



NEWS

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HIGHLIGHTS FROM OUR ANNUAL MEETING

Our Annual Membership Meeting was held on Tuesday May 18th as part of our regular May meeting. It was the first meeting held at the Bloomington Event Center since February 2020.

Current Slate of Officers Renewed for One Year.

As a result of the COVID19 pandemic, it was decided that the current slate of officers would be carried over for next year. This was approved by the membership by voice vote.

Summer Reading Book Sale

The Summer Reading book sale was a big success. Approximately 9 boxes of books were sold and the Round Table made \$159.

Special Guest: Frances Martin, State History Day Civil War Prize Winner.

Frances Martin, a student at Mounds Park Academy and winner of this year's Civil War Prize at the State History Day contest, was a guest at our May meeting. She attended the meeting with her father. Her award-winning essay can be found later in the newsletter.

JOIN OUR FACEBOOK GROUP

Are you on Facebook? If so, please consider joining our Civil War Round Table - Twin Cities Group. On our Group page you will find posts shared from some of the



First Minnesota Monument at Gettysburg

best Civil War history organizations in the county including the American Battlefield Trust, Civil War Chronicles and Emerging Civil War. As a group member you can post and share any Civil War related items (photos, stories, questions) you wish. If you are already on Facebook, make sure you the search for our group and ask to be a member.

STEVEN SCHIER'S CIVIL WAR TRIVIA QUESTION OF THE MONTH:

What was the northernmost battle of the Civil War?

(See the last page for the answer)

THIS MONTH IN CIVIL WAR HISTORY – JUNE

- 1st 1861 – Skirmish at Fairfax Court House, Virginia
- 2nd 1861 – P.G.T. Beauregard takes command of Confederate forces in northern VA
- 6th 1862 – Battle of Memphis, Tennessee
- 7th 1862 – William Mumford is hung in New Orleans for destroying a U.S. flag
- 7th 1863 – Battle of Milliken's Bend, Louisiana
- 10th 1864 – Battle of Brice's Cross Roads (Guntown), Mississippi
- 16th 1862 – Battle of Secessionville, South Caroline
- 19th 1862 – Lincoln signs a law prohibiting slavery in the Western territories.
- 23rd 1865 – General Stand Watie surrenders Confederate forces in Indian Territory.
- 27th 1864 – Battle of Kennesaw Mountain, Georgia
- 28th 1863 – Union Major General George Gordon Meade replaces Joseph Hooker as head of the Army of the Potomac

CIVIL WAR BIRTHDAYS – JUNE

- 1st 1825 Brig.Gen. John Hunt Morgan C.S.
- 11th 1823 Maj. Gen. James Lawson Kemper C.S.
- 8th 1806 Brig. Gen. Gideon Johnson Pillow C.S.
- 14th 1811 Harriet Beecher Stowe author of "Uncle Tom's Cabin.

From the Dusty Collection #11

Coffee: Our Civil War Based National Addiction

America's infatuation with coffee became a passionate love affair after 1865. Over three million men (and some hundreds of women) served in the ranks of the Union Army. All were issued a daily ration of coffee and often came to value it more than sleep or food! At the end of the war the established supply chain that kept those soldiers caffeinated expanded as coffee replaced tea, and to some extent hard cider, as the favored drink of the masses.

Here is a little information on how a little roasted bean served the Union Army, like these Illinois boys at an 1863 picket post outside Memphis.

American soldiers were issued whiskey every day until 1832. A gill, or a quarter pint, was the ration intended to preserve health and warm the soldier on a cold morning. But that daily ration also created alcoholics and a variety of discipline problems when soldiers surreptitiously hoarded their ration



for a later binge. So to a chorus of groans from thirsty soldiers coffee replaced whiskey in the daily ration. The Navy followed suit as it dropped its long-standing rum ration to the chagrin of sailors.

The daily ration was set at 10 pounds of green coffee beans or 8 pounds of roasted, or roasted and ground coffee per 100 men. That works out to an average of 36 pounds per man every year. Coffee was shipped in bags and usually issued in the form of unroasted, green beans which the soldier then had to roast in his tin cup or frying pan and grind with the socket end of his bayonet. At times the army contractor took care of the roasting, though ready-to-brew grounds were seldom issued. The quality of imported green coffee was precisely specified in Subsistence Department regulations.

