

Elaine Franz Witten

Fine Art Bronzes

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The Village Lion

The historic village of Old Bennington, Vermont commissioned from the artist the two bronze lion heads as part of a larger restoration project in 1991, when the Village restored Upper Monument Avenue. As part of that rehabilitation, the pipes to the fountain were replaced and two new bronze lion heads were ordered to replace the originals, which had long since disappeared. The fountain was first placed in 1906, a gift to the Village from the National Humane Alliance (Hermon Lee Ensign, founder). The National Humane Alliance donated similar fountains—really horse watering troughs—to more than 100 cities and towns across the country to encourage kind treatment, including access to fresh water, for animals. (more information about these fountains is available here:

<http://electronicvalley.org/DERBY/QUIZ/pages/wateringtrough.htm> although it would appear that more research is still wanting on this interesting byway of history).

All of the granite fountains including this one, featured bronze lion heads, and had an upper trough for thirsty equines and a lower trough for dogs. They were quarried and manufactured on the island of Vinalhaven, Maine by the Bodwell Granite Company, which flourished from 1852-1922.

In the 1991 restoration, the water trough structure was converted to a water fountain for passers by. Water comes out of the mouth of the two lions, placed on either side, and flows into the granite basin when the drinking fountain is used. The fountain now decorates the Old Bennington Village Green.

A regal *Village Lion* makes a handsome addition to any garden space. It may be mounted on a wall or, as in Old Bennington, decoratively adorn a water feature. Placed outdoors it takes on, over time, a beautiful gray-green natural patina.

Medium: Bronze

Size: 8" × 10" × 5.5"

Price: \$1,900

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COAST-TO-COAST THIRST — East met west at the recently - repaired fountain on Monument Avenue when members of the Richard B. Graham family (foreground and at right) of the Cape Cod town of West Dennis drank alongside the Karl Vespers (father and daughter) of Palo Alto, Calif., The fountain stood dry during the summer of 1966 and was just put back in working order. It was constructed by The National Humane Alliance in 1906. (Sullivan)