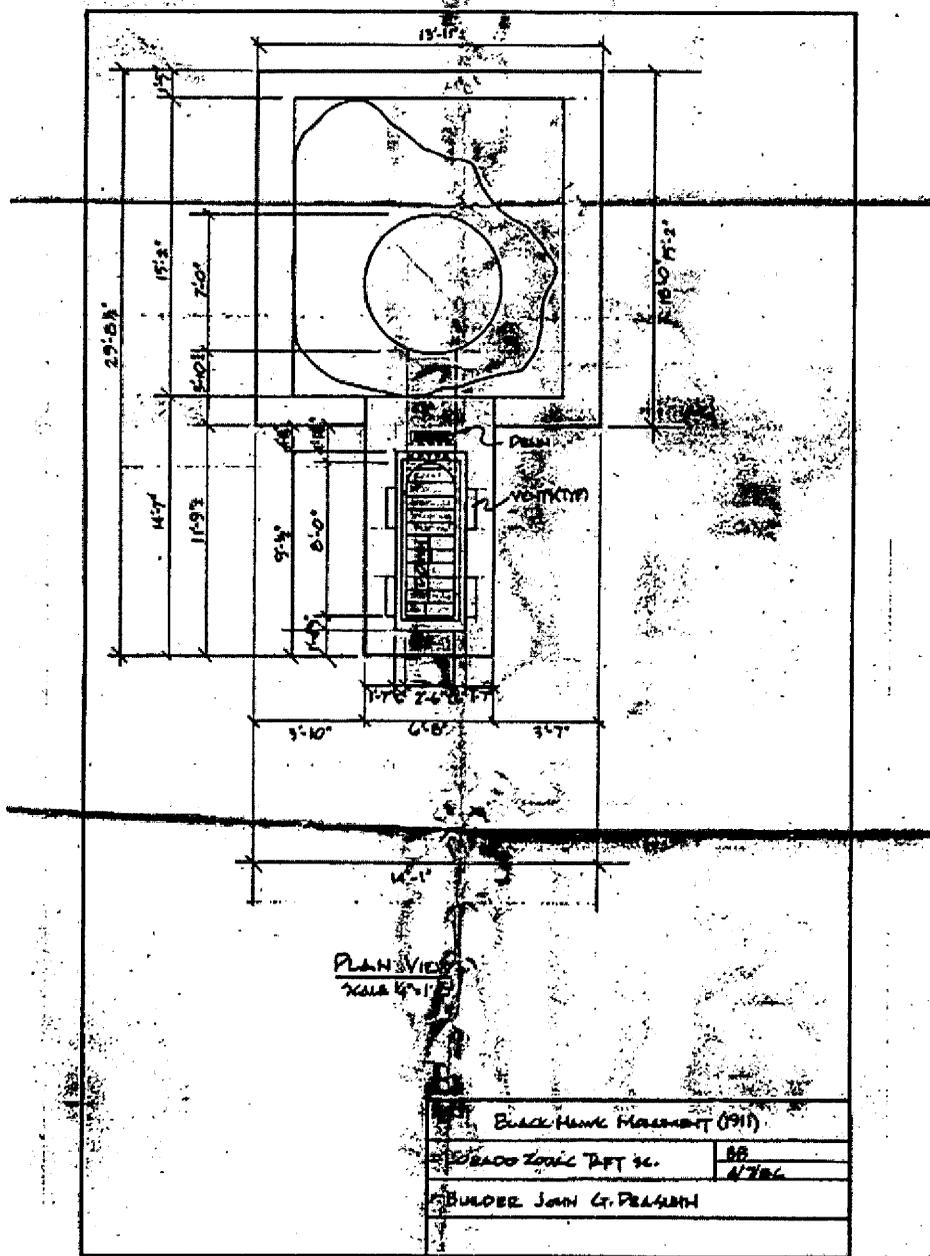


Figure 2: Statue in plan drawn for 1986 Marti report.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

Indian/Black Hawk Statue
Ogle County, Illinois

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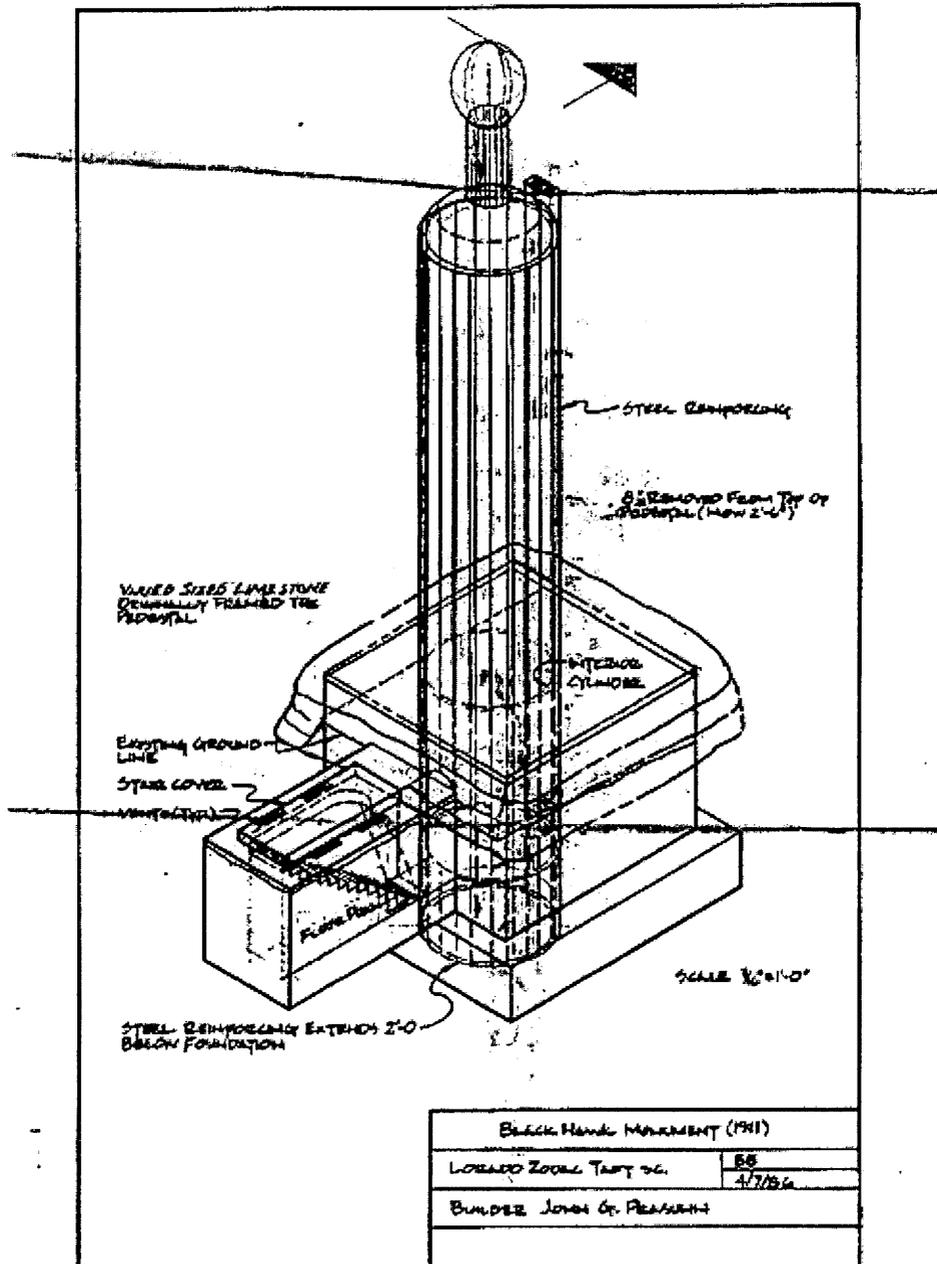