Like other parts of the ration, coffee was purchased in immense lots and processed through armies, corps, division, brigade, and regimental commissaries based on written requisitions. Company commissary or quartermaster sergeants were provided their coffee from the regimental commissary officer, a detailed lieutenant. Back at the company street they often spread a rubber blanket on the ground and divided up the beans into little piles, one for each of the typically twenty to one hundred men in a company. To avoid favoritism in handing out coffee and food, some sergeants turned their backs, pointed to a pile, and said "and who shall have this ration?" as each man stepped forward in turn. The precious beans were quickly transferred into safe storage,



like this recycled sock used by Sergeant Mark Judkins of the 4th US Light Artillery who preserved it with his army gear for the wonderment of a 21st Century collector!

Sugar was also issued and likewise became a national addiction, with 15 pounds issued daily per 100 men. The sugar was shipped in heavy wooden barrels. Some soldiers mixed their

sugar ration with their coffee beans while others piled it on a hardtack for immediate consumption and then craved the sweet until next issue. Army sugar was processed in huge plants but was not the finely ground and bleached product of today. The closest approximation is modern raw sugar, coarse and off white.

When regiments were on the march and halted for their hourly break hundreds of little fires were kindled within minutes to brew coffee. Each man carried a 4 X 4-inch tinned steel cup, or a discarded tin can with wire loop added to the top. Soldiers partnered with another (that's where the term "pard" came about.) One man would go off for water while the other kindled a little fire and started brewing a cup to share. Pards shared their blankets and rations, took care of each other when sick, and were a "husband and wife" of the little community which was the company. If the call to "Fall In" came before the coffee was done the grumbling could be heard for miles!



Most American coffee, and especially for Dixie, entered the busy Port of New Orleans. Confederate armies and civilians were soon denied their coffee as the blockade of the southern states tightened and the city was captured in 1862. War supplies had precedent over civilian luxuries with fewer and fewer blockade runners making it to an ever shrinking number of ports. Real coffee soared in price and was hoarded for special occasions. Soldiers traded for coffee between the lines using tobacco that Yankees craved. Most Southerners learned to improvise by making a substitute drink out of parched rye, rice, beets, okra seed, chicory or even sweet potatoes. When the substitutes were dark, chocolaty and caramelized it was time to time to brew. And while the resulting drink lacked a caffeine punch at least it flavored questionable water and probably kept soldiers healthier thanks to the boiling. Chicory coffee is still available today and not too bad! But many repatriated Union prisoners of

war, tired of these ersatz drinks, wrote about their first cup of good strong army black coffee after their release. That first cup seemed to rival the first view of the stars and stripes!

Two "modern" products were also developed during the war. Experiments with so called instant foods went back to Napoleon's time. Coffee proved an easy and quite successful product that required only roasting, grinding to a powder, and canning. A full case of these cans turned up in the original stock of the pioneer Harkin Store when the Minnesota Historical Society developed it as a historic site. The author found that deteriorated case in a huge dumpster used to dispose of



items that could not be displayed and rescued a couple of cans in the early 1970s. The "Essence of Coffee" labeled can was reproduced by a major Civil War reenactment supplier and is still carried by uniformed hobbyists. While the original contents were a black tarry paste that still smelled like coffee, the modern replica containers are a good place to stash instant coffee.

Condensed milk was the other innovative product widely used by Union soldiers. The Borden

Company got its great start during the war and is still a major producer today. Soldiers loved milk in their coffee; cows encountered on the march provided a ready source. But those with cash visited the sutler for a can of Borden's product. We found a few much-deteriorated cans of condensed milk in the Harkin Store trash, and the Historical Society replicated them for display.

And one day back in the early '70s, a long-time museum professional shared a little Civil War ditty with me. He had learned it decades earlier, and here it is edited as a farm boy turned soldier might have written it down during the war:

"No t*ts to pull
No shi*t to pitch,
Just punch two holes
in the Son of a B*tch."

