

The City of Faribault

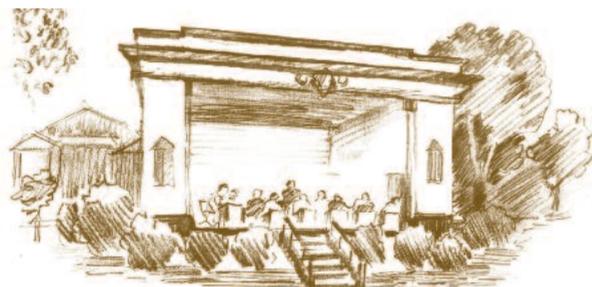
SINCE 1855

Brian Anderson,
City Administrator



CONCERTS IN THE PARK 7:00PM, HISTORIC CENTRAL PARK

130th
Anniversary
Season!



✦ Central Park History

• The City's Oldest Park!

The town's first proprietors, Alexander Faribault, John North, and Porter Nutting, established the first city park in 1855 by setting aside Block 16 in the original town plat. The 2.5 acre public gathering place was given the name Central Park.

Just because the land was set aside for a park did not mean it was a tree-laden lush green space. On the contrary. The land was prairie ground that defied shade tree and flower planting. In an effort to improve the park, some public-spirited souls dug up trees from a nearby woodlot, replanting them in the uncultivated soil. Without the benefit of mulch to hold in moisture, the first trees withered away. A second effort to add trees to the park began in 1867 when a local Fruit Growers Association hosted an indoor strawberry show and donated \$38 in proceed to a tree fund. Perhaps these were the first trees to gain a foothold as in a *Faribault Herald* article from 1901 stating, "The park is well kept and is set with native trees."

In a simpler day, an individual named Bob Smith was the park's caretaker. Hired in 1905, he held the position for 17 years. Nowadays, Faribault Parks & Recreation maintains Central Park, including mowing, tree planting, and band shell improvements. A local group of gardeners, aptly named G.R.O.W.S., cares for flower beds and also plants trees.

• Outdoor Concert Series

From its inception, Faribault was regarded as "The Athens of the West" for being a center of the arts, culture, and education. It's no wonder one can look for and find many references to the city and public supporting the arts at Central Park. According to our research, there has been a regular concert series held since 1887, making 2016 the 130th anniversary season.

A natural progression to having musical events like this almost requires a structure for musicians to project their sound from. In 1879, the Faribault Brass Band circulated a "subscription paper" to raise money for a band stand. In another effort, Faribault City Council wanted a bandstand constructed in Central Park in 1921, and succeeded when the Wm. Weires Co. built one that April. From our research, this was the first band shell. In speaking with a pair of elderly ladies in summer of 2015, they recall a band shell that burnt down at the park in the 1930s, and afterwards being rebuilt. From all accounts, the current band shell structure has graced the park since that time.

Due to generous support from the City, area individuals and businesses, the longstanding musical series will continue as a free program. Events will be held at 7pm each Thursday night beginning June 16 through August 18. Come help us enjoy the 130th anniversary season! See page 11 for the complete 2016 summer concert series or for a printable schedule, see <http://www.faribault.org/219/City-Enrichment-Programs>.