

RAMSEY COUNTY  
**History**  
*A Publication of the Ramsey County Historical Society*

Spring 2013

Volume 48, Number 1

A Monument to Freedom,  
a Monument to All:

Restoring the  
*Johann Christoph Friedrich von  
Schiller Memorial*  
in Como Park

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*Rooted in Community*

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Internationally known artist Jason Najarak's "Ladder of Hope" mural, the centerpiece of Guild Incorporated's donor wall, was inspired by others whose "genius and mental illness played out in many ways." Najarak gifted the organization with his painting. Photo courtesy of Guild Incorporated.

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# RAMSEY COUNTY History

Volume 48, Number 1

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THE MISSION STATEMENT OF THE RAMSEY COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
ADOPTED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS ON DECEMBER 20, 2007:

The Ramsey County Historical Society inspires current and future generations  
to learn from and value their history by engaging in a diverse program  
of presenting, publishing and preserving.

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Clara M. Claussen and Frieda H. Claussen in memory of Henry H. Cowie Jr.  
and by a contribution from the late Reuel D. Harmon*

**Correction:** In the Winter 2013 issue, which included the 2012 Donor Recognition Report, Myrna Weyer was incorrectly identified in the Report as deceased. On the contrary, she is very much alive. We greatly regret this error.

## A Message from the Editorial Board

This issue brings us a diverse group of articles. We trace the history of the Guild of Catholic Women and Guild Incorporated: a compelling story of helping St. Paul residents through community support, especially housing. We watch as the Como Park statue of the German writer and philosopher, Schiller, is restored and rededicated. And we thrill to the airborne adventures of Phoebe Omlie, a pioneering aviator and parachute jumper who got her start in Ramsey County. As we welcome Chad Roberts, the new President of RCHS, I also want to thank John Lindley, our editor, who has recently served as Interim Executive Director. John kept us moving forward as an organization as he also handled responsibilities editing this magazine. We are thankful for his administrative experience and initiative, but happy to have him back applying his full expertise to this great publication.

*Anne Cowie,*  
Chair, Editorial Board

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## *A Monument to Freedom, a Monument to All:*

# Restoring the *Johann Christoph Friedrich von Schiller* Memorial in Como Park

*Colin Nelson-Dusek*

Since 1907, a bronze sculpture of German literary giant Johann Christoph Friedrich von Schiller has presided over the gateway to Como Park. Countless people have passed by the sculpture, located just beyond the intersection of Lexington Parkway and Estabrook Drive. Yet in the 106 years since Ignatius Taschner, a German artist, created the monument to Schiller specifically for the park, there has been a surprising lack of information about the history of the sculpture. Additionally, over a century passed without any major attempt to preserve the statue from exposure to nature and harsh Minnesota winters.

After many years of neglect and a general lack of information, the monument to Friedrich von Schiller has finally received some care and attention. Public Art Saint Paul, the City of St. Paul's non-profit partner in creating and caring for art in the public sphere, and Saint Paul Parks and Recreation initiated a major restoration of the Schiller monument in early fall 2012. I was fortunate enough to join the dedicated staff of Public Art Saint Paul and aid them by conducting research into the history of the sculpture. I also served as an on-site liaison for the duration of the project, welcoming people who visited the monument and answering any and all questions that visitors had about the restoration and sculpture. The restoration of the statue took about one and one-half months. During that time, I had the pleasure of seeing dedicated conservators restore the statue to a beautiful state that respected both the original work of the sculptor and the committee that sponsored the statue's creation. I also had the joy of talking to St. Paul residents who had grown up visiting Como Park. Through their stories, it became clear that the Schiller monument was more than just a statue of some man; it was a social landmark for the community.

The story of the Schiller statue and its importance to St. Paul tell much about the development of the city and the communities that built it. Originally commis-

sioned and gifted to the city by a committee of prominent German-Americans, the Schiller monument stands as a testament to the determination and vision of not only the German immigrants who came to St. Paul, but also to people from around the world who have come to make their lives in Minnesota's capital city. My research into the Schiller monument revealed how the statue affected the lives of local residents and involved national and international artists, philanthropists, and statesmen.