That ditty is an original Civil War artifact you'll not find in reference books for obvious reasons! And I think it's enough writing for one day. And I'm suddenly in desperate need of a fresh cup of coffee

GRIMKÉ SISTERS: COMMUNICATING ABOLITION THROUGH A WHITE FEMINIST LENS

BY FRANCES MARTIN

In the early 1800s in the United States, overt white supremacy and the enslavement of African Americans were normalized, and women of all races had very little to no institutional power. It was not deemed acceptable for women to voice their opinions, especially in politics. Within a culture of oppressive white supremacy and patriarchy, the Grimké sisters communicated their personal experiences as white women, with firsthand knowledge of systems of enslavement, and used feminist ideology to convince other middle class white women to join them in using their voices to speak out against slavery and fight for abolition.

Early 1800s America

The system of enslaving Africans was an integral part of the American economy. Therefore, while African Americans were mostly enslaved in the South, Northern reliance on this system meant few white people in the North worked to abolish slavery. There was, however, a small but growing abolitionist movement in the North due to growing abolitionist beliefs, such as the abolitionist activism of the Quakers.¹ The Grimké sisters were influenced by Quaker teachings and eventually joined the Quaker church, left home and became abolitionists.² Simultaneously, women were starting to be able to receive formal education, and the temperance anti-alcohol movement brought women into politics for the first time in American history.³

Women began to be heard in social and political spheres. This was still considered controversial, and women often received harsh criticism and harassment for doing so, including the Grimké sisters.

Personal Experience of the Grimké Sisters

Informed by their lived experiences within a family and society organized around the enslavement of African Americans, Sarah and Angelina Grimké became two of the most prominent white female abolitionists of their time. Born in South Carolina in 1792 and 1805 respectively, the Grimkés were raised on their family's plantation which was fueled by the labor of enslaved African Americans. Their father, John Grimké, and their brothers were all lawyers, exposing them to law books and providing them extensive education throughout their childhoods. Angelina developed an interest in public speaking, while Sarah preferred to write, but were not allowed to pursue either as women. This drew them to the Quaker church, as women were given an opportunity to speak out as ministers. After years of unease at their complicity in these systems of enslavement, the Grimké sisters moved North in their twenties. In doing so, they were completely cut off from their family, and neither of them being married at the time, relied on the Quaker church for financial support.⁴

Through writing, speeches, and personal appeals to family, friends, and acquaintances, the Grimké sisters shared their personal experiences as white women who grew up amidst systems of enslavement as they spoke out against slavery and fought for abolition. Sarah Grimké recounted, "I left my native state on account of slavery, and deserted the home of my father to escape the sounds of the lash and the shrieks of tortured victims"⁵ Their personal benefits from this system left them unsettled. They did not, however, simply flee their discomfort and unsettledness. The Grimké sisters sought opportunities to share their experiences growing up in the South to communicate to fellow white people how necessary it was to fight for abolition. Sarah Grimké contributed to a book called, "American Slavery As It Is: Testimony of a Thousand Witnesses," in which she shared her own testimony with multiple accounts on the horrors of slavery.⁶

Persuading Women of the South to Advocate for Abolition in Feminist Ways

The Grimké sisters gained sympathy and support from other Christian white women in the South through their shared experience. In her pamphlet, *Appeal to Christian Women of the South*, Angelina Grimké gave detailed analysis on the ways that enslavement is distinctly against Christian biblical teachings. She appealed to women directly, “I know you do not make the laws, but I also know that you are the wives and mothers, the sisters and daughters of those who do; and if you really suppose you can do nothing to overthrow slavery, you are greatly mistaken.”⁷ She encourages fellow white Christian women of the South to read, talk, pray and act on abolition. Angelina was able to use her direct knowledge of the social and political structures of the South to appeal to her demographic and know what these middle class white women could do to make a difference. This was radically feminist because at this time, particularly in the South and the evangelical church, it was not deemed socially acceptable for women to speak out and be involved in politics.

