



THE VIGILANT

AUGUST 2022

Newsletter of the Hermann Monument Society, New Ulm MN

HERMANN MONUMENT SOCIETY GEARS UP FOR HERMANNFEST 2022

Hermannfest returns for the ninth time on **Saturday, Sept 10**. The format will be the usual one, with festivities beginning on top of the hill at Hermann Heights Park around 11:00 am. Bands will be playing, food and drink will be available until mid-afternoon. Then the park will clear out and the celebration continue below the monument in Harmon Park. More music, more food, more drinks there until 11 pm. "Jonah and the Whales" will again be our spotlight band, rocking us into the evening.

The festival will also give the stage to the New Ulm Municipal Band and the New Ulm Battery to perform their traditional offering – the *1812 Overture* with cannon fire (6:00 pm). If you have never experienced that before, this is the year to come and see!

Then, at 8:30 pm, as autumn darkness falls, enjoy the annual fireworks spectacular as the rockets light up the monument, reminding the city of our special heritage we have. Join us!

THE MONUMENT AND THE SHIP OF THESEUS

The initial reports from surveying and engineering firms concerning the condition of the Hermann Monument have now been made public and various people have begun to digest the data and consider the implications. One thing is for sure: the monument needs repair, sooner rather than later. But how soon those repairs can take place and what the extent of those repairs will be are questions unanswerable at this time. The cost of repairs will also be a significant factor, to state the obvious.

One thing, though, that is interesting to think about—in a speculative way—is the important question: do we *restore* the monument...or *rebuild* the monument? No decisions about that have, of course, been made. But as we consider the scope of the project before the community, we undoubtedly will have people fall into one of two camps. One group, in genuine concern for historical preservation, will feel that in order for the monument to remain "the Hermann monument," it must be restored; the original materials should be cleaned, strengthened and reused. The other group may well have the attitude that the current situation presents an ideal opportunity to rebuild the monument with new materials, making it even better than before. Both groups want the best for the city, and both want generations to come to be able to enjoy and appreciate this impressive landmark.

In a way, this situation with the monument reminds me of an old problem from philosophy class called "The Ship of Theseus." The problem is meant to get students to think about the issues of "essence" and "identity." It goes like this:
(cont.)

HMS WELCOMES NEW MEMBER: JOHN VORWERK



HMS welcomes new member John Vorwerk to the HMS Board, and we're happy to have him aboard! John, a life-long citizen of New Ulm, brings his insights and talents with him. John also is known in New Ulm for owning and operating the Pinball Palace on Broadway. Welcome John!

Who Was Varus?

Background: From Sept 15-19, 2009 a rather unique convocation of scholars took place in Regensburg, Germany, at the Institute for Classical Philology. The stated goal of the convocation was to explore the details and historical significance of the Battle of Teutoburg Forest in which Arminius (Hermann) destroyed three entire Roman legions under the command of Quintilius Varus. The proceeds of the convocation were published (Leuven Univ Press, 2011) entirely in Latin under the title "At the Borders of the Roman Empire: At the 200th Anniversary of the Varusschlacht" ("disaster of Varus", the typical German manner of referring to the Battle of Teutoburg Forest).



The following is a portion of an essay by the great German classicist, Michael von Albrecht (Univ of Heidelberg). It provides some additional insights into the Roman Varus. (This article was translated from the Latin by Keith Wessel.)

I will now transition to speaking about Varus. This is a man who usually is denounced by both Romans and Germans – and in this particular matter there is marvelous agreement: denounced by the Romans because he was defeated, and by the Germans, simply because he was Roman. For that reason, it is worth the

effort to explore whether all these things said against him ought rightly to be applied to him.

