

## **Louisa Voelker Macklind 1837 -1905**

*Buried Bellefontaine Cemetery Plot Block 207, Lot 3020*

**While we are here today to honor the service of all our veterans, at the same time we must remember the sacrifices made by those that supported our veterans as well. Spies, ship builders, telegraph operators, waggoneers, teamsters, and during the Civil War, African-American, so-called contrabands, all did service to support the war effort. Such support personnel have existed in all our wars. James Eads, a St. Louis ship builder, is buried in this cemetery and so is this woman we honor.**

**Louisa E. Voelker was 24 years old when in 1863 she volunteered and became a member of the Military Telegraph Corps. She was the only operator west of the Mississippi at that time. Louisa transmitted vital intelligence information to St. Louis and helped limit the success of General Sterling Price's 1864 Missouri Raid at the risk of being captured. At one point she was at her station continuously for over forty-eight hours until she was relieved. After the war Louisa Volker was one of only two women telegraphers who were awarded certificates of Honorable Service.**

**During the war, Louisa Volker made the acquaintance of Thomas Hanlon Macklind, a lawyer and civil engineer, who participated in the construction of the St. Louis & Iron Mountain Railroad. He helped organize the Twelfth Missouri State Militia Cavalry of the Missouri State Militia and was eventually promoted to Captain.**

**In May 1865, Captain Macklind and Louisa Volker were married in St. Louis. They moved to St. Louis, where Macklind became an engineer with the Street Department until his death in 1904. Macklind Ave is named for him.**

**She gave up telegraphy after her marriage to Captain Thomas H. Macklind and took an interest in the field that was just beginning to be open to women-- stenography. She not only learned stenography, but also gave free instruction to poor girls of the city. In 1895, at age 58, she graduated from Women's Medical College in St. Louis and was granted a license for the practice of general medicine. Although, she never practiced medicine extensively most of her practice was devoted to charity cases.**

**Louisa Volker Macklind died on May 21, 1905, at the age of 68. Her obituary appeared in the May 22 *St. Louis Post Dispatch* under the heading, "First Woman War Telegrapher Dead."**