Shrine Dedicates New Cannon

Have you seen the Lincoln Memorial Shrine’s new cannon? Dedicated on Saturday, August 14, the reproduction Model 1857 Napoleon 12-pounder field gun dated 1864 is now beautifully situated in Smiley Park.

What started as a suggestion by former Watchorn Lincoln Memorial Association Trustee Jim Dunn to fellow Trustee Dr. Boyd Nies resulted in a generous gift by the Nies family to bring a cannon to the Lincoln Shrine. Manufactured by Trail Rock Ordnance of Tennessee, the cannon’s dedication ceremony drew an estimated 150 onlookers who witnessed the inaugural shots fired by Drs. Boyd, Alan, and Kenneth Nies under the guidance of the 1st Pennsylvania Light Artillery, a reenactor group popular at the annual Lincoln Shrine Open House. Music by the Camp Carleton Cornet Band and an appearance by President Abraham Lincoln presenter Robert Broski, the Sons of Union Veterans, and other reenactors, rounded out the celebratory program.

Following the event, the cannon was installed on the west side of the Lincoln Shrine and is the perfect selfie location! Make sure to tag @lincolnshrine and use the hashtag #lincolnshrine to share your photos. A big thanks to everyone who helped make the day a big success!
With the Lincoln Memorial Shrine closed during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and early 2021, the staff of the Special Collections Division of A.K. Smiley Public Library worked to continue to share history through the Resilient Redlands Webinar Series. Beginning in April, 2020, and continuing through May, 2021, the series brought 31 webinars focusing on the history of Redlands, the Civil War, World War II, and stories in commemoration of Black History Month. These programs are now available to be streamed on the Special Collection YouTube channel “AKSPL Special Collections.” Check out the following webinars focusing on Abraham Lincoln and the Civil War:

“The Civil War in Southern California”
“From the Shrine’s Collections: Colonel Chapin and the 21st Connecticut Infantry”
“From the Shrine’s Collections: Emancipation and Lincoln’s Letter to James Conkling”
“From the Shrine’s Collections: The U.S. Sanitary Commission”
“Grant’s First Great Victory: The Campaign for Forts Henry & Donelson”
“The Life of Elmer Ellsworth of the 1st Fire Zouaves”
“Lincoln’s Greatest Decision: Emancipation and the Use of Black Troops”
“Warriors & Patriots: Women of the Civil War”

As an added bonus, this year’s Virtual Lincoln Dinner is also available on the channel, along with a performance of “The President’s Emancipation March” by University of Redlands Professor Dr. Lara Urrutia.

To access the videos, visit the Events page on the Lincoln Shrine website at www.lincolnshrine.org, or search “AKSPL Special Collections” on YouTube to find the channel. Contact the Heritage Room at (909)798-7632 with any questions.
As the tensions within the Civil War South grew, many poor white women began to break the social norms of the time to make demands and eventually take up arms against the Confederacy. The stories of these women are rarely discussed in the larger context of the Civil War; however, the actions of these women affected Confederate laws and were discussed in papers across the world. Mary Jackson—the future leader of the largest demonstration—was a working woman and mother to a Confederate soldier who also helped her husband run their farm. Jackson was well connected in both the city and the rural areas of Richmond, Virginia. When Jackson’s son was drafted—most likely in 1862 after the Confederate Conscription Act began—she and her family were one of the many families who could not produce enough food on the farm. She was also undoubtedly terrified that her child would die in a war that he had no choice in joining. Jackson’s response was quick and direct. Like many other women whose husbands, brothers, and sons were drafted, she began to write personal letters to the Confederate government, which asked for boys and men whose labor was needed to be sent home and begging the government for aid and support. When these letters failed to receive an answer, Jackson became well acquainted with John Jones, the Richmond War Clerk. She frequently petitioned him for her son’s discharge from military service so he could return safely and rejoin the family farm. Jackson’s demands continued to go unanswered. In response, her rage began to grow, as did that of many white female Confederate wives, mothers, and sisters struggling on the home front. While Mary Jackson is the face of this Richmond movement, her story is not unique. Thousands of women faced similar fates and wanted to have family members return from war and wanted a return to the prewar status quo. Make no mistake: these women were not calling to topple Southern slave holding society, but they were demanding socioeconomic and cultural stability. The women like Mary Jackson became known as the “soldiers’ wives.” In their early letters, the soldiers’ wives, like Jackson, called for government assistance and, most importantly, to bring their male relatives home from war. According to Stephanie McCurry, these women also began to petition the Confederate government for lowered food prices. One of these petitions ended with the signature of 23 women and was accompanied by their “identity in terms of the family relation to men in military service and the sacrifice they had made to the cause.” When their letters, then petitions, and finally meetings with the Richmond and other War Clerks went unanswered, these women saw no other choice but to rebel and take what their government was refusing them and demand to be heard.

