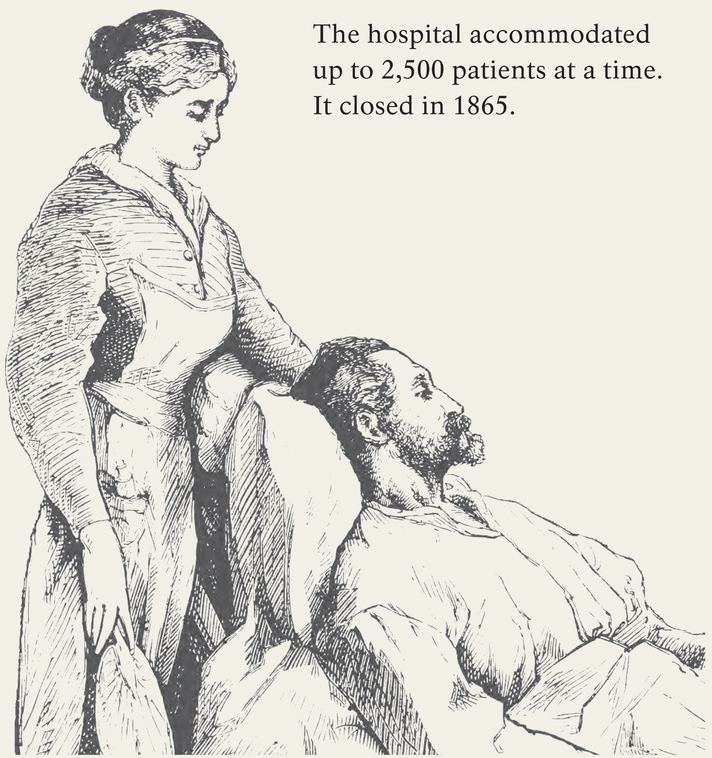
BEVERLY NATIONAL CEMETERY

Beverly Hospital

Two years into the Civil War, Philadelphia hospitals were filled with sick and wounded soldiers. To relieve the overcrowding, in 1864 the federal government established a military hospital in nearby Beverly. The New Jersey facility served soldiers requiring hospital care, and those recovering but not yet fit for active duty.

The ailing arrived from Philadelphia aboard the steamer *John A. Warner.* According to local lore, the citizens of Beverly met the boat at the wharf and helped transport soldiers to the hospital. Church bells tolled in welcome, and women served food and coffee.

The hospital accommodated up to 2,500 patients at a time. It closed in 1865.



Nurse and wounded Union soldier. Hospital Sketches and Camp and Fireside Stories *(1869).*

An 1898 view of the superintendent's lodge, erected 1879, and in front of it, the New Jersey Soldiers' Monument on a mound. National Archives and Records Administration.

National Cemetery

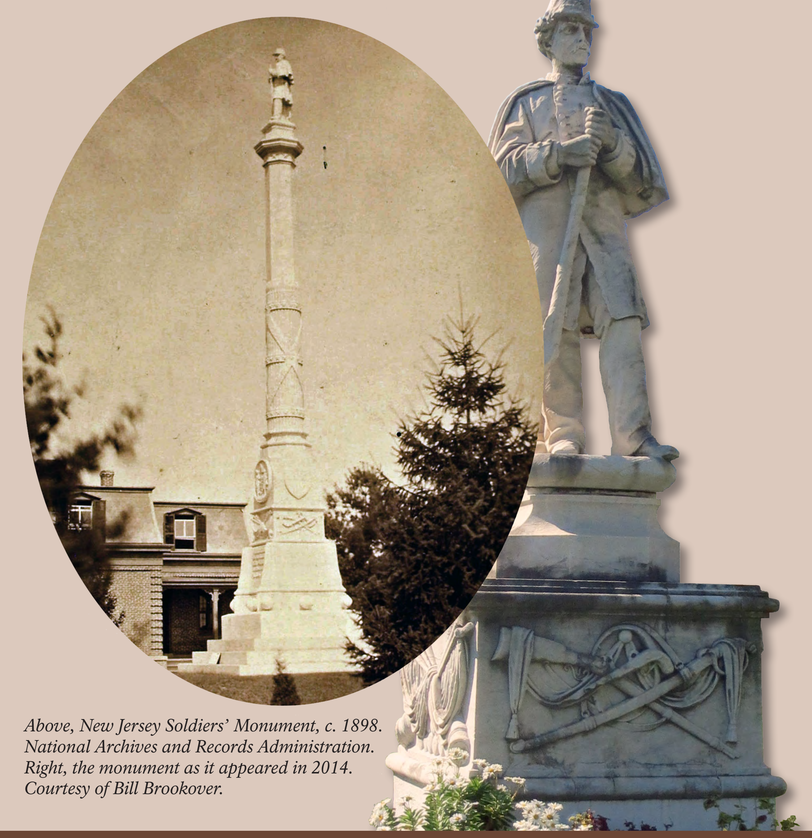
In August 1864, a private citizen donated to the federal government land that became Beverly National Cemetery. Pvt. William Haskell, Company K, 24th Massachusetts Infantry, was the first burial on August 29, 1864. By the end of the war 147 soldiers lay here, seven unknown.

One Civil War recipient of the Medal of Honor is buried in the cemetery: First Sgt. Bernard A. Strausbaugh (Strasbaugh), 3rd Maryland Infantry. 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.

On June 17, 1864, Strausbaugh was injured recapturing the 2nd Pennsylvania Provisional Artillery colors at Petersburg, Virginia. He died in a Beverly hospital on November 5, 1864 (Section 1, Grave 102).

Soldiers' Monument

On June 25, 1875, a roaring artillery salute ended a ceremony to dedicate an imposing marble monument at the cemetery. National Guard units, local dignitaries, and the New Jersey governor participated. The state appropriated $10,000 to build the monument. Nearly 60 feet tall, topped with a standing soldier, it was inscribed: "Erected by the State of New Jersey in Memory of her Patriot Dead." The monument remained in place for more than seventy years. It was taken down in the 1950s after it became unstable. The figure and part of the base now stand in front of the American Legion Post 115 building a few blocks north of the cemetery.



Above, New Jersey Soldiers' Monument, c. 1898. National Archives and Records Administration. Right, the monument as it appeared in 2014. Courtesy of Bill Brookover.