### **Who Was Schiller?**

St. Paul's early German community desired a public sculpture that would connect their pride as American citizens to their rich cultural heritage, and there are few Germans who embody the intellectual and artistic tradition of the country better than Friedrich von Schiller. A writer and philosopher who is considered one of the most important literary figures in European history, Schiller was born in Marbach am Neckar, Germany in 1759. He came from a military family and was educated at a military academy, where he first studied law and medicine. Schiller began studying philosophy in 1776, which turned out to be an extremely influential year for him. The ideals of democracy, justice, and equality that inspired the American Revolution quickly spread



*An early twentieth-century engraving of Friedrich von Schiller that emphasizes his intensity of purpose and vision. Photo courtesy of the Library of Congress. LC-USZ62-136145.*

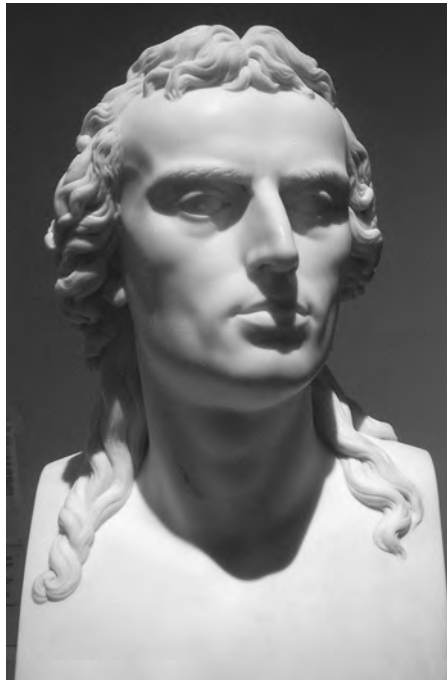
to the European continent and captivated numerous artists and intellectuals, including the young Schiller. In 1781, while still a member of the military, he self-published his first play, *Die Räuber* ("The Robbers"). It was a dramatic work that addressed social corruption and promoted revolutionary ideas. When the play premiered, it caused a scandal and made Schiller an overnight sensation. His involvement with the play, as well as his decision to leave his military post to see the premiere, led to his detainment and censure by the local aristocracy.

In 1782, Schiller was able to flee his home, moving through several cities in Germany while continuing his literary career by writing plays and poetry, and publishing historical research. Eventually he settled in the university town of Weimar in 1787. Schiller spent the rest of his life

either in Weimar or in Jena—another famous home for intellectuals—serving as a university professor and continually producing literary works. His later plays centered on historical figures, such as William Tell and Joan of Arc, while emphasizing politics, morality, and the injustice of social hierarchy. Schiller devoted his entire life to spreading democratic thought and promoting the virtues of liberty, both in his German homeland and throughout the European continent. He was rewarded for his philosophy of liberty and equality in 1792 when he was made an honorary citizen of the newly established French Republic.

Besides his dramatic and historical writings, Schiller is also celebrated as a poet. While many of his poems are widely recognized across Europe, his most famous is “An die Freude” (“Ode to Joy,” 1785), the lines of which were used as lyrics by Beethoven for the stirring finale of his Ninth Symphony. Schiller’s literary output serves to bridge the changing attitudes in intellectual thought in Europe from the late 1700s to the early 1800s. His writings reflect the philosophical interest in aesthetics and issues of human equality and justice taken up by Age of Enlightenment thinkers in the eighteenth century. His work moves beyond the major concerns of the Enlightenment era by also focusing on nineteenth century fascinations with psychology, self-reflection, and the investigation of emotions, all of which would become defining issues of the Romantic period.<sup>1</sup>

In the last decade of his life, Schiller developed a close friendship with another extraordinarily gifted German writer, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. Schiller and Goethe greatly influenced each other’s thoughts on aesthetics and philosophy and forever changed the history of European culture. Schiller’s death on May 9, 1805, was met with mourning throughout the European continent, but particularly in the German states. From the time of his death in the early nineteenth century up to the present day, Friedrich von Schiller has been considered one of Germany’s national treasures, having the same level of recognition and high regard in his home country as William Shakespeare in England



*Theodor Wagner's bust of Schiller, after a bust by Johann Heinrich Dannecker. The Taschner sculpture of Schiller in Como Park exhibits many facial similarities to the Dannecker bust. Photo by Andreas Praefcke.*

and Walt Whitman in the United States. Almost immediately after his death, a marble bust of Schiller was sculpted by the artist Heinrich Dannecker. The first bronze statue of Schiller was dedicated in Stuttgart in 1839. More soon followed and by the beginning of the twentieth century, Schiller monuments could be found in cities across the recently united German Empire, as well as in several cities in the United States that contained sizeable German-American populations.

