

Confederate Fountain

After the Civil War, cadres of elite white Southern women created local Ladies Memorial Associations to raise funds to bury and memorialize the Confederate dead and care for needy Confederate veterans and their families. In 1894, they came together to form the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC), whose mission grew to encompass memorials to Confederate soldiers in prominent public spaces. Built in 1916, this granite fountain is perhaps the northernmost UDC memorial. A crucial component in the UDC's campaign to restore honor to defeated Confederate veterans, these memorials were part of a larger campaign to assert the justice of the "Lost Cause." The UDC openly supported the early Ku Klux Klan in its mission of white supremacy and worked to rewrite school textbooks to distort history by romanticizing the Old South. According to this view, valiant Confederate soldiers lost only because of the North's superior numbers and resources; the war was fought over the constitutional issue of states' rights, not slavery; slavery was a benevolent institution. The myth of the "Lost Cause" helped reunite white Southerners and Northerners at the expense of the freed slaves, their descendants, and the ideal of racial equality. Helena architect George Carsley, son of a Union Civil War veteran from Wisconsin, designed the fountain, commissioned at a cost of \$2,000 by the local Winnie Davis Chapter of the UDC. The Butt-Millett fountain in Washington, D.C., a memorial to Titanic victims, inspired his design, which may explain why the fountain resembles a lighthouse. The brass cap interior was originally illuminated. Georgia Young and two others represented the UDC in the Women's Park Association, the group that oversaw the landscaping of Hill Park. Born in Georgia, Young came to Helena in 1885 at age twenty-eight, after completing nurse's training in Connecticut, her mother's home state. She was a founder and Superintendent of St. Peter's Hospital for twenty-two years. In her dedication speech, she "lauded the present-day

American spirit, a spirit of union with no feeling between the old North and South that caused such bitterness and sorrow years ago.”