Figure 3: Projection of steel reinforcement and base drawn for 1986 Marti report.

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CONTINUATION SHEET**

**Indian/Black Hawk Statue
Ogle County, Illinois**

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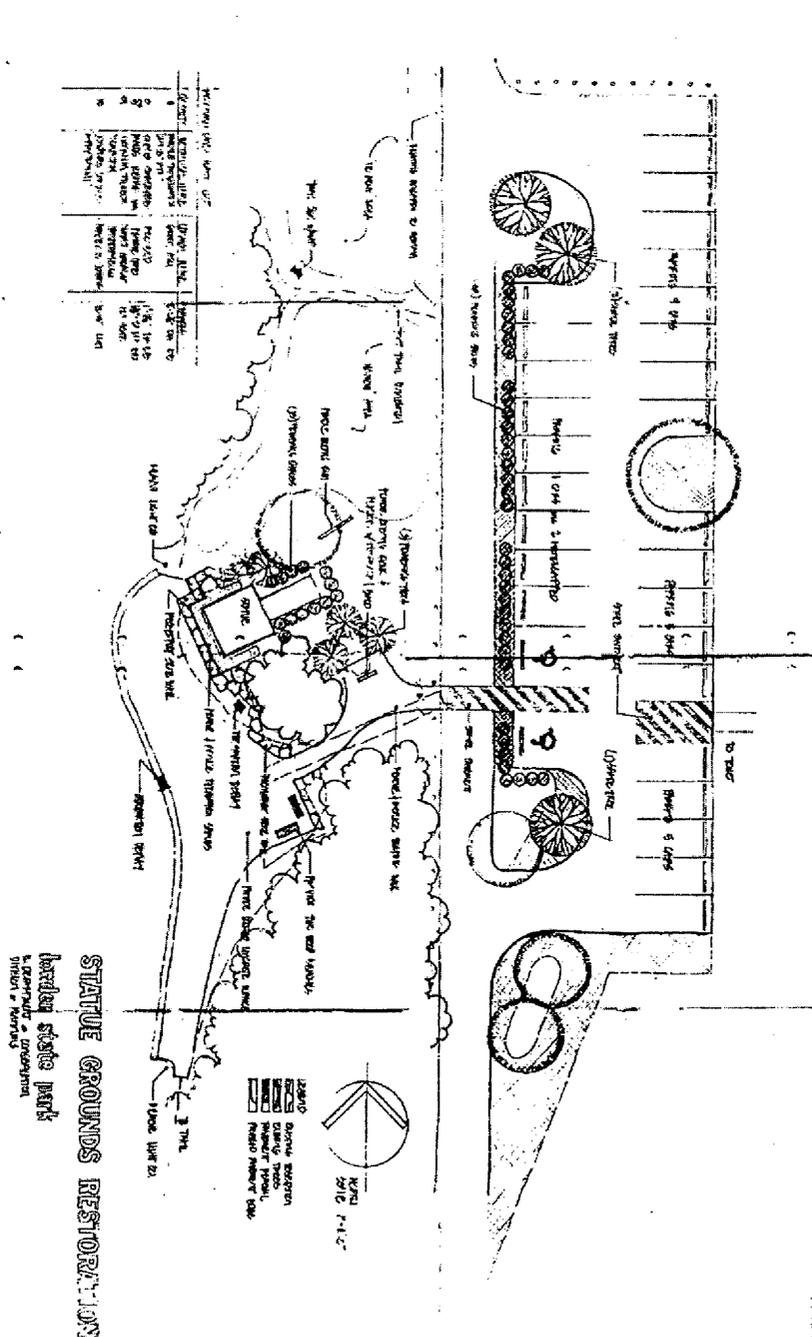


Figure 4: Site plan 2009

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**Indian/Black Hawk Statue
Ogle County, Illinois**

Section 8 Page 10

Section 8. Significance

Lorado Taft's Indian statue known as Black Hawk is nationally significant under Criterion C in the area of art for its contribution to the history of American sculpture. At forty-eight feet high it was the largest monolithic poured concrete statue in the United States and announced a new use for modern cement in art. It was one of the most important pieces of public sculpture in its time, attracting international attention. It is also significant under Criterion C as the work of a master, Lorado Zadoc Taft. Taft was a national figure in the United States art world from the 1890s to his death in 1936. Even as a traditionalist, his theories and teachings on art were widespread and influential through most of the twentieth century. His sculptural work found patrons from coast to coast, and his monumental public sculptures were well known and well regarded.