Feminist Activism as Women in Politics

Because they were women, the Grimké sisters were not encouraged or applauded for voicing their political opinions, especially because their viewpoints differed from those of the white men in power. They were frequently required to defend themselves and the validity of their opinions to white men, even within their own abolitionist community. The pro-slavery *Southern Literary Messenger* referred to abolitionist women as “politicians in petticoats.”⁸ The sisters were formally exiled from their home state of South Carolina for advocating for the abolition of slavery.⁹ Even their own Quaker community did not approve of women speaking their minds; many elders denounced the sisters for speaking out on abolition after Angelina’s first letter was published in *The Liberator*, an abolitionist newspaper.¹⁰ In July 1837, the sisters were on an oratory tour, speaking to mixed audiences of men and women. Two white men from Massachusetts decided to challenge Angelina to a debate, believing women had no place in politics. Angelina was unfazed, and described by an eyewitness as “calm, modest, and dignified in her manner” and, “with the utmost ease brushed away the cobwebs, which her puny antagonist had thrown her way.”¹¹ Simply refusing to be silenced and continued speaking out was an act of protest and radical feminism. Beyond this, their encouragement and support of other women speaking out and taking a stand in politics can be considered groundbreakingly feminist.

The sisters were, however, not alone in this issue. They did have a close community of fellow abolitionists, including some men, who supported women’s rights strongly. In 1840, when some in the American Anti-Slavery Society did not want to admit women, founder William Lloyd Garrison split off, standing firm in his belief that women should be able to participate in politics as much as men.¹² Sojourner Truth was a strong women’s rights activist, stating in her “Ain’t I a Woman?” speech in 1851 that “the negroes of the South and the women at the North, all talking about rights, the white men will be in a fix pretty soon”¹³ articulating a similar sentiment to the Grimké sisters: shared oppression at the hands of white men. While Truth was in the public eye later than the sisters, she too struggled with even greater levels of discrimination due to Anti-Black racism as well as sexism.

Yet the Grimké sisters did not simply defend themselves. They actively advocated for themselves and for women’s rights. In order to advance the cause of abolition, the Grimké sisters had to be feminists. Sarah, in particular, would go on to write many essays on women’s rights, as another critical matter. The Grimké sisters argued that they too were being held down by the same white men oppressing and enslaving Black people. Sarah Grimké stated that “woman has been made a means to promote the welfare of man”¹⁴ and communicated how women not only deserved to be involved in politics, they needed to be.

Using Feminist Ideology to Encourage Women to Fight for Abolition

The Grimké sisters were some of the first people in the abolitionist movement to communicate to other white women the idea that white women and enslaved people shared a common oppressor. Up until this point, most prominent abolitionists had been men, mostly talking to other men about abolition, with the exception of Frederick Douglass¹⁵. The main method used by abolitionists to try to gain support was through ideas of religious morality, and how slavery was against Christianity.¹⁶ Women did not have the right to vote and had very little institutional power in politics, so very few abolitionists focused their time trying to convince white women to fight for abolition. The Grimké sisters, however, saw that middle class white women could have great influence, and also saw a way they would be able to convince these women to fight for abolition: help them see the ways in which the oppression of women was linked to the oppression of enslaved people.

Sarah Grimké wrote about how both women and enslaved people had been deemed intellectually inferior to white men while being refused the same educational opportunities.¹⁷ Angelina Grimké argued, “[t]rue, we have not felt the slaveholder’s lash; true we have not had our hands manacled, but our hearts have been crushed ... I want to be identified with the negro; until he gets his rights, we shall never have ours.”¹⁸ When the Grimkés communicated the connection between white women’s liberation and abolition, they were successful in convincing large numbers of Northern white women that they needed to take a stand in politics and stand against the atrocity of slavery.¹⁹ In the long run, however, these efforts likely undercut their effectiveness outside of their influence with fellow white women. Likening the oppression white women faced to the oppression of enslaved African Americans was an oversimplification, as white women were not facing the same level of extreme violence as enslaved people. This likely harmed the Grimké sisters’ relationships with fellow abolitionists, especially Black abolitionists.

Abolitionist and Feminist Impact and Influence

The Grimké sisters were able to influence fellow middle-class Christian white women to speak out against slavery and make themselves heard in the political sphere of the United States. In Angelina Grimké’s 1836, “Appeal to Christian Women of the South” she says that women can help, and they could do so by collecting signatures:

I would say, send up that petition, and be not in the least discouraged by the scoffs... It will be a great thing if the subject can be introduced into your legislatures in any way, even by women, and they will be the most likely to introduce it there in the best possible manner, as a matter of morals and religion, not of expediency or politics.²⁰

Drawing on her own faith and her understanding of the deeply religious culture of the South, Grimké communicated to other white Christian women how they were best positioned to advocate for abolition not only in the South, but throughout the United States. These women were largely motivated by religion and morality, as opposed to politics, in which they held little to no institutional power. Yet, Angelina Grimké believed they had the potential for great influence.