### **Formation of the St. Paul Monument Committee**

1905 marked the centennial anniversary of Schiller’s death and celebrations honoring the great thinker were planned in German communities throughout the world. As a city with a considerable population of ethnic Germans, St. Paul followed suit. During the organization of these festivities, suggestions began circulating that a statue be erected to memorialize the literary figure.<sup>2</sup> By 1905, the idea of a Schiller statue in an American city had numerous precedents: St. Louis, Philadelphia, Chicago, Columbus, New

York City, and San Francisco had all received Schiller statues by this time.

Inspired by the centennial celebrations, and not to be outdone by other cities, St. Paul’s German-American community formed a Monument Committee in August of 1905.<sup>3</sup> They did this to memorialize and celebrate the famous writer and to express their pride as Germans and gratitude as immigrants who had found their home in a country that embraced the ideals of freedom and democracy that Schiller promoted. The committee was comprised of some of the city’s most prominent individuals at the time, including brewer William Hamm, banker Otto Bremer, lumber baron Frederick Weyerhaeuser, and city health commissioner Dr. Justus Ohage. The committee’s president was Ferdinand Willius, a banker and former consul of Prussia, who immediately began consulting prominent artists and architects in the United States and Germany for advice on who to commission for the creation of St. Paul’s Schiller Monument.<sup>4</sup>

Correspondence between members of the Monument Committee indicates that during the first months of the organization, a few prominent questions arose: should the statue be an original work or a copy of an earlier version? What materials should be used to make the statue? If a sculptor is commissioned for the project, should he be American or German? The first question arose because a number of Schiller monuments already erected in American cities were copies of earlier German statues.<sup>5</sup> The installation of a Schiller copy in St. Paul would certainly have been cheaper than commissioning an original work of art and it was seriously considered by the cost-conscious Monument Committee. The option of having a copy made, however, was abandoned after the committee consulted eminent St. Paul-born architect Cass Gilbert, who advised against having a reproduction made. “The monument should be beautiful,” he wrote. “If it is not beautiful, it is worse than none at all . . . cheap reproductions of commonplace designs, no matter where else they may have been erected, are to be avoided. . . . It is my opinion that nothing is too good for St. Paul. . . . As Schiller maintained high ide-

als, advocating that which is best and noblest in humanity, so those of our generation should respond in kind with a fitting memorial.”<sup>6</sup> These words also deterred the Monument Committee from commissioning a statue that would have been made using the electrolyte process.<sup>7</sup>

### The Search for an Artist

Cass Gilbert’s stirring call for original work led the committee to ask noted European and American sculptors about their interest in a commission. The search for a suitable sculptor was a convoluted affair, with a number of important artists and architects being contacted by Ferdinand Willius. Along with Cass Gilbert, the committee contacted other prominent American artists, including Karl Bitter, the sculptor of the Thomas Lowry Memorial in Minneapolis; Albert Jaegers, creator of the “German Pioneers” sculptural suite at the Minnesota State Capitol; Augustus Saint-Gaudens, creator of the *New York Life Eagle* in St. Paul’s Summit Lookout Park; and Daniel Chester French, who would go on to sculpt the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D.C. and, along with Edward Potter, the *Quadriga* (1906) for the Minnesota Capitol.<sup>8</sup> Many of these artists offered their opinions on the project, with Cass Gilbert going so far as creating a sketch for his vision of the Schiller memorial. Of the American sculptors contacted, however, the one who received the most attention from the committee was Albert Jaegers.

Fresh off a successful showing at the 1904 World’s Fair in St. Louis, and highly recommended by Cass Gilbert, Albert Jaegers suggested that a German-American sculptor should receive the commission. He argued that such an artist would understand the devotion and importance of Schiller to St. Paul’s German population. Jaegers also believed that an American sculptor would produce superior work over any European of notoriety. His rationale was that European sculptors, perceiving that Americans do not have the same discerning tastes as Europeans, could pass off a poorly made and quickly produced sculpture at a high price. Additionally, since the work would be located across the Atlantic Ocean, it



An undated photograph of artist Carl Marr. Photo courtesy of the Library of Congress. LC-B2-1017-6.