Creation of the statue

Sculptor Lorado Taft had devoted much of his career to promoting the idea of public sculpture, which led rather naturally to notions of large monuments addressing universal themes. He had become interested in giant sculptures as early as 1905, a few years before undertaking the concrete Indian statue. During this period he also conceived "Fountain of Time," considered by some to be his masterpiece, but which was not executed until the early 1920s.¹ Upon observing workers erecting a large chimney for the Art Institute of Chicago by a process of a continuous concrete pour, sometime in 1908 he arrived at the decision to create a large statue of a Native American made entirely of concrete, a material that was gaining popularity for its plasticity and durability. Used extensively for construction projects in ancient Rome, concrete was making a comeback around the end of the nineteenth century. Its use as an art medium was untried.

¹ Ada Bartlett Taft, *Lorado Taft Sculptor and Citizen*, (Greensboro, NC: Mary Taft Smith, 1946), pp. 34-36. This book is a memoir/biography written by Taft's wife and printed privately by their daughter.

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**Indian/Black Hawk Statue
Ogle County, Illinois**

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During the summer of 1908 he created an eight-inch plaster sketch of the proposed statue. John Prasuhn, Taft's student and studio assistant, took the sketch and made a twenty-four-inch and a six-foot model, the latter to be used as the actual working model. The working model would be used to "point-out" or transfer proportionally enlarged measurements to the actual mould. The models and sketches were created in Taft's Chicago Midway Studios then moved out to the Eagle's Nest camp, an artists' summer refuge near Oregon, where the final product would be placed on the Rock River bluff.

The Eagle's Nest Association was formed by a group of Chicago-based artists and intellectuals as a retreat from the oppression of summer in the city. Such behavior was a customary part of artists' lifestyle. The group, led by Lorado Taft and his family, included such luminaries as novelists Henry Fuller and Hamlin Garland, who was Taft's brother-in-law, architect Irving Pond, who was Taft's close personal friend, plus Oliver Grover, Ralph Clarkson, and Nellie Walker. The group originally located their retreat in 1895 at the farm of their acquaintance Charles Mulligan at Bass Lake near Lake Michigan in northern Indiana, but the fear of malaria prompted a search for a more salubrious location. The search ended with Wallace Heckman, an attorney and business manager for the University of Chicago, who owned a 275-acre farm on the east bank of the Rock River a mile above Oregon, ninety miles west of Chicago. The farm already had established literary associations as a place connected to a visit in 1843 by Margaret Fuller, the famous Eastern transcendentalist, feminist, and critic. Indeed, a small island in the river at that place is named for Margaret Fuller. Much of the property was heavily wooded and included unusually high and scenic bluffs along the river.² The group formed the Eagle's Nest Association that leased from Heckman approximately fourteen acres along the bluffs in 1898. Heckman maintained a large house on the estate that he named Ganymede in keeping with the neo-classicism of the period. The house was demolished in 1963.³ The colonists or campers, as they variously called themselves,

² Federal Writers' Project, *Illinois: A Descriptive and Historical Guide*, "American Guide Series," (Chicago: A.C. McClure Co., 1939), p. 458; Timothy Garvey, *Public Sculptor: Lorado Taft and the Beautification of Chicago*, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988), p. 106.

³ Richard Hagen, historical curator for the Department of Conservation, to Sam Parr, director of the Department of Conservation, October 30, 1963, "Lowden Miscellaneous, Boonton and Hagen" file, Parks and Memorials 1958-1978, Illinois Department of

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CONTINUATION SHEET**

**Indian/Black Hawk Statue
Ogle County, Illinois**

Section 8 Page 12

at first lived in tents and tentative cabins. By 1902 there was a stone "camp house" then thereafter individual family cottages usually built by the occupants themselves. Hamlin Garland stayed in a teepee. The place was named Eagle's Nest because there was a large tree on the bluff that supposedly held an eagle's nest at one time.⁴ Taft thought that Eagle's Nest would be the perfect place for the colossal concrete statue.

In 1910 Heckman and Taft erected some canvas and lumber in the back of a wagon that they moved to various places around the bluff while evaluating sight lines, elevations, and access to determine the best site for the statue. That summer the models were moved out to Eagle's Nest from Chicago, the materials acquired, and construction of the plaster prototype begun. Material for the statue itself consisted of approximately 412 barrels of Portland cement, thirty-eight one-inch steel reinforcing bars to run the vertical length of the statue together with unknown numbers of half-inch and quarter-inch rods that would go into 238 yards of concrete, and twenty tons of pink granite chips for the outside covering.⁵ As Ada Taft put it, the ground was covered with "great pieces of lumber, enormous quantities of twisted steel rods, yards and yards of wire netting and burlap." There were also two pointing-out machines for enlarging the model, a specially constructed derrick, and a 5000-gallon tank for water that had to be pumped to the top of the bluff from the river and heated.⁶

Measurements from the six-foot model were projected by the pointing-out machines to create a full-sized plaster prototype. The prototype was made in horizontal sections about three feet thick then hoisted into place like a stack of sardine cans. The mould made of burlap, wire netting, and plaster was laid on top the prototype, which was also made of plaster and burlap. When the plaster prototype was removed, the mould, with the steel reinforcing rods inserted, was left standing empty, supported by a system of heavy wood timbers. The clay prototype for the head of the statue was made in one piece, not in horizontal sections, because of the level of detail desired for the face. Taft himself took charge of making the head. It was raised into place and

Conservation Collection, Record Group 244.002, Illinois State Archives. Hagen had determined that the house was too badly deteriorated to save and had no historical value.

⁴ Ada Taft, p. 43.

⁵ Robert F. Marti, "Historic Structures Report and Restoration Study of Lorado Zadoc Taft/The Blackhawk Monument (1911)," Unpublished report, April 11, 1986, for the Illinois Department of Conservation.

⁶ Ada Taft, 54.

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CONTINUATION SHEET**

**Indian/Black Hawk Statue
Ogle County, Illinois**

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the mould carefully shaped around it. The next step was to fill the mould with liquid concrete, let it cure, then remove the mould to reveal the finished statue. Winter was hard upon the workers by this time, however, and a decision had to be made either to proceed or to wait until the following spring of 1911 to pour the concrete. The decision was made to start the pour immediately because of the riskiness of exposing the empty mould to the freeze-thaw cycle and winds of a Midwestern winter.