The spring of 1863 was a time of turmoil, war, and growing discontent within the Confederacy and became the setting for the planned mobilization of poor white women protesting their governments in a series of demonstrations which have come to be known collectively as the Confederate or Southern Bread Riots. These demonstrations made a statement that was unique for poor white southern women of the time, as a typical white
woman’s place was a laborer and/or homemaker, not a rebel. These demonstrations were a visible and very public display of their growing discontent towards the Confederacy. The most well-known demonstration in this series occurred in Richmond on April 2, 1863. While Richmond is often discussed as a singularity, it happened in the midst of at least nine other similar protests: Atlanta, Georgia on March 16; Salisbury, North Carolina on March 18; Mobile, Alabama on March 25; Petersburg, Virginia on April 1; Richmond, Virginia on April 2; Columbus, Georgia on April 11; Milledgeville, Georgia on April 14; Macon, Georgia in late April; Butts County, Georgia also in late April. These demonstrations differed in size, some reporting at least a dozen women raiding small businesses and government transports, while others were much larger and focused on major downtown districts throughout the South. The aspects that remain constant throughout these various demonstrations is the class, gender, and race of those perpetrating the demonstration, what these women stole, and why they demonstrated. The poor and working-class white women of the Confederacy planned and enacted their vengeance on the Confederacy for price gouging, the inequality and disproportionate impact of the Confederate draft, and lack of governmental support toward their citizens. These demonstrations were spread throughout major urban centers as well as rural areas. Some of these demonstrations were violent, with calls of “Bread or Blood;” while others were non-violent or stopped by police before they could become violent.

The rage that these women experienced and displayed at the various demonstrations was threatening to Confederate leadership, order, and morale and, therefore, was systematically
discredited. As historians do work on events that include “female rage,” we must remember that “the stereotypes whereby femininity demands the suppression of anger while masculinity rewards its expression, and whereby angry women are hysterical harpies but angry men—white men, at any rate—are heroes.” The language that surrounds the various demonstrations reveals these gendered assumptions and stereotypes. The women who planned and subsequently led the South demonstrations were labeled “hunger maddened Amazons,” prostitutes, “Yankee hags,” and other insults, leveled primarily by the Confederate papers. These demeaning comments were specifically gendered to delegitimize and stigmatize female activism and grievances and claiming of the public and political spheres. Confederate leaders faced streets filled with thousands of angry, armed women. These same men sought to delegitimize their protests using attacks upon their appearances, personhood, and sexuality, rather than consider the rightness or merit of their cause.

Significant disparities in the media coverage of these spring 1863 protests reveal how much this female unrest challenged the status quo and was alternately featured, dismissed, and demonized. Historians continue to work to understand the motivations, acts, and repercussions of these events. The language surrounding these events has been used to demean the actions of the women who participated. Using the terminology of riot has worked to diminish the actions that these women took against their government, firstly in letters and petitions, and ending in violent demonstrations. When these women took up arms against the Confederacy, the southern press, which favored the government, actively tried to prove that the rebellions were not coming from the Confederacy’s women but from outside invaders. Some Confederate newspapers worked to purposely degrade female protestors and their leaders. Other papers reported dutifully because they could not ignore the events of the demonstrations but also called them “outrageous.” The specifically gendered insults were used by elite men and women to “deny the complicity of any ‘true’ Richmond ladies in such ‘base’ activities.” The loaded language used to describe this event and its participants exists not only in contemporaneous press but persists in much current Civil War scholarship that provides only passing reference to these “outrageous” events.

The spring, 1863 white, female-led protests were a reaction against wartime deprivation and a demand for voice in the political sphere. This event was far more than a few skirmishes over...
The demonstrations shaped the course of the war by demanding change, which brought more foot soldiers home and exposed and challenged war profiteering off the backs of Confederate women. The women of the demonstrations were neither “hunger-maddened Amazons” nor “Bread Rebels”; they became political activists, women who planned, and executed a series of successful demonstrations that resulted in legal changes and demonstrates the possibilities of power for white southern women.

Ms. Sawyer Castleberry-Backman is a recent graduate of University of Redlands; she graduated Magna Cum Laude with a Bachelors of Arts degree in history and has recently earned her Single Subject Teaching Credential. She looks forward to continuing to expand on this important research in future works.

Northern newspapers, like The Waukegan Weekly Gazette of Illinois seen here, reported on the riots in April, 1863

Have you included the Watchorn Lincoln Memorial Association in your estate planning? If so, let the Shrine know so you may be recognized as a member of The Watchorn Society. For more information, please contact the Shrine at (909) 798-7565 or admin@akspl.org.
On June 17, 2021, 156 years after the emancipation of enslaved Americans and following decades of effort, Juneteenth received an official designation as a national holiday. Signed by President Joe Biden, the national recognition came a century after the terrible Tulsa Race Massacre that decimated the Black Greenwood neighborhood of Tulsa and resulted in the death of between 75 and 100 people.

The origins of Juneteenth lie in the end of the Civil War as United States troops moved through the South. While President Abraham Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation freed enslaved people in rebelling states in 1863 and the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution formally ended the nation’s system of enslavement in 1865, countless enslaved Americans in the Deep South remained in bondage. On June 19, 1865, soldiers arrived in Galveston Bay, Texas and informed the enslaved population of their freedom, a momentous occasion that became a day of independence for Black Americans and was eventually called Juneteenth.

The first Juneteenth celebration took place on June 19, 1866, the one-year anniversary of the pronouncement, and the day eventually became a rallying point for African Americans across the county as they battled against the prejudicial circumstances created by Jim Crow. Interest in the commemoration waned during the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s as conversations turned to addressing the vital issues of systemic discrimination, disenfranchisement, and segregation. Revived in the late 1960s, Juneteenth earned recognition as a state holiday in Texas in 1980, eventually earning that status in all states except South Dakota, before its federal recognition this year.
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