would be far away from “respectable” art critics and not endanger the European sculptor’s reputation. As Jaegers said in a December 7, 1905 letter to Ferdinand Willius, “Anything goes in this country. [European sculptors] think and consider it a financial question only. Not so the American sculptor of ability, he has a reputation to uphold and his work in his own country becomes his accuser if not conscientiously executed.”<sup>9</sup>

Although Albert Jaegers made some interesting points for the commission of an American sculptor to the Schiller project, correspondence between the sculptor and the Monument Committee lasted for only a few months. Judging from the committee members’ concerns about money, it appears that cost was a major factor in their decision not to hire Jaegers, who quoted a price of \$10,000 for an original sculpture, far more than the Monument Committee ever collected through subscriptions and donations.<sup>10</sup> After the first two months of 1906, the Monument Committee remained in touch with just one artistic advisor, Carl Marr, whose influence and recommendations would ultimately shape how the sculpture appeared and who made it.

### Carl Marr and Ignatius Taschner

Born in Milwaukee in 1858 to German immigrants, Marr was a promising painter who left the United States at the age of seventeen to further his artistic career and

train in Germany. Except for periodic visits to the U.S. for work and family, Marr spent the rest of his life as a successful painter in Germany. He was appointed to a professorship at the Munich Academy in 1893 and eventually became director of the institution in 1919.<sup>11</sup> Although Marr certainly had the qualifications and reputation to offer advice on an art project, it is unclear exactly how he first established contact with the Monument Committee and why he was able to establish such profound influence over the group’s artistic decisions. There are, however, some suggestions within the Committee’s correspondences. None of the executive members of the committee were artists or affiliated with artistic organizations. The majority of members were businessmen. Although they could have been connoisseurs and collectors of fine art, their continued contact with local and nationally renowned artists in tandem with their earlier idea of having a copy of an older statue made using the electrolyte process indicates that they were not intimately aware of the current state of sculpture and were as equally concerned about the cost of the project as they were with its artistic merit. These circumstances made the opinion of a professional and internationally respected artist offering his candid opinions all the more valuable.

While the initial reasons for contacting Carl Marr remain vague, the fact that his brother, Louis Marr, was a St. Paul resident and member of the Monument Committee certainly could not have hurt his appointment as the committee’s unofficial artistic advisor and liaison. Like Albert Jaegers, Marr was not afraid to offer his frank critique to Ferdinand Willius: he was critical of most American and European artists, saying that there are precious few sculptors who would be able to do justice to Friedrich von Schiller.<sup>12</sup> In 1905 Marr did, however, recommend a promising young German sculptor who had received his training at the Munich Academy and was just beginning his professional career. Through the insistence of Carl Marr, the Monument Committee eventually awarded the commission for the Schiller Monument to this young sculptor and illustrator whose name was Ignatius Taschner.

Born in 1871 in the Bavarian town of Bad Kissingen, Taschner came from a family of stonemasons. He was trained by his father from an early age to take over the family trade, but Taschner decided to pursue further artistic studies and develop his sculpting skills. Beginning in 1889, he studied at the Munich Academy, and while there, he became influenced by the *Jugendstil* movement—the German equivalent of *Art Nouveau*. He was appointed as an art professor in Wroclaw, Poland in 1903, followed by commissions in Vienna and Berlin. He opened his own studio in Berlin in 1905; there, he became a member of the Berlin Secession, a group associated with *Jugendstil*, and worked on projects ranging from architectural sculpture to illustrations for children’s books.

At the time of his commission from the Monument Committee, the Schiller statue was one of the largest and most important projects that Taschner had undertaken. The specific details of Taschner’s commission for the Schiller sculpture were worked out in the spring of 1906 when committee member Justus Ohage paid a visit to Berlin. Apart from this meeting, all correspondence between the Monument Committee and Ignatius Taschner was coordinated through Carl Marr. Besides his affiliation with *Jugendstil*, Taschner also drew inspiration from works of Classical Antiquity and the Northern Renaissance. Additionally, he had a keen interest in German folk culture and fairytales. This fascination is most prominent in the creation of what many consider his greatest works: the sculptures for the Fairy Tale Fountain in Friedrichshain Park in Berlin, completed in 1913. Taschner’s work often had an air of playfulness and frivolity, which is in contrast to the serious, intellectual figure of Schiller. This difference in mood compared with some of his other works could be attributed to the Schiller sculpture being intended as a memorial, as well as Taschner’s following of precedent for the style of previous Schiller monuments.