The mould had to be filled in one continuous pour of concrete to avoid faults and future fractures. Thus the workforce was organized into two shifts of fourteen men working twenty-four hours a day until the pour was complete, which took ten days. On the first day of pouring, December 20, 1910, the temperature was near zero. The engine that drove the pump that lifted the water from the river also heated the water. Between the hot water, the ambient heat inside the shroud-like cover of the mould, and the natural heat produced from the chemical reaction in the concrete, the concrete kept flowing and the crews had a tolerable work environment. Working from the top down and from inside the core the men guided the flow of the concrete. The addition of the crushed pink granite was accomplished by holding a piece of sheet tin two to three inches back from the edge of the mould and pouring the regular concrete into the inside of the tin and the concrete with the pink granite into the outside to prevent one from invading the other. When the concrete settled down the tin was lifted up and prepared for the next round. In this way the pink outer layer was actually part of the whole concrete mass rather than pargetting that could easily delaminate and fall off like stucco. The pouring went as well as could be expected under the circumstance of extreme weather, but when the level of concrete had reached about to the bridge of the nose the engine broke down and everything came to a halt. By the time repairs were made the concrete had set up enough that the concrete laid on top of it did not bond or mix thoroughly. Consequently there is a fracture on the bridge of the nose; the extent of the fracture cannot be determined, but it seems no fatal damage resulted from the unscheduled shutdown. Upon completion of the pour in the middle of the afternoon on December 30 there was nothing left to do but wait several months for the

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concrete to cure then take away the mould. No one would know until then whether the effort had been successful or not.⁷

Creating a statue of such large size and with an untried material like cement was beyond Taft's knowledge and experience. Making this statue was not like chipping away at a block of marble in his studio. Taft had thirty years' experience casting metals, but for this enterprise he had to enlist the services of other disciplines. One helper was Leland Summers, a Chicago engineer and a friend of Taft. Summers' calculations for weight, wind pressure, soil compaction, and gravity helped determine the size and shape of the statue and especially its base. The most significant help came from John G. Prasuhn, one of Taft's students and an assistant at the Midway Studios. Before turning to art Prasuhn had worked for a construction company that built concrete highway bridges.⁸ He may have been the only person in Chicago's art world with a firm footing in concrete knowledge. Taft conceived, designed, and organized the project, but he put Prasuhn in charge of it, duly acknowledging his indispensable role when he stated publically that

[good] fortune sent to me John G. Prasuhn, a young sculptor of the Chicago Art Institute, and who knew all about cement. He became interested in my project and undertook the enlargement and cement work. Of the latter I knew nothing and depended absolutely upon him. Thus my share in the work was practically limited to the six-foot model. Mr. Prasuhn occupied himself with the details, and ever since our colossus was started has put in most of this time here [at Eagle's Nest], often working nights as well as days.... The statue is a memorial to Mr. Prasuhn, as well as to the Indian⁹

Prasuhn also functioned as the chief administrator for the project. Though Taft had ultimate control over the entire project and was responsible for funding it, there were many mundane tasks like room, board, and pay for twenty-four workers, acquisition of the construction materials, and maintenance of the machinery. When Taft

⁷ The facts of the story of the actual construction of the mould and pouring of the concrete as presented here are found principally in Ada Taft's memoir, John G. Prasuhn's letters to Taft (see below) and Prasuhn's article, "A Novel Use of Cement in Sculpture," *Scientific American*, Vol. 68 (September 7, 1912), pp. 192ff. Robert Marti also compiled interesting facts about the construction, which he probably gleaned from the local Oregon newspaper.

⁸ Ada Taft, pp. 53-56.

⁹ Frank O. Lowden and Wallace Heckman, *Lorado Taft's Indian Statue "Black Hawk." An Account of the Unveiling Ceremonies at Eagle's Nest, July 1, 1911* (Chicago: privately printed, 1912), pp. 95-96.

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was in Chicago, which was most of the time, Prasuhn ran the project and communicated with Taft by frequent letters.¹⁰

Taft wanted the statue to be his gift to the people of Illinois so he intended to fund the project out of his own pocket. There is no evidence that anyone connected to the project undertook any fundraising efforts, yet Taft certainly welcomed the non-cash contributions of his Eagle's Nest landlord Wallace Heckman. The Universal Portland Cement Company, based in Chicago, also offered to donate all the cement Taft would need, although Taft would have to pay for shipping and handling. It was rumored later that a neighbor may have donated five thousand dollars to the project. The neighbor was Frank O. Lowden, a successful Chicago attorney, future governor of Illinois, future presidential candidate, and at the time a member of the United States Congress who, like Heckman, maintained an estate near Oregon. Lowden's financial support for the statue cannot be verified, but his avid endorsement of it was very public.¹¹

When the spring of 1911 came the concrete was judged cured and the mould ordered removed. Taft wanted to start at the top since the head was the most detailed part of the statue and failure there would mean failure for the entire work. Assistants carefully chipped away the mould around the mouth and found no flaws. They cleared the mould from the rest of the head and then the whole statue and found no flaws.¹² All that was left to do was clean up the site and prepare for the dedication. On Saturday, July 1, 1911, five hundred people, including two hundred who came by train from Chicago, attended the dedication ceremony to hear poems read,

¹⁰ The letters, written between November 6, 1910, and January 7, 1911, are written in a large, confident scrawl on unlined paper and can be found in the Lorado Taft Papers, Record Series 20/26/16, University Archives, University of Illinois-Urbana-Champaign.

¹¹ Lowden was just completing his last of three terms in Congress when the statue was completed. He would serve as governor from 1917 to 1921 and would barely miss nomination as the Republican candidate in the 1920 election, which ultimately went to Warren G. Harding. The state park in which the statue is located is of course named for Lowden, in a sense making Lowden responsible for the statue's passing into public ownership. See the report of the Lowden Memorial Commission in "Lowden Memorial" files, Parks and Memorial 1921-1957, Department of Conservation Collection, Record Group 244.002, Illinois State Archives. See also Ada Taft, *ibid*, and Robert H. Moulton, "Lorado Taft and His Work As a Sculptor," *Review of Reviews and World's Work*, Vol. XLV (January-June, 1912), p. 723. Moulton would go on to write a number of articles about Taft and his work, in particular the Indian statue, to which Moulton refers as "a labor of love."

