

HISTORY IN BRONZE

By Bryan J Ogg

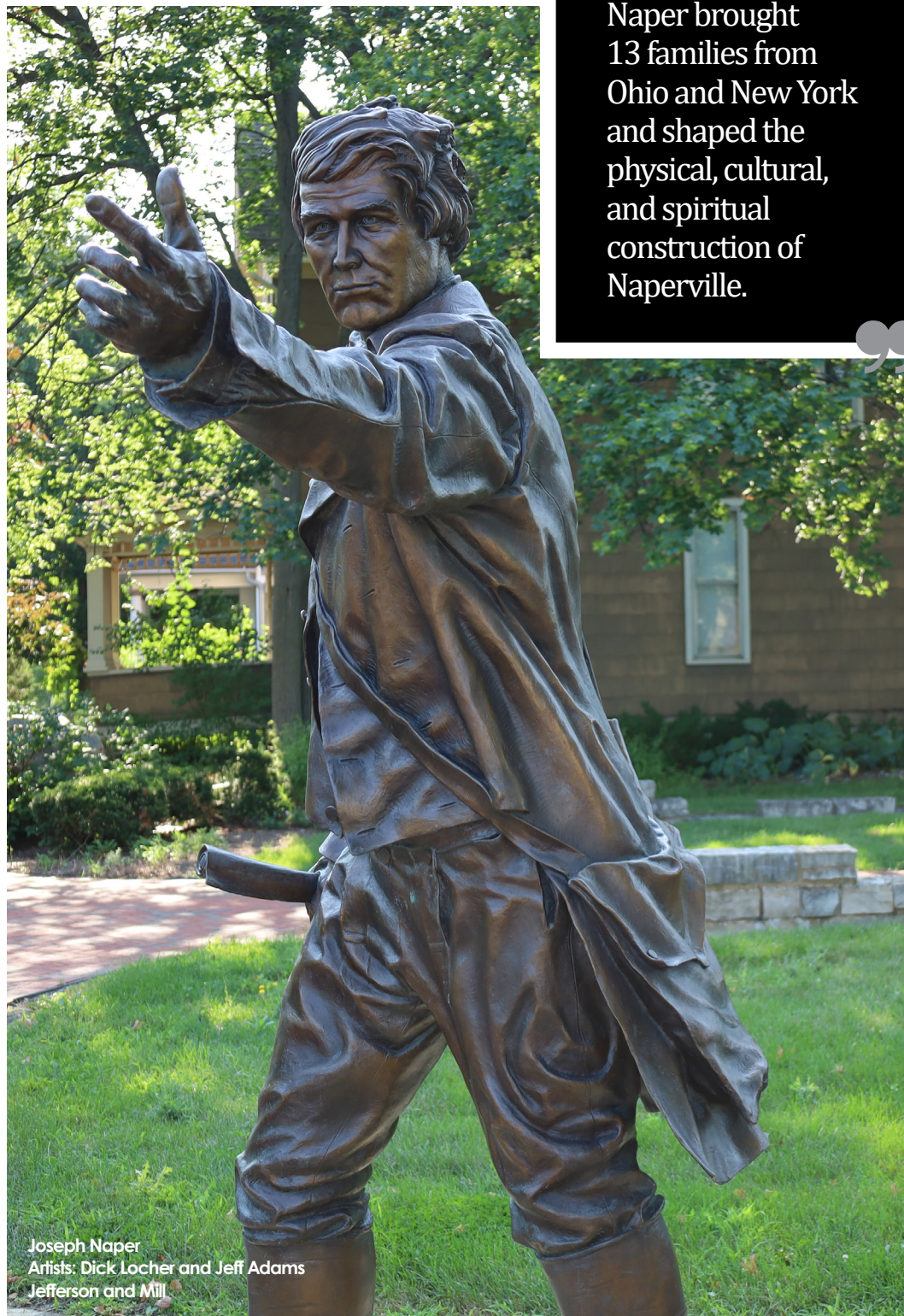
Black and white photographs do not always express the heroic proportions or down-to-earth humanity of a person quite like a statue. To bridge this gap, Brand Bobosky established Century Walk to tell the 20th Century stories of Naperville. The artists engaged by Century Walk used their talents and skills to bring these historical figures to life. Here are just a few of the many bronzes located around Naperville that tell our rich history.