In 1838, she became the first woman ever to testify in a United States legislative meeting, when she delivered a petition with the signatures of 20,000 Massachusetts women calling for the abolition of slavery to the Massachusetts legislature.²¹ While presenting this petition, Angelina Grimké gave a rousing speech on abolition and a woman’s place in politics: “I hold, Mr. Chairman, that American women have to do with this subject, not only because it is moral and religious, but because it is political, inasmuch as we are citizens of this republic, and as such our honor, happiness, and well-being, are bound up in its politics and government and laws”.²² As Angelina advocated, she brought up the petition, and was not “discouraged by the scoffs”.²³ She advocated for her and the co-signers abolitionist demands and standing in politics. As Grimké delineates in her speech, she believed that women needed to be in government, not just fighting for abolition, but in all of politics, because as citizens of the U.S., they deserved a say in all political matters. Her address to a U.S. legislative body broke barriers and opened doors for other women to do the same and be heard in politics.

Throughout their lives, the Grimké sisters continued to influence women to stand up and use their voices. Starting in the 1840's, their physical and emotional health deteriorated in the face of constant opposition, even inside their own communities. As they grew older and were less active in abolitionist and feminist communities, the sisters established a school with Angelina's husband, Theodore Weld, who was also a prominent abolitionist. ²⁴ Both sisters taught at the school, which was among the first co-educational schools in America. From their teaching positions, the Grimké sisters fostered young girls' interests in politics, racial equality, and feminism and to speak their minds, creating a new generation of feminist women.

Short Term Impacts

While the Grimké sisters' advocacy waned, their legacy of feminist and abolitionist views lived on in those they influenced through their teaching. One of their former pupils, Catherine Birney, wrote the first biography of the sisters in 1885, a few years after they both died. Birney described the sisters as "two of the noblest women in the country."²⁵ The sisters were some of the most captivating speakers and writers of their time and were responsible for helping to spread anti-slavery rhetoric, which led to the Civil War.

The Grimké sisters lived through the Civil War to see slavery abolished. In 1863, Angelina made a then rare appearance and gave a speech, at age 58, after the Emancipation Proclamation was issued. As Quakers, neither sister liked the idea of a Civil War, but had long accepted it necessary to bring about abolition.²⁶ The Grimké sisters did not live to see women get the right to vote, although in 1870, they cast symbolic ballots as Vice Presidents of the Massachusetts Woman's Suffrage Association.²⁷ It would not be until the turn of the century, that the mainstream women's rights movement would gain broader recognition.

Long Term Impacts

The Grimké sisters' view that women's rights and racial justice are inherently linked is one that continues to be relevant in American society. The sisters inspired fellow white women to care about abolition through a sense of both moral obligation and shared oppression at the hands of white men. The Grimkés knew that one cannot dismantle bits and pieces of oppressive power structures. One must be committed to fighting alongside everyone who is being oppressed in the social systems in which one lives. This can be seen today in movements such as the #MeToo movement, and the Black Lives Matter movement. Even in a modern context, the connections are evident. In fact, the #MeToo movement was started by Tarana Burke, a Black woman.²⁸ Feminism is the liberation of all women, and that includes women of color, so white feminists need to fight for Black liberation as well. The Grimké sisters fought for earlier versions of this concept. We can learn from the Grimké sisters, both in their successes and mistakes, and advocate for everyone living under oppressive power structures.

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STEVEN SCHIER’S TRIVIA QUESTION ANSWER:

The Battle of Athens, a skirmish fought on the Iowa-Missouri border along the Des Moines river directly across from Croton, Iowa in Lee County, Iowa

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Can you contribute to a future newsletter? Writers are wanted to submit Civil War related articles to this newsletter.

Please submit your drafts to Bruce Cooper: earlofbuce@hotmail.com