¹² Prasuhn, pp. 193-194.

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formal expressions of praise from dignitaries, declamations by descendants of local Native Americans, and genuinely humble remarks from Lorado Taft.¹³

The significance of the statue was noted immediately. Within days of the dedication newspapers throughout the United States and Europe ran stories about the colossus overlooking the Rock River. Readers of daily papers in, among other places, Chicago, Boston, New Orleans, Philadelphia, Detroit, and New York learned about the world's largest concrete statue. The news spread across the ocean where the story was reported in England, Spain, and Italy.¹⁴ In addition to its significant contribution to art the statue also attracted attention for the magnitude of the project and the unusual aspect of its being a giant statue made of concrete. Thus *Popular Mechanics* heralded "the world's biggest Indian" in its report stating that it "marks an epoch in statue-building, as it is not only a work of art but an example of mechanical genius and engineering skill." John Prasuhn specifically highlighted the construction technique when he described the creative process for the cover story in the prestigious magazine *Scientific American*.¹⁵ The *Ohio Architect, Engineer and Builder* celebrated the application of concrete in an artistic project, optimistically (and baselessly) pointing out that concrete "is practically everlasting and indestructible."¹⁶

The statue was and is an object of wonderment. From the time of its dedication up to the present the statue has been represented in travel guides and collections of roadside attractions. The story of its creation and

¹³ All the proceedings were recorded then printed in a suede-bound, commemorative volume funded by Frank Lowden and Wallace Heckman in a limited edition of 500 copies. The book, entitled *Lorado Taft's Indian Statue "Black Hawk,"* (see note 9, above) was dedicated to Chicago's Cliff Dwellers Club whose members were mostly architects. The local press, the *Ogle County Republican* of Oregon, had been following the story from the beginning and provided the most complete coverage of the dedication ceremony in its July 6, 1911, issue.

¹⁴ Clippings in "Indian Statue," Box 14, Lorado Taft Papers, Record Series 20/26/16, University Archives, University of Illinois-Champaign-Urbana. Most of the clippings are undated and a number are identical, suggesting that writer Robert Moulton was able to syndicate the story. The European press included *Carrier Della Sera* (Milan), *La Actualidad* (Barcelona), and the *Sphere* (London). Curiously there are no clipping from newspapers in France, for which Taft had a long-time affinity and many connections.

¹⁵ "Colossal Indian Statue Built of Concrete," *Popular Mechanics* (March, 1911), pp. 413-414; John Prasuhn, "A Novel Use of Cement in Sculpture," *Scientific American*, Vol. 68 (September 7, 1912), pp. 192ff.

¹⁶ "Statue of Black Hawk," *Ohio Architect, Engineer and Builder*, Vol. XXIV, No. VII (July, 1914), pp. 46-47.

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public reception makes it a nationally significant landmark that continues to draw interest.¹⁷ The statue as seen in the context of American sculpture and Lorado Taft's body of work is discussed below.

After the creation

The statue continued gazing down the river towards the city of Oregon a mile away, but the Eagle's Nest Association came to an end in 1942. The colony's buildings deteriorated and no one wanted to use them. After Wallace Heckman's death his mansion, like the colony buildings along with the rest of the property, also suffered from the decay of disuse. The death of Frank Lowden in 1943, however, set in motion a process that resulted in the statue's public ownership, which became closely related to the statue's condition and history of repairs as outlined in Section 7, Description, above.

Lowden had been a prominent state and national figure. When he died the immediate response was to search for a way to commemorate his life and service to Illinois and the nation. To that end, in June, 1943, a state supported commission with a \$25,000 budget was appointed to come up with a suitable memorial. The five-member panel included Governor Dwight Green, two citizens from Oregon, and two citizens from Chicago. The commission decided that the 275-acre Heckman property should be acquired and made into a state park dedicated to Lowden's memory because of its proximity to Lowden's beloved estate, the scenic river bluffs, the site of Eagle's Nest (as decrepit as it was), and Taft's statue. Initially the state did not want to purchase the entire 275 acres, but when Heckman's widow refused to sell nothing less than the entire property with all the buildings for \$50,000, the local community raised \$13,000 and the state was able to find additional money in its budget. The property transfer was effected in 1945, and the Illinois Department of Public Works began the transformation of the site to Frank O. Lowden Memorial State Park, which it remains. In 1951 sixty-six acres that did not include the statue but did include the remains of the Eagle's Nest camp were transferred to

¹⁷ The statue is included in such references as the Federal Writers' Project "American Guide Series," and books like Stuart Liege, *Tales and Trails of Illinois* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2002). The statue is dealt with more academically in Karla Ann Marling, *The Colossus of Roads: Myth and Symbolism along the American Highway* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000).

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Northern Illinois State Teachers College (now Northern Illinois University) for use for teachers' outdoor education programs. The college named their new acreage the Lorado Taft Field Campus.¹⁸ The statue remained inside the boundaries of the park that is now owned and maintained by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, successor agency to the Department of Public Works.

Naming the statue

Lorado Taft apparently did not give his statue a name. Although it is almost universally referred to as "Black Hawk," Taft neither named it that nor intended it as a representation of Black Hawk. He was the leader of a regional band of the Sac-Fox tribe noted for the Black Hawk War of 1832 that was fought over land use and treaty violations. The Rock River valley was the band's home ground until their removal to Iowa. Denizens of the area strongly identified Black Hawk and his people with that area and the rest of northwest Illinois. The sculptor said that in designing the statue, "I did not study any one type of race of Indians. It is a composite of the Foxes, and the Sacs, the Sioux, and the Mohawks, and, in short, it represents the Indian personality."¹⁹ He is known to have referred to it as "the Indian," "my Indian," and even "the colossus," but at this time there is no evidence that he ever settled on a name.²⁰ Some secondary literature has suggested that the statue's name was "The Eternal Indian," but there is no conclusive link to Taft himself.²¹ It may be a case of confusing the name of his statue "Eternal Silence" in Graceland Cemetery in Chicago. People close to the project knew that it was not named "Black Hawk," but none used any other particular name. In the present day many writers and

¹⁸ Charles P. Casey, Director, Department of Public Works to Attorney General Ivan Elliott, December 4, 1950, "Lowden Memorial Proposed Park" file, Parks and Memorials 1921-1957, Illinois Department of Conservation Collection, Record Group 244.002, Illinois State Archives; Lieutenant Governor Sherwood Dixon to Governor Adlai Stevenson, May 8, 1951, "Lowden Memorial" file, Parks and Memorials 1921-1957; Leslie A. Holmes, President, Northern Illinois State Teachers, College to Charles P. Casey, August 23, 1951, "Lowden Memorial" file, Parks and Memorials 1921-1957. When the property was to be transferred to the teachers college in 1951 all that was left of Eagle's Nest were ten houses in various degrees of disrepair with leaky roofs, no windows or doors, and extensive vandalism as reported in "NISTC Lorado Taft Field Campus Proposal," in "Lowden Memorial" file, Parks and Memorials 1921-1957.