However, prior to this disaster Quintilius Varus was a man who possessed great authority. For he was married to Claudia Pulcher, the great-granddaughter of Augustus. His family clan was most illustrious and grew stronger while he was alive, and even the historians judged Varus rather gently. Before he had arrived in Germania, he had become *consul* along with Tiberius in the year 13 B.C. This demonstrates how important Augustus and Livia had made him to be. Then, from 7-6 B.C., Varus was busily serving as *proconsul* in Africa, that most celebrated senatorial province. We know this from coinage depicting the image of Varus upon them. Then he had been commissioned by Augustus as a *propraetor* in Syria (at that time an imperial province owned by Augustus). Finally, he served in the same capacity in Germania.

Writers of the past did, to some extent, attempt to defend with various excuses this man of such great authority even after he had been taken by such a disaster. For Tacitus says, gently enough, that he (Varus) had been "ignorant of the deception," (*Annals* 2.46.1), and Velleius (Paterculus) himself excuses him in this way: "Now the Fates stood in the way of his plans, and they entirely blinded the keenness of his mind. So, it was—and often is—for the man whose fortune some god is about to change, and corrupts that man's plans and brings it about –and this is the worst part—that what eventually happens is also viewed as having happened deservedly, and misfortune morphs into guilt." (2.118.4) In another place it is evident that Velleius, because he himself had served as a soldier, is more willing to defend soldiers than the emperor. [For he writes]: "It is evident that Varus, very much a serious man of good will, lost his most magnificent army more through the defective plan of the commander than through any lack of valor in his soldiers." (2.120.4-5)

Yet it also is true that Velleius complains about the "rotteness of the commander" (199.2), as does Tacitus, who writes about the "inactivity of the commander" (*Ann.*1.58.2). Moreover, Suetonius attacks "that Varro"¹ more harshly by contending that the disaster that befell Varus happened "due to the rashness and negligence of the commander" (*Tib.*18). Without a doubt Suetonius simply repeated those very words which Tiberius was glad to hear.

For, in fact, both Augustus and Tiberius wanted to make the disaster appear to be the error of the commander, so that they themselves would not be blamed. For this reason, it is not by chance that we trust the account of Velleius Paterculus too much, that great admirer of Tiberius, who reports that Varus had come to wealthy Syria as a poor man, but left Syria poor as a rich man. However, it is true that we cannot deny that he was a lover of the arts and all things of great value. There are even those who suspect that the magnificent treasure trove of silver discovered at Hildesheim² once had belonged to Quintilius Varus.

¹ Suetonius likens Varus to Varro, an impetuous Roman commander who lost some 80,000 men to Hannibal in the 2nd Punic War, at the Battle of Cannae (217 BC).

² The Hildesheim Treasury, dated to the 1st cent. A.D., was discovered Oct. 17, 1868 and remains the largest cache of silver ever discovered outside of the boundaries of the Roman empire.

HMS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Chairman

Tom Furth

Members at Large

Denny Warta

Brian Filzen

Terry Johnson

Keith Wessel

Jon Vorwerk

Phil Vorwerk

Joe Meyer

Jared Peterson



HMS Executive Director

Denise Fischer

Park & Rec Liaison

Tom Schmitz

A Hermann Monument & Montezuma Connection?

by Denny Warta

The conservation specialists who restored the copper Hermann statue in 2004 needed to re-create the ball or

'pommel' at the end of the sword handle and they admitted that they had no idea on how to create such a ball of copper. They had contracted to create it and asked about a substitute material.

Fortunately, at this time there resided part time in New Ulm a coppersmith by the name of Billy MacRae who creates copper jewelry such as pendants and earrings as well as decorative vases of copper. Most of these vases are made from recycled copper which is melted into clumps of copper the shape of a ball. Then, this ball is hammered into the shape of a vase.

Prior to the conquest of Mexico by the Spaniards there resided in the mountains East of Mexico City the Purhepecha people who created armaments of copper for the Aztecs and others. They discovered that by hammering the copper clumps found on the mountain sides that the copper would become very hard and this quality made their weapons superior to those made of copper that was molded and which had not been hammered. They taught Billy MacRae how to create vases from such copper clumps and Billy enhanced these vases by heating areas of the vases with a torch. This heating process brought out beautiful colors which had lain there forever.