Taschner always kept a close connection to his home region of Bavaria. In 1907, he purchased a home in the town of Mitterndorf and it was there that he died in 1913. Although he was commissioned to create works in several European

countries, Taschner’s Schiller in Como Park was his only public sculpture made for an American audience.

### Completion and Installation

In March of 1907, Taschner had completed the Schiller statue. Standing ten feet tall and weighing about 1,200 pounds, the total cost of Taschner’s commission was \$3,750.<sup>13</sup> When compared with Albert

Jaegers’ quote of \$10,000, Taschner’s price seems like a steal. The vast difference in cost can be attributed to the fact that Taschner was an unknown and young artist compared to Jaegers and the other American sculptors, who were well-established in their careers. Additionally, Carl Marr was probably aware of the Monument Committee’s finances and his status as liaison between Taschner and the



*Ilma S. Scheffer (1877–1976), the daughter of Albert and Margaretha Dreis Scheffer, who were prominent members of St. Paul’s German-American community, participated in the unveiling of the monument to Freidrich von Schiller in Como Park on July 8, 1907. Ilma gave a prologue to the event and along with her sister, Anita, and several other young women of German heritage, drew back the folds of the American flag that was draped over the statue prior to its unveiling. William Hamm, a leader of the local German-American community and a member of the Monument Community, then presented the statue to the city of St. Paul. Mayor Robert A. Smith accepted the gift on behalf of the city and the park board. More speeches followed including the reading of a cablegram of congratulations from Kaiser Wilhelm II and an address in German from a former German legislator and orator. Photo courtesy of the Minnesota Historical Society.*

committee helped the Americans to secure an original sculpture at a very reasonable price. The bronze casting was completed by Guss Martin & Piltzing, a foundry in Berlin, and the sculptor's signature and the foundry marks can still be seen on the bronze base. The sculpture was transported to the port city of Bremen from Berlin, where it was then shipped across the Atlantic Ocean and first entered the United States through Baltimore. From there, it travelled by rail to St. Paul. Throughout its voyage, the status of the Schiller statue as a work of art allowed it to be shipped to the Monument Committee duty-free.<sup>14</sup>

As an added bonus, Taschner agreed to create a sketch for an accompanying pedestal at no extra cost, which was to be completed by American stonemasons.<sup>15</sup> The statue stands atop a two-tiered, Vermont granite pedestal, which is rather severe in its execution. The pedestal bears no ornament; the only marking is the name "Schiller," executed in a style suggestive of Art Nouveau and engraved onto three sides of the pedestal. Work on the pedestal was done by the Peterson Granite Company of Vermont, through the coordination of none other than Louis Marr.<sup>16</sup> The completion of the granite pedestal brought the total cost of the Memorial to about \$6,000.<sup>17</sup>

Taschner sculpted Schiller as a confident man moving toward the future: he leans forward with his right foot, his left ready to take the next step. Instead of holding a quill pen or books, as is seen in other monuments, Taschner's Schiller holds a bundle of papers in his left hand, which alludes to his literary and scholarly production, and his right hand is placed on his hip. His long hair is pulled back at the nape of his neck and he is dressed in a long coat, double-breasted vest, collared shirt with frills, breeches with fall-front opening, stockings, and buckled shoes.

While it seems ornate by contemporary standards, Schiller's dress would have been considered everyday informal attire for an upper-class German gentleman in the late eighteenth century. In fact, the majority of Schiller monuments in Germany and the United States have the figure wearing a nearly identical outfit.<sup>18</sup> Besides the standardization of dress across statues, the pronounced forehead



*The city of Columbus, Ohio, erected a statue of Schiller in one of its parks between 1900 and 1905. Photo courtesy of the Library of Congress. Detroit Publishing Company Collection. LC-D4-17368.*

and prominent nose that Taschner gave to the sculpted figure were accepted as true physical traits, especially since these facial features appear across earlier memorials and portraits of Schiller. The marble bust by Schiller's friend Heinrich Dannecker, made shortly after the former's death, featured the high forehead and large nose.

