

# City to celebrate Coleman park

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UPDATED: 05/19/2011 05:05:59 PM EDT

Lebanon will be transported back in time 150 years on Saturday, when the Coleman Memorial Park trustees present a parade to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the city obtaining the 100-acre park from the Coleman and Brock families.

Before the land became the city's, it was called Mt. Lebanon and was home to G. Dawson Coleman, the iron and steel baron who, along with Horace Brock, built the North Lebanon Furnace that once occupied land just to the south of the park. The Brock family also owned mansions at the property before they joined the Coleman family in deeding them to the city in 1936 after family members moved away or died.

Saturday's parade will be a re-enactment of the community's greeting to Coleman upon his return to Lebanon from one of his frequent trips out of town, according to park trustee and historian Irv Siegel.

The festivities will begin at 11 a.m. at the former Philadelphia and Reading Railroad station at North Eighth Street and the railroad tracks, where actors portraying Dawson and his wife will be greeted by members of the Perseverance Band and the 93rd Pennsylvania Volunteers, who will escort their horse-drawn carriage through city streets to their "Homestead" mansion at the park.

"G. Dawson was a very significant man in the community in the 1850s and '60s and even into the 1870s," Siegel said. "He was politically well known, and there had been talk of him running for governor of Pennsylvania.

"He frequently traveled to Philadelphia and Washington, D.C., especially around the Civil War. When he would return to Lebanon, his servants would bring the horse and carriage to the train station."

Saturday's re-creation will begin with remarks by Mayor Sherry Capello and a performance by the Perseverance Band, which will appear in a parade for the first time since 1976.

From the railroad station, the carriage will carry Dawson and his wife, Debra, portrayed by Jim and Lisa Polczynski, north on North Eighth Street to Guilford Street, then west to North 12th Street. From there, the parade will proceed north to Basehore Drive, past Christ Presbyterian Church and into the park.

At the park, participants will assemble at the site of the Homestead mansion, where brief remarks will be made by David Schnoke, chairman of the park board of trustees; Rosemarie Christianson,

president of the Friends of Coleman Park; and Jim Polczynski, in the character of G. Dawson Coleman.

Capt. Dennis Shirk of the 93rd and Wayne Fox, president of the Perseverance Band, will also speak. And a mural painted by local artist Andrew Zidik will be unveiled at the Carriage House.

The event will conclude with a free ice cream social from noon to 2 p.m., courtesy of the Coleman Memorial Park Mini-Golf and Ice Cream Parlor.

Other features of the event will include an encampment by the 93rd, which will participate in a 10:45 a.m. Sunday service at Christ Presbyterian Church, 1300 Maple St., also to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the park. The church shares its history with the park because it was built by G. Dawson and his wife in 1870.

While this is the major event of the park's 75th anniversary, Siegel said future events at the park, including the Fourth of July fireworks show and the Heritage and Harvest festivals in the fall, will share in the celebration.

The park's anniversary coincides with the creation of a master plan that details recommendations for future improvements to the park. The finished plan is being reviewed by the state Department of Community and Economic Development and should be released in its final form soon, Siegel said.

For more information about Coleman Memorial Park and Friends of Coleman Park, visit the website at [colemanmemorialpark.org](http://colemanmemorialpark.org).

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### **Coleman book for sale**

A limited number of copies of "The Colemans: Lebanon's 'Royal Family'" will be on sale for \$15 at Coleman Memorial Park on Saturday after the parade to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the city obtaining the park. All proceeds from the book will benefit the park.

The book, first published by the Lebanon County Historical Society in 1996, is the definitive history of the Coleman family and is filled with photos of family members, their mansions and the North Lebanon Furnace that fueled their fortunes.