¹⁹ Quoted in Theodore Hild, "Mistaken Identity, the Statue at Lowden State Park, *Historic Illinois*, (October, 1998), pp. 9-12.

²⁰ He used these identifiers at the dedication ceremony (Lowden and Heckman, p. 95) and in correspondence found in his papers in the University of Illinois Archives.

²¹ For example, the issue is mentioned in Sullivan, p. 4.

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researchers acknowledge the mistaken identity, but in common parlance the statue is nonetheless referred to as “Black Hawk” even though the features of the statue and the real Black Hawk were nothing alike. The public may have been primed for the error because statues customarily represented particular individuals rather than a sentiment or an abstract quality.

The misnomer has its own history that started even before work commenced on the statue. In 1909 when Taft was assembling his resources, his cement supplier called the proposed statue “Black Hawk.” During construction John Prasuhn called it “Black Hawk” and later asserted, perhaps wishfully, that the statue was often called “The Spirit of Black Hawk.” It was called “Black Hawk” at the dedication ceremony. The reporter for the local newspaper, the *Ogle County Republican*, acknowledged that it was only a representation of the “Indian personality” but had to concede that it was being called “Black Hawk” by “common consent.” Finally, after about two years even Lorado Taft resignedly called it “Black Hawk.”²²

Life and career of Lorado Taft

Lorado Zadoc Taft was a nationally recognized artist of the Beaux-Arts tradition, a leading advocate of public sculpture, and a teacher whose writing and lecturing played a large role in art in the United States in the twentieth century. His sculpture stands on display in places from coast to coast, and his notable *History of American Sculpture*, published in 1903, was used well into the second half of the century. Although modern tastes have changed, he is still regarded as a master.

He was born April 29, 1860, in the small town of Elmwood, about halfway between Peoria and Galesburg in the northwestern part of Illinois. His polymath father took a faculty position teaching geology at the newly opened Illinois Industrial University in Urbana that later became the University of Illinois. He was

²² For the earliest know misuse of the name see the letter from J.P. Beck, Universal Portland Cement Co. to Lorado Taft, June 21, 1909, “Indian Statue” file, Box 14, Lorado Taft Papers. Writing in 1945 Taft’s widow, Ada, used the name “Black Hawk” in the biography of her late husband (Ada Taft, pp. 52ff) and in the Taft family papers at the University of Illinois it is routinely called “Black Hawk. For Prasuhn’s usage see his letters to Taft at the University of Illinois and his *Scientific American* article. For the local press coverage see the clipping “Black Hawk Statue Unveiled Saturday,” *Ogle County Republican* (Oregon, Illinois) July 6, 1911, p. 1. Taft used the “Black Hawk” name in response to a letter in May, 1913, in “Letters Received 1910-1929” file, Lorado Taft Papers. Ever the gentleman, he may have used the name out of politeness so as not contradict his correspondent.

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home-schooled until he entered the university from which he was graduated at the age of nineteen. From 1880 to 1883 he studied sculpture at the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris to learn the skills of carving and casting while steeping in the traditions of continental classicism. He returned to the United States in 1884, but returned to Paris from 1885 to 1886. His lengthy education abroad formed the basis for his lifelong understanding and affinity for European and especially French art. He also returned with a desire to help Americans appreciate art and beauty and participate in the development of a strictly American art.²³

In 1886 he returned from France and settled in Chicago. Though he could scarcely afford it he rented studio space on the tenth floor of the Fine Arts Building in the Loop in the heart of the city just down the street from the Art Institute of Chicago, where he would serve on the faculty most of the rest of his life. He had a few large commissions such as the critically well-received statue of former vice president Schuyler Colfax for downtown Indianapolis, but he generally lived hand to mouth on commissions for portrait busts and decorative architectural trim. To secure an income and to pursue his mission to teach people about beauty he taught and lectured at the Art Institute. His studio classes were notable for taking women as students, but his lecturing, which he dubbed "clay talks," and subsequent writing for journals like *Inland Architect* and a regular newspaper column in the *Chicago Record* made him popular.²⁴ These lectures resulted in MacMillan Company publishers approaching him to write his famous *History of American Sculpture*, which was published in New York and London in 1903. It has since gone through five editions and many printings, the last in 1969.²⁵

Chicago's 1893 World's Columbian Exposition took Taft's career up several levels after architect William LeBaron Jenney asked Taft to make the sculptures adorning his Horticulture Building on the fairgrounds. Taft's "Sleep of Flowers" and "Awakening Flowers" flanked the building's entry, attracting

²³ The only biography that deals with Taft's life and all his work is Lewis Waldron Williams' unpublished dissertation, *Lorado Taft: American Sculptor and Art Missionary*, (University of Chicago, 1958). Biographical material for this section is taken largely from Ada Taft's *Lorado Taft Sculptor and Citizen* and Timothy Joseph Garvey, *Public Sculptor: Lorado Taft and the Beautification of Chicago* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988). On promoting beauty see Ada Taft, p. 74.

²⁴ Garvey, pp. 56-62; Ada Taft, 26. Mrs. Taft said that he lectured in every state but Florida. Most of his lectures were given free, but at one time he signed on the national speaking circuit for thirty lectures for \$3000, as reported by Chautauqua impresario C.L. Wagner in *Seeing Stars* (New York: Putnam's, 1940), pp. 61-63.

²⁵ Wayne Craven, *Sculpture in America* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1968), pp. 494-497. For a list of the editions see the Library of Congress catalog on-line <http://catalog.loc.gov/>.