The creation of a memorial to a historic and widely respected figure requires that the artist adhere to precedent and popular opinion. With this in mind, it would be difficult to criticize Taschner for following the style of others. Taschner was surely following the expectations of the Monument Committee and the advice of Carl Marr in creating a Schiller memorial that closely followed an established style. Still, Taschner was able to add a few unique aspects to his work, including the details of Schiller's dress by adding a simple, yet beautiful floral pattern to the vest. The way in which Taschner depicts Schiller as striding forward with fixed eyes adds dy-

namism to this sculpture that is missing in older examples where the literary legend is introspectively looking down or has his feet planted firmly in place. Previous examples were respected in the style of the sculpture, but Taschner offered an artistic perspective that gave new features to the expected presentation of Schiller. The result was a statue that received high praise upon its official unveiling.

The dedication of the Schiller statue on July 7, 1907, was a day of celebration; 5,000 people gathered to hear lofty speeches about the life, work, and ideals of Schiller. In speeches made during the festivities, particular emphasis was given to the close relationship between Germany and the United States, the bonds of which sprang from a mutual love of liberty. William Hamm spoke on behalf of the Monument Committee, saying that "It is a fact worthy of note that this monument to the great German patriot and believer in freedom for all should be unveiled in the home of the freedom of which he dreamed by the people of his own race."<sup>19</sup> The keynote speaker that day was former German politician and publicist Dr. Theodor Barth, who shared similar sentiments to Hamm by proclaiming, "Schiller saw far in the dim future wherein men were free and equal, and it is fitting that in this land of liberty the sons and daughters of Germany should erect a statue to his memory."<sup>20</sup>

Articles that appeared in newspapers praised the celebration and the values of community and democracy it promoted, and made particular mention of the sculpture's beauty. In the July 8, 1907 edition of the *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, the dedication and ceremony was front-page news. The article declared Taschner "one of the leading artists in the world" and applauded the sculpture by saying, "It is regarded as a work of art of no small merit, and will add to a marked degree to the quiet beauty and dignity of that portion of the park wherein it is located."<sup>21</sup> Acclaim did not just come from the local newspaper; a reporter from the *Boston Herald* was also at the celebration and called the whole affair a "characteristically German-American scene." The reporter went on to judge the statue as "realistic to the last degree, and yet, in every rugged or literal detail

of bearing and attitude, instinct with the fire of spirit.”<sup>22</sup> Unfortunately, Taschner was not present at the unveiling and he never saw his work after it had been installed at Como Park. Even without the artist on hand, members of the German-American community in St. Paul and beyond were in attendance, as well as local government officials and representatives from the German Empire. The Monument Committee’s goal was realized, with the result being a beautiful and well-made statue that received widespread praise and was considered a valuable addition to Como Park and St. Paul.

### **Neglect and Restoration**

Friedrich von Schiller has stood fast for 106 years. The effects of time and human intervention, however, had damaged the sculpture to such an extent that by 2012 intervention was necessary to ensure the statue’s survival for another century, if not just another decade. Public Art Saint Paul had been campaigning since 2007 to acquire stewardship funding to complete the restoration of the Schiller monument. Through a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, funding from the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund (“Legacy Amendment”), and support from Saint Paul Parks and Recreation, Public Art Saint Paul was able to raise the money necessary to undertake an extensive restoration project of the Schiller monument. Kristin Cheronis, a Sculpture Conservator, and her company Kristin Cheronis, Inc. were selected to be the project conservators. Treatment of the sculpture lasted from late August to the middle of October 2012, the result of which was a dramatic improvement in the appearance and longevity of the statue.

Before beginning conservation treatment, Kristin Cheronis assessed the Schiller monument, highlighting the surface and structure as being in states of rapid deterioration. The surface of the bronze was in poor condition: it was badly pitted (possibly due to a past attempt at sandblasting the sculpture), unstable, and heavily streaked with light green and blue copper carbonate corrosion and black, copper-sulfate crusts. Streaking was caused primarily by airborne pollutants and a lack of protective coatings. The



*A close up of the left foot of the Schiller statue prior to restoration shows both the name of the sculptor, Ignatius Taschner, and some of the graffiti that had been added to the cast bronze over the more than 100 years that this monument has been in St. Paul’s Como Park. Photo courtesy of Robert Muschewske.*



*A crew from Saint Paul Parks and Recreation Department used a sling to carefully lift the statue from its granite pedestal prior to beginning the restoration work. Photo courtesy of Robert Muschewske.*





Conservator Kristin Cheronis, right foreground, points out areas where concentrated work is needed to Christine Podas-Larson, president of Public Art Saint Paul, left, and her staff once the statue is ready for restoration. This view shows the great wear that Schiller's right shoe has received over the years. Photo courtesy of Robert Muschewske.