After the Hermann statue was brought down for restoration, Billy stated that he thought that one of the vases that he had created would solve the pommel problem. Within a couple hours he had made the round ball to fit the sword handle and he made certain that the ball would drain by putting a hole in the bottom of the ball. (It is likely that water froze in the original ball which then expanded, causing it to fall off.) It was missing for over 100 years but it now has been restored since 2004, thanks to the art and craft and skills of one Copper Billy MacRae who donated the pommel to the project.

Copper Billy MacRae, a Canadian, had craft booths at major Renaissance Fairs and Art throughout the US.

Ed note: Copper Billy passed away Nov, 18, 2020 at the age of 76 yrs.



Follow our Facebook page!
"Like" HMS and stay informed!

VOLUNTEER FOR HERMANNFEST 2022



Contact us today to enjoy time with friends and family by volunteering!

info@hermannmonumnet.com

507.404.1000

**

LISTEN to KNUJ Community Affairs

1:15 pm, Sept 6: "Hermannfest Preview"

"Theseus" cont.

Suppose that the sailing ship of the great Greek hero Theseus sets sail from Athens and will be gone for years. With time, various planks will rot and be replaced, so that after a decade of sailing, Theseus returns to port in a ship that has had *every* board replaced over the journey. So, the question is, "Is this still the ship of Theseus?" And what if (hypothetically), some skilled worker managed to collect all the discarded boards from the first ship...and rebuild the entire (original) ship! Which one is the ship of Theseus? Is it the material that makes it the ship of Theseus? Is it the presence of Theseus on the ship that makes it "the ship of Theseus"? Is "the ship of Theseus" what the boat is made of, or is it merely a *symbol* of an idea...or an ideal hero? What exactly is the ship of Theseus?

So, what will the renewed / renovated Hermann Monument look like? If materials are changed or improved, is it still "the Hermann Monument"? Could it even possibly have a new design (as it once had a different paint scheme) ...and still be "the Hermann Monument"? Is it the *materials* that contribute to the authenticity of a monument, or is the monument's primary purpose to serve as a *symbol* of an ideal?

Wiser minds than mine will need to sort such questions out. But HMS has every confidence that the community of New Ulm will rise to this generational challenge and tackle the work that needs to be done in a manner that will make the city proud. - KCW

MINNEAPOLIS MN 553

18 AUG 2022 PM 3 L



THE HERMANN MONUMENT SOCIETY

10 Monument Street

P.O. Box 643

New Ulm, MN 56073 USA

Tom & Kim Schmitz
44 Cedar Drive
New Ulm, MN 56073

56073-156444





HERMANN HEIGHTS PARK

INSCRIPTION PAVER STONE ORDER FORM

(As of May 19, 2021)

\$200.00 Each 8" X 16" X 2" Paver Stone

Cash, or Check made out to: City of New Ulm Park & Rec Dept

Attn: Hermann Paver Stone

Mailed or Delivered to:

122 South Garden Street New Ulm MN 56073

507-359-8344 ParkAndRecDept@newulmmn.gov

Verbiage: Maximum 15 total characters (letters, numbers, punctuation marks or blank spaces) per line; and 3 or fewer lines. Graphics cost more.

DONORS NAME _____

MAILING ADDRESS _____

TELEPHONE optional _____

EMAIL ADDRESS optional _____

Hermann Fest

GERMANS HAVE MORE FUN

September 10, 2022

HERMANN HEIGHTS

11:30 a.m. Dain's Dutchmen
1:30 p.m. Leon Olsen Band
3:30 p.m. Concord Singers

HARMAN PARK

6:00 p.m. Thunder in the Valley:
NU Municipal Band & Battery
7:45 p.m. -10:45 p.m. Jonah & The Whales

FREE

ADMISSION

Fun for the whole family!

GERMAN food, music, and beer!

8:30 p.m. - Fireworks Over Hermann Monument!



Sponsored By:

Hermann Monument Society
www.HermannMonument.com

On Facebook @HermannMonument