Shrine’s Lincoln Season Returns

After a yearlong hiatus of in-person events, the 2022 Lincoln Season was a great success! Celebrating the 50th anniversary of the first Open House, 90th anniversary of the Lincoln Memorial Shrine, and 90th Watchorn Lincoln Dinner, this year’s festivities included a new exhibition, special programming, and a documentary on the history of the Shrine.

On Saturday, February 5th, the golden anniversary of the first Open House was celebrated in the Lincoln Shrine and Smiley Park. A tradition started in honor of the museum’s 40th year half a century ago, the Open House has evolved to include the participation of reenactor groups, live music, and family activities. The event drew almost 500 people and included the participation of two dozen reenactors.

The Shrine’s 90th anniversary was feted with a unique Watchorn Lincoln Dinner on February 12th. Nearly 200 revelers celebrated the momentous occasion with live music and the premier of “Enduring Legacies: The Lincoln Shrine at 90,” a special documentary produced for the event. The evening concluded with a spectacular fireworks presentation!

The Lincoln Memorial Shrine thanks the evening’s underwriters, Watchorn Lincoln Memorial Association Trustees Bill Hatfield and Dr. Christopher Walker.

If you missed the event or would like to watch the documentary again, visit News & Events at www.lincolnshrine.org.

For more information, contact the Heritage Room at (909)798-7632 or heritage@akspl.org.
THANKS TO YOUR GENEROSITY

Supporters of the Lincoln Memorial Shrine never cease to amaze! Thanks to the unwavering generosity of sponsors to the 2022 Watchorn Lincoln Dinner, a staggering $52,000 was raised! This record-breaking amount will aid in the acquisition of a special item to be unveiled at the 2023 Dinner.

Past sponsorship acquisitions have enhanced the Shrine’s collections in many ways, and this year is sure to be no different. From letters written and signed by President Lincoln to artifacts from his presidential campaign in 1860, Lincoln Dinner sponsorship acquisitions have allowed the collections to grow. Explore previous acquisitions by visiting the Collections page at www.lincolnshrine.org.

The Lincoln Shrine offers sincere thanks to this year’s sponsors:

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As is now tradition, guests to the Lincoln Dinner were introduced to the new addition made possible by last year’s sponsorship fund: a wooden axe carried by a member of the Wide Awakes during the 1860 presidential campaign. The axe is a valuable addition to the Shrine’s artifact collection and helps tell multiple stories, from Abraham Lincoln’s first run for the highest office to the youth movement that helped propel him to popularity.

Like never before, the 1860 presidential election inspired the enthusiasm and patriotism of young Americans. Spurred by an interest in the most important issues of the day—namely the enslavement of Black Americans and the threat of civil war—young men (and occasionally women) came together in northern cities to march in support of the Republican Party and its new presidential candidate. Recognizing an immense opportunity, Party leaders sought to entice potential voters who were swept up in the energetic new movement.

Known as the Wide Awakes, the first group organized in Hartford, Connecticut in March of 1860 and quickly experienced growth among their ranks. Within weeks, Wide Awake clubs sprouted across the northern states, characterized by their adoption of paramilitary-style uniforms and torch lit marches. As the movement swept across the Northeast, clubs formed within communities. With names such as the Rail Maulers, Lincoln Rangers, and Rail Splitters, Wide Awake clubs played on Lincoln’s upbringing on the American frontier and called on his reputation as “Honest Abe” to attract disaffected Americans of voting age, particularly farmers and wage laborers. Through regular meetings, public demonstrations of support, and social appeal, the Wide Awakes electrified the 1860 presidential campaign, strengthening the Republican Party and contributing to high voter turnout on Election Day.

