

E.M. Viquesney and the Doughboy Statue at Memorial Park

Memorial Park in Indiana, Pennsylvania was established for the purpose of honoring men and women who have fought for our country's freedom throughout the years. The park contains many veteran graves and was once used as an Underground Railroad hideaway. The Doughboy Statue, which stands at the center of the park, is the park's most prominent feature. The Doughboy was erected in 1925 by a local committee, headed by Alex Stewart, father of the actor Jimmy Stewart.



Doughboy statues were made to honor veterans from World War I. The official title of the statue is "Spirit of the American Doughboy". Because the local committee wanted to honor all veterans of previous wars they chose the more general name, "Spirit of the American Soldier".

Behind E.M. Viquesney



During World War I the term "doughboy", referring to the American troops, gained widespread use. Sculptor and artist, Ernest Moore Viquesney, was the man behind the famous doughboy statues installed throughout the country to honor World War I Veterans. Researchers believe there may at one time been as many as 845 doughboy statues scattered around the country, but only 145 have been documented to date. There were several other products which used the doughboy, aside from the large statues. Viquesney designed "Spirit of the American Doughboy" lamps that doubled as a candlestick holder and incense burner. He also produced one

foot and rare six inch miniature versions of the statues to go along with the large life size replicas.

Viquesney used several marketing tactics to promote this WWI memorabilia, including an advertising promotion directed specifically to women. He tried to convince American women that their homes would not be complete without “the nation’s most beautiful patriotic lamp.” The American Legion Weekly targeted ex-servicemen to buy Viquesney’s doughboy products. In 1920 Viquesney founded the World War Memorial Association and used this group to promote his



products. From 1936-1937 the doughboy newsletter “Spirit of the American Doughboy” was published in magazines such as “The Monumental News.” Doughboys were advertised as being available in a cast zinc option, but none were found until after mid-1934. Before this the doughboys were made and assembled from 75 stamped “copper/bronze sheets”. The Memorial Park Statue is made from copper/bronze sheets.

The man behind the doughboy craze was Ernest Moore Viquesney. Viquesney was born in Spencer, Indiana and spent some time in Georgia. His first doughboy statues have Americus, Georgia inscribed on the bottom. Viquesney claimed the first doughboy was patented in Spencer, Indiana, but evidence suggests otherwise. During his stay in Georgia he also designed Civil War Memorials. He eventually moved back to Indiana and loved to claim himself as a ‘Hoosier’. Throughout his life he designed several sculptures including state memorials, Andersonville Prison Cemetery and Park, “Comrades” which depicts a WWI and WWII veterans shaking hands, and Wichita (Kansas) State War Memorial. He reportedly knew the famous sculptor, Borglum, who worked on Stone Mountain Georgia and the Black Hills.



Photo courtesy of Seth Gaines

Viquesney’s first marriage to Cora Barnes ended when she died of diphtheria in 1933. His sculpture “The Unveiling,” now at his family burial plot at Riverside

Cemetery in Spencer, Indiana is said to be a model of his second wife, Elizabeth "Betty" Sadler. "The Unveiling," was available for sale in life size and miniature models, just like the American Doughboy statues.

After Betty died, Viquesney committed suicide not long after. He left a note saying he, "could not carry on." Viquesney composed his own obituary for people to read. He highlighted the sculptors he knew, what monuments and statues he had constructed and made note of his Hoosier pride.



After Viquesney's death, Milton Waymire bought all remaining miniature doughboys from Louisville Composition Products. Frederic L. Hollis tried to continue the business in Gosport, Indiana, but his attempts failed. Even with Viquesney's death and Waymire unsuccessful attempt, a few years later T. Perry Wesley would keep the doughboy tradition alive.

T. Perry Wesley and friends began collecting doughboy statues and other Viquesney pieces to open a museum. They advertised in the newspaper for people to donate works of Viquesney to the museum cause.

There are reportedly 80 doughboy statues remaining in 29 states, including 11 in Pennsylvania. The last Doughboy statue installation took place in Verona, PA in 1943. The doughboy statue was not designed to show power through the doughboy, instead Viquesney wanted it to show spirit and determination to preserve freedom for America and its citizens. On your next time visit to Memorial Park in Indiana, PA take a moment to remember the veterans of WWI as the doughboy looks down over the park.

Information on E.M. Viquesney and the Doughboy statue is from an extensive website dedicated to the Doughboy and Viquesney research: <http://emvarchive.weebly.com/index.html>

Above photo of Doughboy lamp courtesy of Mr. Les Kopel, who maintains an extensive website about the Doughboy Statue and E.M. Viquesney. Our thanks to Mr. Kopel and Mr. Earl Goldsmith for the use of information and photos contained in this report.