Here Kristin Cheronis demonstrates how the melted wax is to be applied to the surface of the sculpture. The brownish-green wax gives the bronze surface a protective coating. Photo courtesy of Robert Muschewske.

streaky, blotchy corrosion products were evidence of active deterioration, and they also acted to obscure the underlying sculptural form. The surface of the sculpture also suffered from a century's worth of graffiti, scratching, and carving.<sup>23</sup>

In addition to the surface damage, there was considerable structural damage to the bronze self-base and armature—the support beam inside the statue. This was actually the second armature that had been installed in the statue; the first had to be replaced in the 1950s when a serious act of vandalism crumpled some of the bronze self-base and almost resulted in Schiller being knocked off the pedestal.<sup>24</sup> Bimetallic corrosion between the bronze and the steel actively deteriorated the metals and caused the second armature to break apart, thereby losing any ability to structurally support the statue. The top of the bronze self-base upon which Schiller stood was domed upwards and deformed, probably due to a combination of freeze-thaw expansion of water trapped underneath the statue and the 1950s vandalism.

Kristin Cheronis, Inc. established a treatment plan that would restore the structural support of the Schiller sculpture, as well as clean and preserve the surface from further deterioration. The corroded armature was removed and a

new stainless steel one was installed with Cheronis and her team ensuring that corrosion would not continue by isolating the steel from the bronze. The surface was first cleaned using detergent to remove oil and some grime, followed by a thorough pressure washing that knocked off corrosion, pollution, and dirt. Repairs were also done to the bronze base and the connection between the statue and pedestal was reinforced. The worst areas of graffiti and scratching were laboriously “inpatinated” using heat and miniscule swabs of patina chemicals. Minor areas of scratching were then reintegrated into the overall appearance by a new protective wax coating. The brownish-green color of the wax coating was chosen as a way of both respecting the original intent of the artist and honoring the age and history of the sculpture. The shade of brown highlights some of the beautiful details and allows the viewer to see the artistry of Taschner, while the inclusion of green both suggests the appearance of oxidation that occurs in all aging outdoor bronzes and allows some of the original surface and patina underneath the new coating to be easily seen.

The difference between the statue of Friedrich von Schiller before and after restoration is astounding. The treatment

done by Kristin Cheronis, Inc. has given new life and beauty into one of St. Paul's most impressive public works. With its new coating, Schiller is well complemented by the lush greenery of Como Park. The restoration has also allowed the public to learn about the history of the sculpture and the dedication of the city's early residents in realizing a monument to a man who believed in universal equality and dreamed of a time when people could live without fear of repression. The Schiller Monument in Como Park is not only a celebration of a German hero; it is a dedication to the idealistic members of the Monument Committee, who made this sculpture a lasting gift to the residents of St. Paul, and to all who believe in the values that Schiller promoted. The restoration means that a new layer of history has been placed upon this dedication to universal brotherhood and liberty to live on for all city residents and Como Park visitors.

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A rededication of the Schiller sculpture in St. Paul's Como Park was held on Saturday, May 11, 2013. Public Art Saint Paul, in partnership with Saint Paul Parks and Recreation and its Como Park Zoo and Conservatory, hosted this community celebration of the completion of the restoration of the Schiller statue. Special guests at the ceremony included Christa Tiefenbacher-Hudson, Honorary Consul of the Federal Republic of Germany. Held at the Schiller sculpture site in the park, the rededication began with a triumphant fanfare and attendees heard the Minnesota Chorale perform Beethoven's Ode to Joy from his Ninth Symphony.



Schiller's head before restoration, left, and Schiller's head after restoration, right. Notice how the restoration makes it easy to see all the detail in Schiller's hair, face, cravat, and vest. Photos courtesy of Robert Muschewske.