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attention from many, including Fair chief executive Daniel Burnham who also noted Taft's management skills and put him charge of much of the Fair's sculpture. The work at the Fair brought him national fame and made him the region's predominant sculptor. His accomplishment put him in position to be an effective advocate for public sculpture and American art.²⁶ However, as a result of the depression following the Fair large commissions were not forthcoming, although he was able devote much profitable time to teaching, lecturing, and writing. His most productive period followed the economic recovery when he was able to conceive and design his best known works like the Indian statue, the "Columbus Fountain" in Washington, D.C. (1912), the "Fountain of the Great Lakes," Chicago (1913), the "Fountain of Time," Chicago (1922), "Young Lincoln," Urbana (1927), and "Alma Mater," Urbana (1929).²⁷

These projects were undertaken at his new studio about five miles south of the Loop at the University of Chicago's main campus in the Hyde Park neighborhood. In 1906 after twenty years in the Fine Arts Building Taft moved his family and studio to the south side, where he would reside until his death. He acquired an unused brick barn on the Midway Plaisance (the site of the Fair) and moved in two other barns for additions. Initially his family resided at the Hyde Park Hotel but eventually moved into housing attached to the studio itself. Taft's studio system provided facilities for fifteen to twenty-five students at a time, many of them women. It was also the birthplace of careers for a number of future sculptors like Leonard Crunelle, who was working in a coal mine near Decatur, Illinois, while Taft was lecturing there and discovered him.²⁸ It was in these studios, surrounded by his family, that Taft died of a stroke after several years of heart disease on October 30, 1936, at the age of seventy-six. The studio buildings are now owned by the University of Chicago and operated as the Lorado Taft Midway Studios.

Lorado Taft in the context of American sculpture 1880-1930

²⁶ Garvey, p. 10; Craven, p. 495.

²⁷ Tom Armstrong, *et al.*, *200 Years of American Sculpture* (Boston: D.R. Godine, 1976), p. 315.

²⁸ Ada Taft, pp. 28-32.

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In the 1880's bronze and stone portraits were the dominant form of American sculpture. Memorializing the Civil War was still prevalent in the public sector where local subscriptions provided funds for statues of soldiers atop columns in courthouse squares and what sculptor Daniel Chester French referred to as "Prince Albert coat statues."²⁹ As the period progressed, however, the neo-classical ideas of sculptors like Taft, Auguste Saint-Gaudens, Frederick MacMonnies, Leonard Volk, and French replaced the memorials of individuals with figures representing sentiments or symbolizing ideals, which, to be sure, were still conservative and served to celebrate rather than challenge traditional American values. In typical neo-classical fashion those sentiments and ideals were expressed in the human body that Taft himself said was to the artist "the fairest thing of all."³⁰ Sculptors were also employed to add ornament to buildings designed in the Beaux-Arts mode where the foliate and animal forms of the world of nature were welcomed. There were still clients seeking portrait busts, but on the whole the sculpture in the period was intended to be public and thus not marketable except to government or institutional purchasers.³¹

As an articulate and prolific writer on the subject Taft was clear about his aesthetic. He thought that art should possess timeless beauty and universal meaning and that the achievement of those goals would help bind society by providing communication between the living generation and posterity. Thus sculpture should utilize forms from nature because nature is unchanging and universal. This also meant that human figures should not be represented in contemporary clothing because clothing styles were temporary and not universal.³² "Styles come and go in the sculptors' studios," Taft said, "as in the millinery shops."³³ His 1927 statue of a young Abraham Lincoln dressed in an early-nineteenth century lawyer's suit, however, was a necessary exception. Generally his figures appear draped rather than clothed. In figures like "Eternal Silence," the Indian statue,

²⁹ Garvey, p. 75.

³⁰ Quoted in Allen Weller, "Lorado Taft, the Ferguson Fund, and the Advent of Modernism," in Sue Ann Price (ed.), *The Old Guard and the Avant-Garde: Modernism in Chicago, 1910-1940* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), p. 40.

³¹ Armstrong, pp. 90-121; Holliday T. Day, "Sculpture," in Richard Sisson, Christian Zacher, and Andrew Clayton (ed.), *The American Midwest: an Interpretive Encyclopedia* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2007), pp. 599-602.

³² Garvey, pp. 95-96.

³³ Lorado Taft, "Recent Tendencies in Sculpture," *Proceedings of the American Academy of Arts and Letters* (1909-1910), pp. 46.

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“Fountain of Time,” and to a lesser extent in the funerary “Crusader,” clothing is reduced practically to an abstraction.

Between the time of the 1893 Fair and the Indian statue Taft became a national figure and to his contemporaries one of the “most famous American sculptors living and dead.”³⁴ He was the foremost advocate of conservative sculpture and was active in the conservative National Sculpture Society along with the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the American Federation of Artists, Chicago Painters and Sculptors, and was an honorary member of the American Institute of Architects.³⁵ His best-known works as mentioned above are products of this period. Although “The Great Lakes” is considered his pivotal work and “Fountain of Time” is considered his masterpiece and were produced in 1913 and 1922, respectively, the early planning and conceptualization of both began around 1905-1906, which was the same period that produced the earliest work on the Indian statue. In the context of his work and philosophy the Indian statue is a mature expression.

The disastrous blow to his career and the careers of every other conservative artist came in 1913 with the Armory show. When the traveling exhibit from the show came to Chicago Taft had to admit that he simply could not see the point. He did not like modernism. He seemed to have a particular dislike for Henri Matisse, who he thought “puerile and inept,” and dismissed the rest as crude and hopeless.³⁶ But it was as if the Armory show had released a pent-up aesthetic demand that had been building behind the dominant neo-classicism of the previous twenty years. Like an old hat in a milliner’s shop Taft’s conservatism was out of favor. Modernism passed him by, leaving him somewhat bewildered and unable to assimilate the new aesthetic. Nevertheless he was kept busy with commissions and other projects right up to the time of his death. He did “The Crusader,” a figure for newspaper publisher Victor Lawson’s tomb in Graceland Cemetery in Chicago in 1931 and the pioneer group at the Louisiana state capitol in 1932. He had planned to do bas-reliefs for Hoover (Boulder) Dam but was unable to before he died. His last completed work before he died was the Lincoln-Douglas

³⁴ Shaler Matthews, “Uncommercial Chicago,” *World To-day*, 9 (September, 1905), p. 450, quoted in Garvey, p. 11; Harriet Monroe in the *Chicago Tribune*, July 7, 1911.