Organized along military lines, Wide Awake clubs were led by captains and lieutenants who carried red or blue glass lanterns, while members carried banners, double-swivel Pitkin torches, rifle torches, and other similar accoutrement. Wooden axes, like this one carried by John E. Edmunds of the Rail Splitters’ Brigade, were symbolic of the “Rail Splitter” persona associated with Abraham Lincoln throughout the campaign. Believed to have organized in Massachusetts, the Rail Splitters’ Brigade was one of many Wide Awakes clubs to adopt the image.
Did You Know?

Did you know the Shrine’s bust of Abraham Lincoln by sculptor George Grey Barnard is made from the same material as Michelangelo’s famed statue of David in Florence? Known as Luna marble by ancient Romans who used it for sculpture and building décor, Carrara marble is mined near the eponymous city in Italy’s Tuscany region. Recognized for its stunning white color with blue-gray veining, Carrara marble was a favorite of Barnard, who utilized the material in many of his works.

SHRINE RESUMES PROGRAMMING

In-person programming has returned to the Lincoln Memorial Shrine. In addition to the Open House and Watchorn Lincoln Dinner, the Shrine has hosted musical programs and lectures over the past few months.

In celebration of the holiday season, the Shrine presented Camp Carleton Christmas Carols on Saturday, December 18. Hosted in Smiley Park outside of the museum, the always-popular program attracted approximately 130 people who joined in the holiday merriment.

On Saturday, March 5, renowned biographer Walter Stahr presented “Chase and Lincoln: Rivals and Colleagues.” Focusing on Salmon P. Chase, Secretary of the Treasury under Abraham Lincoln, the program provided an overview of Chase’s life and his contentious relationship with President Lincoln. Dozens of history enthusiasts attended the program.

Check out future newsletters and the Shrine’s website at www.lincolnshrine.org for information about upcoming programming.

DON’T MISS “LINCOLN IN FILM”

The Lincoln in Film series continues! Join us every other month at 2pm in the Contemporary Club of A.K. Smiley Public Library for free screenings of the following films:

Young Mr. Lincoln (1939)
April 16 (Not Rated)

Abe Lincoln in Illinois (1940)
June 18 (Not Rated)

Abraham Lincoln: Vampire Hunter (2012)
September 17 (Rated PG-13)

Lincoln (2012)
November 19 (Rated R)

Follow Us on Instagram

Remember to follow @lincolnshrine on Instagram to learn about upcoming events, learn facts about the Civil War, and see images of past programs. Tell your friends and family to help get the word out!
“Masterpiece of Sculpting”: Barnard’s Bust of Lincoln

This year marks the centennial of Robert and Alma Watchorn’s acquisition of the cornerstone of the Lincoln Memorial Shrine: the Carrara marble bust of Abraham Lincoln by George Grey Barnard. The Watchorns’ desire to give this stunning sculpture to the people of Redlands served as the impetus for the creation of the museum and cemented the family’s place among Redlands’s best known philanthropists. This milestone affords an opportunity to learn about Barnard and the importance of his work to the Lincoln Shrine.

American sculptor George Grey Barnard was born in Pennsylvania in 1863 as the fires of the Civil War were burning brightly. Growing up in the Midwest, Barnard moved to Chicago as a young man where he studied at the Academy of Design under the tutelage of Leonard and Douglas Volk; the former remains best known for the creation of a life mask of Abraham Lincoln in 1860 that has served as the model in depictions of Lincoln for generations of artists.

Barnard moved to Paris in 1883 where he spent the next 15 years, first as a “starving artist” and later under the patronage of American millionaire Albert Corning Clark, heir to the Singer Sewing Machine fortune and patron of the arts. Barnard returned to New York City at the turn of the century and gained notoriety for his work.