## Endnotes

1. Mason Riddle, "Johann Christoph Friedrich von Schiller: A Restoration of Ideas," *Public Art Saint Paul Newsletter*, Spring/Summer 2012.
2. Schiller Monument Committee Records, folder 2, Coll. P1499, Minnesota History Center, Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul. While there are numerous private letters in the Schiller Committee Records that discuss the possibility of erecting a statue in St. Paul, some of the first serious considerations come from an April 3, 1905 letter from the United States Customs Service that details the cost of importing a memorial statue from Germany. A May 8, 1905 article in the *Pioneer Press* detailed the festivities of the centennial Schiller celebration in St. Paul, with one of the events being the laying of a cornerstone for the Schiller monument.
3. Draft of Schiller Memorial Committee Articles of Incorporation, August 1905, folder 2, Schiller Monument Committee Records, Minnesota History Center.
4. *Ibid.*
5. Brigitte Schütz, "Das Schiller-Denkmal in St. Paul, Minnesota," in Norbert Götz and Ursel Berger, eds., *Ignatius Taschner: Ein Künstlerleben zwischen Jugendstil und Neoklassizismus* (Munich: Kinkhardt & Biermann, 1992), 263.
6. Letter from Cass Gilbert to Ferdinand Willius, December 4, 1905, folder 3, Schiller Monument Committee Records, Minnesota History Center.
7. Known in Europe as galvanoplasty, electrotyping was developed in 1838 by M.H. von Jacobi. The process involves electrically charging the surface of a mold, which attracts metal particles, creating a cast. Copper was often used to create electrotype casts of sculpture in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and was seen as a budget-conscious, but aesthetically inferior, alternative to bronze casting.
8. Unattributed note, November 10, 1905, folder 3, Schiller Monument Committee Records, Minnesota History Center. Many letters make mention of artists of interest to the Committee, but this particular note compiles the list of artists, along with a brief description of their previous achievements.
9. Letter from Albert Jaegers to Ferdinand Willius, December 7, 1905, folder 3, Schiller Monument Committee Records, Minnesota History Center.
10. Letter from Albert Jaegers to Ferdinand Willius, December 15, 1905, folder 3, Schiller Monument Committee Records, Minnesota History Center. In discussing his ideas for a monument, Jaegers wrote that he preferred to make a sitting, rather than standing, sculpture of Schiller. This preference was due to Jaegers's belief that older standing monuments of Schiller were not particularly fitting to the man, and Jaegers's conviction that a large-scale, well-executed sitting figure would impress the viewer more.
11. "Carl von Marr Collection," Museum of Wisconsin Art, accessed February 10, 2013, <http://www.wisconsinart.org/collections/carlvonmarr.aspx>.
12. Schütz, 264, 271. In her article, Schütz includes a quotation from several letters between Carl Marr and Ferdinand Willius. Opinions from Marr include, "All of our vocational and craft schools are backward, . . . what is coming out of our schools generally cannot keep pace with the demands of the times. . . . In my opinion there are in all of Europe hardly five people who are capable of making a genuine Schiller statue. Monuments are constantly being produced, even in Berlin, but look at what kind of stuff they are!!!"
13. *Ibid.*, 269.
14. Charlotte Seguin, "A History of the Schiller Monument in Saint Paul," 4, Coll. F613 .S64 S45 1984, Minnesota History Center, Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul.
15. Schütz, 269.
16. Charlotte Seguin's article, "A History of the Schiller Monument in Saint Paul," notes that the pedestal was completed by the Peterson Granite Company (p. 4), while Schütz's article discusses Louis Marr's involvement (p. 269).
17. Moira F. Harris, *Monumental Minnesota: A Guide to Outdoor Sculpture* (St. Paul: Pogo Press, 1992), 9.
18. The only exception to this being a few statues in which Schiller is depicted in a toga-like robe, suggesting his legendary status and implying life and work is on equal footing to the great authors and thinkers of classical antiquity.
19. *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, July 8, 1907, folder 5, Schiller Monument Committee Records, Minnesota History Center.
20. *Ibid.* The article goes into great detail about the statue's unveiling and the accompanying festivities.
21. *Ibid.*
22. *Boston Herald*, July 13, 1907, folder 5, Schiller Monument Committee Records, Minnesota History Center.
23. Kristin Cheronis, Inc., "Johann Friedrich von Schiller Final Treatment Report," 2012, records of Public Art Saint Paul, St. Paul, Minn. All of the conservation treatment discussed in this article is found in this report.
24. *Ibid.*

R.C.H.S.

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*From August to October of 2012, the Johann Christoph Friedrich von Schiller Memorial in St. Paul's Como Park underwent restoration. Here the restored statue once more welcomes visitors to the park. For more on Schiller and the restoration of this sculpture, see page 11. Photo courtesy of Robert Muschewske.*