³⁵ Armstrong, p. 147.

³⁶ Taft, “Recent Tendencies in Sculpture,” pp. 46-48.

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Debate memorial in Quincy, Illinois. His Heald Square monument on Wacker Drive in Chicago was executed five years after his death.³⁷ He was a nationally recognized artist of the Beaux-Arts tradition, a leading proponent of public sculpture and a teacher whose writing and students played a large role in art in the United States for most of the twentieth century.

Recognition of Lorado Taft

When Taft died newspapers around the country ran obituaries, sometimes on the front page. His popularity and name-recognition faded as the Beaux-Arts tradition gave way to modernism, but by the time of this death he had achieved a national reputation as one of the most influential and articulate sculptors of his day. His fame can be measured by the importance and popularity of his *History of American Sculpture* and the continuing affection still held for many of his works. His success can also be measured by the award medals he won over a thirty period: at the Fair in 1893, the Pan-American Exposition at Buffalo in 1901, the St. Louis Exposition of 1904, and the Pan-Pacific Exposition in San Francisco in 1915. The United States Department of the Interior acknowledged Taft's significance by designating his Midway Studios as a National Historic Landmark in 1966.³⁸ Several of this statues are included in the National Register of Historic Places individually or as contributing properties in National Register historic districts: "Fountain of Time" as part of the Jackson Park-Washington Park-Midway Plaisance Historic District in Chicago, listed 1972; "The Recording Angel" in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, listed in 1974; "Pioneers" in his birthplace of Elmwood, Illinois, listed in 2001; "Young Lincoln" in Urbana, Illinois, listed in 2004.³⁹

³⁷ Weller, pp. 52-57.

³⁸ The Lorado Taft Papers contains one entire file devoted solely to obituaries, most of them quite lengthy. Authors who deal with Taft's life or work predictably assume his importance, but the evidence of his importance is more compelling when it is included in the compendiums of American art. See for example Craven, pp. 494-497; Armstrong, p. 315. Federal landmark designation is Taft, Lorado, Midway Studios, National Register Number 66000317.

³⁹ National Register of Historic Places website, <http://www.nr.nps.gov/>.

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Comparable statues

Lorado Taft's Indian statue is forty-eight feet high made of a solid block of steel-reinforced concrete with a hollow core. There are no other statues quite like it. A search of internet sites shows that there are at least a dozen free-standing statues larger than the Indian.⁴⁰ Some are novelty items like the sixty-seven feet tall "Dallas Zoo Giraffe" made of bronze and Plexiglas or the fiberglass "Jolly Green Giant" that stands fifty-six feet high in Blue Earth, Minnesota. The majority are either commemorative like the Statue of Liberty ("Liberty Enlightening the World") made of copper, or religious like the 1966 "Christ of the Ozarks" made of mortar layered on a steel armature. Some of the colossi are older, like "Vulcan" made of cast iron for Birmingham, Alabama, in 1904. The concrete dinosaurs made at the entrance to Dinosaur Park in South Dakota in 1936 may be seen either as commemorative art works or advertising novelties. In any case they were listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1990.⁴¹ Most the very tall statues in the United States (and the world) are less than fifty years old, undoubtedly a result of materials technology becoming affordable to local communities or patrons as in the religious "King of Kings" statue in Monroe, Ohio, made of steel and Styrofoam in 2004.

Large statues are inherently eccentric by virtue of their size so it is easy to see them as follies or advertising gimmicks and miss their genuine artistic value. Many times that distraction is bolstered by insipid or maudlin subject matter or crude design. Few observers, however, would deny the dignity, craftsmanship, and high artistic value of Taft's Indian statue. This statue, then, is clearly in the set of large statues, but is distinguished from many of the others by its material and design excellence.

Large statues are distributed throughout the entire world. Some, like the sixty-feet-high statue of Gomateshwara carved from a single piece of granite one thousand years ago in India, are simply astonishing. The power of "Christ the Redeemer" overlooking Rio de Janeiro is stunning. Taft's colossal work fits easily

⁴⁰ A number of sites were accessed on the internet by subject and others accessed by the name of the individual statue. The most useful internet site, and that which was used as starting point to search individual properties, was Wikipedia, accessed at various times from April to June, 2009, at <http://en.wikipedia.org/>.

⁴¹ Listed as Dinosaur Park, National Register Number 90000956.

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into the category of fine art. The "Christ the Redeemer" is ninety-eight feet high and made of poured concrete, but the concrete was poured in sections and lifted into place.

Summary and conclusion

Lorado Taft's sculpture commonly known as "Black Hawk" merits listing and meets Criterion C for the National Register of Historic Places because it is the mature expression of the work of a master, possessing its original design and a high level of integrity of its material and absolute integrity of location and setting. It is a rare example of colossal sculpture and has high artistic value, comparing favorably with such works of art nationwide, if not worldwide. It is an excellent example of Beaux-Arts sculpture in its naturalistic form and expressiveness of character. Lorado Taft was a major figure in the United States' art world in the period 1890 to 1930. This statue is among his more important and best known works, which may be found from coast to coast. The quality of his work and the significance of his career was acknowledged in his lifetime and continues to be recognized in the present day as exemplified in landmark designations for some of his other works and his home and studio.

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Photograph list

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IL_Ogle County_Indian/Black Hawk Statue_0001 Working model in studio
IL_Ogle County_Indian/Black Hawk Statue_0002 View from SW
IL_Ogle County_Indian/Black Hawk Statue_0003 View from SE (rear)
IL_Ogle County_Indian/Black Hawk Statue_0004 Underground entrance in rear
IL_Ogle County_Indian/Black Hawk Statue_0005 Base of statue from NW
IL_Ogle County_Indian/Black Hawk Statue_0006 View across river from SW
IL_Ogle County_Indian/Black Hawk Statue_0007 Mold removal Spring 1911
IL_Ogle County_Indian/Black Hawk Statue_0008 Constructing mold Dec 1910









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