In 1911, he received a commission from Charles Taft, half-brother of the president, to create a Lincoln statue for the city of Cincinnati. The sculptor studied virtually every known photograph and illustration of Lincoln before undertaking the sculpture. He examined other Lincoln statuary and Leonard Volk’s life-mask of Lincoln. He created “mock-ups” in order to study Lincoln’s image from every angle. As part of that process, Barnard sculpted several larger than life busts from Carrara marble. “If a Lincoln statue turns the greatest aristocrat or the most ragged lost soul away, the statue is unworthy,” Barnard declared. “A Lincoln statue should be so conceived that no man or woman could stand before it without feeling, here is one who understands.”
When Barnard’s Cincinnati Lincoln was unveiled in 1917, it sparked a major controversy. Unlike his busts, the statue was derided for over-emphasizing Lincoln’s rough hewn common appearance. It was described as “horrible”, “grotesque” and even “defamatory”. Among the most vocal critics was Robert Lincoln, who lobbied successfully to prevent a replica of the statue from being erected in London.

Despite the criticism from Robert, one marble bust was purchased by Robert and Alma Watchorn in early 1922, less than six months after the death of their son, Ewart. The younger Watchorn admired Lincoln and saw him as an inspirational figure, a fact recalled by his father in the years after his death. Purchased in New York, where the couple maintained a home, the bust remained there while the Watchorns travelled between California, New York, and Europe.

The Watchorns made their way to Redlands in the 1920s where they purchased a winter residence and became friendly with many of the city’s leaders, including Mary Kimberly Shirk, a prominent philanthropist and neighbor of the couple. As she recalled years later, the seed of what eventually grew to become the Lincoln Memorial Shrine was planted in a conversation she had with Robert. Conversing over dinner, Robert proposed gifting the bust to the people of Redlands, an idea she readily supported.

The public announcement of the gift came in January, 1931 in a meeting at A.K. Smiley Public Library where Robert suggested an addition to the library to house the sculpture. Giving Alma credit for the idea, Robert explained the bust would serve as an inspiration for visitors and envisioned a space where it could be “studied in solitude.” Under direction from Smiley Library Board of Trustees President Kirk H. Field, the Lincoln Memorial committee formed to develop a plan to showcase what was described as Barnard’s “masterpiece of sculpting.”

George Grey Barnard’s note accompanying the bust:
“This Lincoln Head is the property of Mr. Robert Watchorn of Los Angeles, Cal. January 10, 1922. ‘All Paid For’. GG Barnard”

Members of the Sacred Heart Girl Scouts present a Junior Guest Book in front of the Barnard bust, 1960.
Early ideas included exhibiting the bust in an extension of a sunken garden at Smiley library and a separate building with an open-air court, before approval of the final enclosed jewel box design in the spring of 1931. Discussing the chosen enclosure, architect Elmer Grey explained, “the Barnard bust is too precious a bit of marble to take any chances of injury from exposure or rain or smudge smoke.” Construction began in June of that year.

In the months leading up to the building’s completion, photographs and stories of the bust often accompanied articles about the Shrine’s creation. The museum opened to the public on February 12, 1932 and the Barnard bust has remained the focal point of the museum for generations of visitors.

Created in honor of the 90th anniversary of the gift of the Lincoln Memorial Shrine, “Enduring Legacies: The Lincoln Shrine at 90” was unveiled at the Open House on February 5. Providing an overview of Robert Watchorn’s life from his upbringing in Alfreton, England, through his later years as a renowned philanthropist, the exhibition features items from the Watchorn Collections, including a medal from Robert’s time in the mining industry, his appointment as Commissioner at Ellis Island signed by President Theodore Roosevelt, and blueprints for the Lincoln Memorial Shrine. Visitors can also watch a home movie of the Watchorns on a visit to Alfreton in the 1930s. You won’t want to miss it!
Interested in the LINCOLN MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION?

If you or a friend would like to become an annual supporter of the Lincoln Memorial Association, please mail a check payable to:

Lincoln Memorial Association
125 West Vine Street, Redlands, CA 92373

Name: ____________________________
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☐ $25 Individual  ☐ $35 Family
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Annual support is January - December. Individual supporters may purchase one discounted ticket to the Lincoln Dinner, and Family and Sustaining supporters may purchase two.

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