



The Art at Shiloh: "Defeated Victory"

Norman Dasinger, Jr., May 3, 2021
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Confederate Monument at Shiloh | CC

The Shiloh Chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC) dedicated the Confederate Monument at Shiloh on May 17, 1917, with the assistance of Tennessee governor Tom Rye and the Rev. Thomas Gailor, the Episcopal bishop of Tennessee.

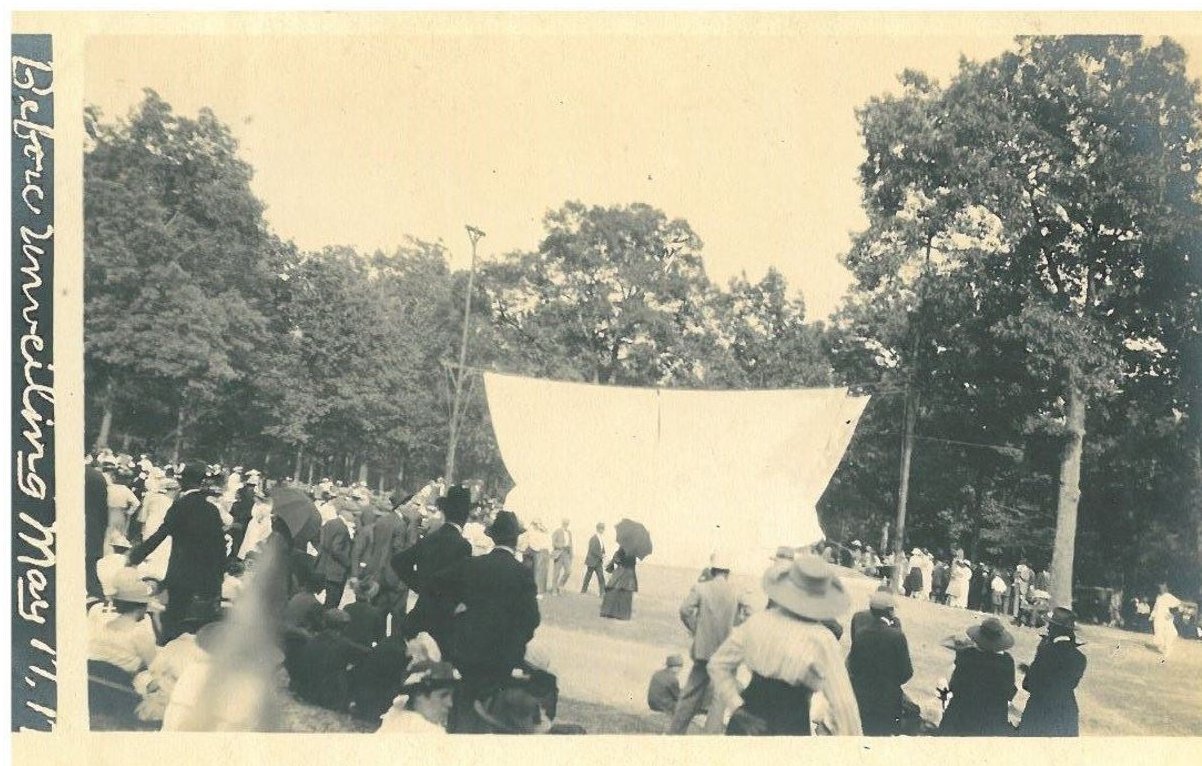
On that day, as part of the agenda, 83-year-old Florida Inge, honorary president of the Mississippi Division of the UDC, presented to the crowd of 15,000 an original poem "Ode to Shiloh." One of the verses read:

"The Stars and Bars with the Star Spangled Banner,
Are merged into one too sacred to sever;
May winds of Liberty, Old Glory unfurl
Over land and sea and bring peace o'er the world"

Florida Inge had hosted Confederate Gen. Albert S. Johnston in her Corinth, Mississippi, home before the Shiloh battle. After his death, she prepared his body for transport, also in her home, and one of her helpers snipped a lock of the general's hair. She had that keepsake placed in the cornerstone of the Shiloh Confederate Monument.

It is interesting to note, the UDC chose to erect a Confederate memorial on a battlefield where the Confederates failed to secure victory. In doing so, they asked its designer and sculptor, Frederick C. Hibbard, to commemorate the event by symbolically having victory taken from them by portraying two inevitable and neutral forces—death and night.

As such, the prominent central group symbolizes "Defeated Victory." The front figure, representing the Confederacy, is surrendering the laurel wreath of victory to Death, on the left, and Night, on the right. Death came to their commander and Night brought reinforcements to the enemy and the battle was lost.



Before the unveiling | NPS



The monument's dedication in 1917 | NPS

Shiloh National Park Superintendent DeLong Rice, at the time of its dedication, said this about the monument: "The states of the South sent to the battle of Shiloh, 79 organizations of infantry, 10 organizations of cavalry, and 23 batteries of artillery. How bravely and how well they fought, let the tablets of history on this field tell. As a greeting to the living remnant of the host of gray and in honor of its dead—whether sleeping in distant places or grave-less here in traceless dust—this monument has been lifted up by the hands of a loving and grateful people."

In 1946, at Culver–Stockton College in Canton, Missouri, Hibbard, the monument's designer and sculptor, made these comments:

"Before a monument is begun, there is always a great deal of research work to be done. Much time must be spent in libraries and in newspaper 'morgues,' gathering information and hunting for photographs and prints."

Hibbard was a master sculptor and recited his motivation for the existence of this unique memorial by once saying, "This monument was erected in memory of the 10,000 Confederate soldiers who fell at the battle of Shiloh."

Hibbard also created the U.S. Grant equestrian statue at Vicksburg, the Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn statues at Hannibal, Missouri, and the 5-ton granite representation of Mary Todd and Abraham Lincoln for Racine, Wisconsin.



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