



## Winterthur Press Release

### **Winterthur Acquires Recently Discovered Anna Pottery Liberty Monument**

Object depicts racial massacre in the Reconstruction Era.

Winterthur, DE, September 16, 2021—Winterthur Museum, Garden & Library has acquired the recently discovered Liberty Monument, a unique 150-year-old stoneware masterwork that dramatically depicts a racially motivated massacre in Colfax, Louisiana, in 1873.

Winterthur acquired the Liberty Monument during the Summer 2021 auction of American stoneware and redware pottery by Crocker Farm, which described it as “one of the greatest American ceramic discoveries to come to light in recent decades.” A consigner who lives near Boise, Idaho, discovered the monument.

The Liberty Monument was created by Wallace and Cornwall Kirkpatrick, owners of Anna Pottery in Anna, Illinois, from 1859 to 1896. The brothers were known to be socially progressive. Vocal about their views, they often commented caustically on events and politics through their work.

The primary scene depicted on the Liberty Monument is the massacre of Black citizens who acted against efforts to overturn the result of the 1872 gubernatorial election in Louisiana. The commentary touches on political scandal, the struggle of Black Americans for basic human rights, the cost of the American Civil War, and other themes. The figure of Lady Liberty crowning the monument gives the work its contemporary name. “The Colfax massacre has been largely ignored by mainstream history books,” notes Leslie Grigsby, senior curator of ceramics and glass at Winterthur.

“I am proud of Alexandra Deutsch, Leslie Grigsby, and our entire curatorial team for recognizing the potential presented by the monument,” said Chris Strand, Interim CEO. “By adding it to our collection, Winterthur will be able to unlock many other stories lying dormant within similar objects that we have collected over the years and give us opportunities to reach new audiences. I am happy that the Board and staff have supported this acquisition.”

“We are working to create a multivocal interpretation for this object by engaging with scholars, students, and others. We expect the interpretation of this complex object to evolve over time,” said Alexandra Deutsch, John L. and Marjorie P. McGraw Director of Collections. “We fully recognize the responsibility we have to depict the multilayered history this object represents.”

The scholars' responses Winterthur has received, so far, have celebrated the acquisition.

*“This is an important object through which we can help uncover more of the history of this understudied massacre. I grew up in Baton Rouge (just two hours from Colfax) and we did not talk about these kinds of traumatic historical episodes. The 100th anniversary of the Tulsa Race Massacre sparked a conversation about the history of racial violence in this country. Winterthur too can contribute to these much-needed conversations.”*

—Dr. Jonathan Michael Square, Assistant Professor of Black Visual Culture at Parsons School of Design and Fellow in History of Art and Visual Culture at the Costume Institute at The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Square runs the digital humanities platform “Fashioning the Self in Slavery and Freedom.”

After further research and cleaning in Winterthur's conservation labs, the Liberty Monument will be placed on display in Winterthur's galleries.

For images, please click [here](#).

## **ABOUT WINTERTHUR MUSEUM, GARDEN & LIBRARY**

Winterthur is known worldwide for its preeminent collection of American decorative arts, naturalistic garden, and research library for the study of American art and material culture. It offers a variety of tours, exhibitions, programs, and activities throughout the year. Admission includes the Winterthur garden, galleries, and a museum tour (by reservation).

Winterthur, located on Route 52, six miles northwest of Wilmington, Delaware, and five miles south of U.S. Route 1, is closed on Mondays (except during Yuletide), Thanksgiving, and Christmas. Museum hours are 10:00 am–5:00 pm, Tuesday–Sunday. \$20 for adults; \$18 for students and seniors; \$6 for ages 2–11. Memberships are available for free and discounted admission. Winterthur is committed to accessible programming for all. For information, including special services, call 800.448.3883, or visit [winterthur.org](http://winterthur.org).

Winterthur follows state and national protocols for the health and safety of all visitors and staff.