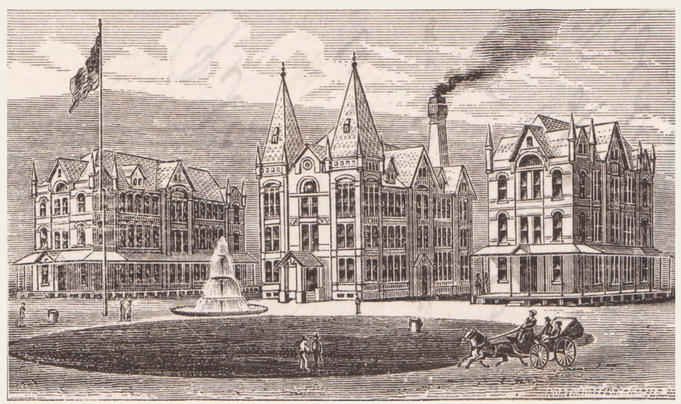
# BATH NATIONAL CEMETERY

## Soldiers' and Sailors' Home

In 1872, the New York legislature passed an unfunded bill to create the New York Soldiers' and Sailors' Home. The Grand Army of the Republic, a Union Army veterans group, raised money to construct the first three buildings. The State Home served its first meal on Christmas Day 1878.

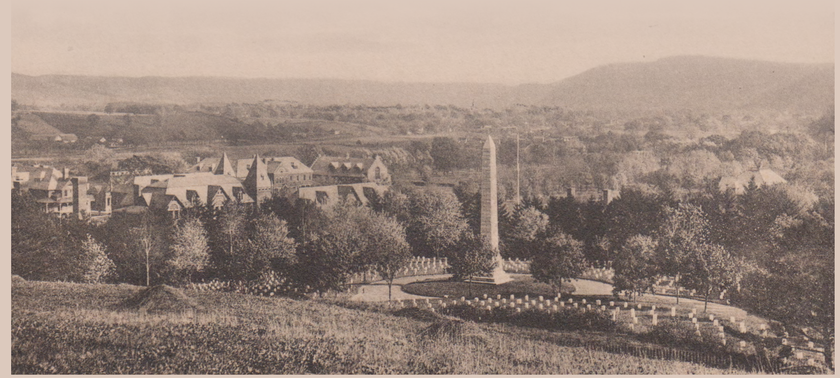
The campus grew to contain more than 100 structures on almost 400 acres. In 1906, the population reached 2,187. By 1928, the death rate of aging Civil War veterans reduced the resident population to 192.



*The New York State Soldiers' and Sailors' Home, from the Home's letterhead, 1881. National Archives and Records Administration.*

In 1929, the federal government assumed responsibility for the facility and it became the Bath Branch of the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers. It was the last of eleven National Homes designated since 1865.

The National Homes were merged with the U.S. Veterans Bureau and Bureau of Pensions to form the Veterans Administration (now the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs) in 1930.



*Postcard view of the 1894 monument and cemetery, 1911. National Cemetery Administration.*

## National Cemetery

The first burial was Pvt. William C. Terrell in 1879. By 1912, an estimated 4,225 Civil War veterans lay in the cemetery, including former members of U.S. Colored Troops. Among those interred here is Pvt. Robert Knox Sneden, who chronicled the Civil War in colorful drawings and maps.

Sneden served in the Army of the Potomac as a topographical engineer. In November 1863 he was captured and spent thirteen months in Confederate prisons, including Andersonville, Georgia. After his December 1864 release, the army discharged him. Sneden returned to New York City and compiled a memoir and scrapbook of images documenting his military service. He entered the State Home in 1904, and died there in 1918 (Section J, Row 11, Grave 14).

*Rebel Battery in the Potomac River, 1862, by Pvt. Robert Knox Sneden. Virginia Historical Society.*

## Medal of Honor Recipients

Five Civil War recipients of the Medal of Honor are buried in the cemetery. First bestowed in 1863, it is the highest award for military valor in the U.S. Armed Services. For acts above and beyond the call of duty, 1,522 individuals who served in the Civil War received the medal.

Pvt. George Grueb, 158th New York Infantry, was commended for gallantry at the Battle of Chaffin's Farm, Virginia, September 29, 1864 (Section A, Row 2, Grave 3).

Sgt. John Kiggins, 149th New York Infantry, saved men from friendly fire at Lookout Mountain, Tennessee, November 24, 1863 (Section H, Row 32, Grave 9).

Pvt. George Ladd, 22nd New York Cavalry, captured a Confederate color guard, flag, and horse at Waynesboro, Virginia, March 2, 1865 (Section C, Row 6, Grave 6).

*Civil War Army Medal of Honor. Gettysburg National Military Park.*

Sgt. Charles E. Morse, 62nd New York Infantry, seized the colors from a wounded sergeant and, though soon injured, carried them during the Battle of the Wilderness, Virginia, May 5, 1864 (Section J, Row 4, Grave 24).

Seaman James Roberts, U.S.S. *Agawam*, was among the crew of a powder boat detonated near Fort Fisher, North Carolina, December 23, 1864 (Section I, Row 26, Grave 2).