Naper Namesake

Town settler, Joseph Naper, needs little introduction. Vermont native Naper was a ship builder, Great Lakes ship captain, and businessman who saw an opportunity in 1831 to better his position in America and establish a legacy.

Naper brought 13 families from Ohio and New York and shaped the physical, cultural, and spiritual construction of Naperville. The collaboration between Pulitzer-prize winning artist Dick Locher and nationally known artist and foundry owner Jeff Adams was a creative history lesson for both.

Using a single photograph of a 59-year-old Naper and various written accounts and images of relatives of Naper, Adams and Locher created Naper's likeness as an energetic, 30-something pioneer.



Joseph Naper
Artists: Dick Locher and Jeff Adams
Jefferson and Mill

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Veterans Honored

California artist, Shirley Moss' Veterans of Valor is located at the west entrance to Naperville's Central Park.

It is Naperville's most recent memorial to the many Naperville men and women who have served our country in the military.



Leo Kueffler
Artist: Shirley Moss
Naperville's Central Park

Moss is best known for her realism and authenticity, which she achieves through research and photographs from family members and verifying uniform details.

The five veterans of Naperville represent four branches of the military. They not only defended their country but also contributed to their hometown, each in their own way. Leo Kueffler (pictured) who worked for School District 203 for 38 years after he sold his gas station located at the corner of Aurora and Eagle. Kueffler was also a member of the Naperville Civil Defense Unit protecting Naperville's home front during the Cold War.

Riverwalk Royalty

Riverwalk Visionaries by Kathleen Farrell located near Water Street and Main Street on the Riverwalk.

The pair represents Jim Moser (Harold's brother) and Mayor Chester "Chet" Rybicki as they worked on their plan to honor the 150th anniversary of the founding of Naperville in 1981. The Riverwalk is now considered one of Naperville's finest "crown jewels" and is visited by people from all over the world.

Rybicki was twice-elected mayor of Naperville (1975-1983) during a critical period of town growth and downtown revitalization. Artist Farrell included a drawing in Rybicki's hand of volunteers planting flowers and setting bricks as a representation of the hundreds of volunteers who worked hard to make the Riverwalk a reality.



Chester Rybicki
Artist: Kathleen Farrell
Main and Webster, Riverwalk

Carillon Couple

Flash forward a century from Naper's arrival to 1930 and we meet our next town builders, Margaret and Harold Moser.

The Great Depression was hitting most people hard. Moser, however, was a restless businessman who operated a coal and lumber yard and founded a newspaper (The Naperville Sun). He had a knack for seeing a need and creating a solution. Moser sold lumber, bought lots and built homes for the growing community.



Mr. and Mrs. Moser
Artist: Barton Gunderson
Base of The Carillon Tower



Statue detail

Moser's company would eventually be responsible for developing one-third of the subdivisions and neighborhoods of Naperville.

Barton Gunderson's statue Mr. and Mrs. Naperville illustrates the Moser's community-building efforts from solid ground.

Like the artists and metal foundries that melted and crafted these bronzes, the people represented in these statutes cast their molds in the making of the culture and spirit of Naperville. Public art is an incredible way to convey the history of a place. So, comb your hair, stand tall, and say "cheese!"

Head to the nearest statue and take a selfie! Become a part of Naperville's rich history!



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Although Bryan was not raised in Naperville, he knows a lot about the town he now calls home. Bryan is a dedicated researcher, tour guide, and author with more than 30 years of museum and non-profit experience. His last title, Naperville: A Brief History is at local bookstores and libraries.