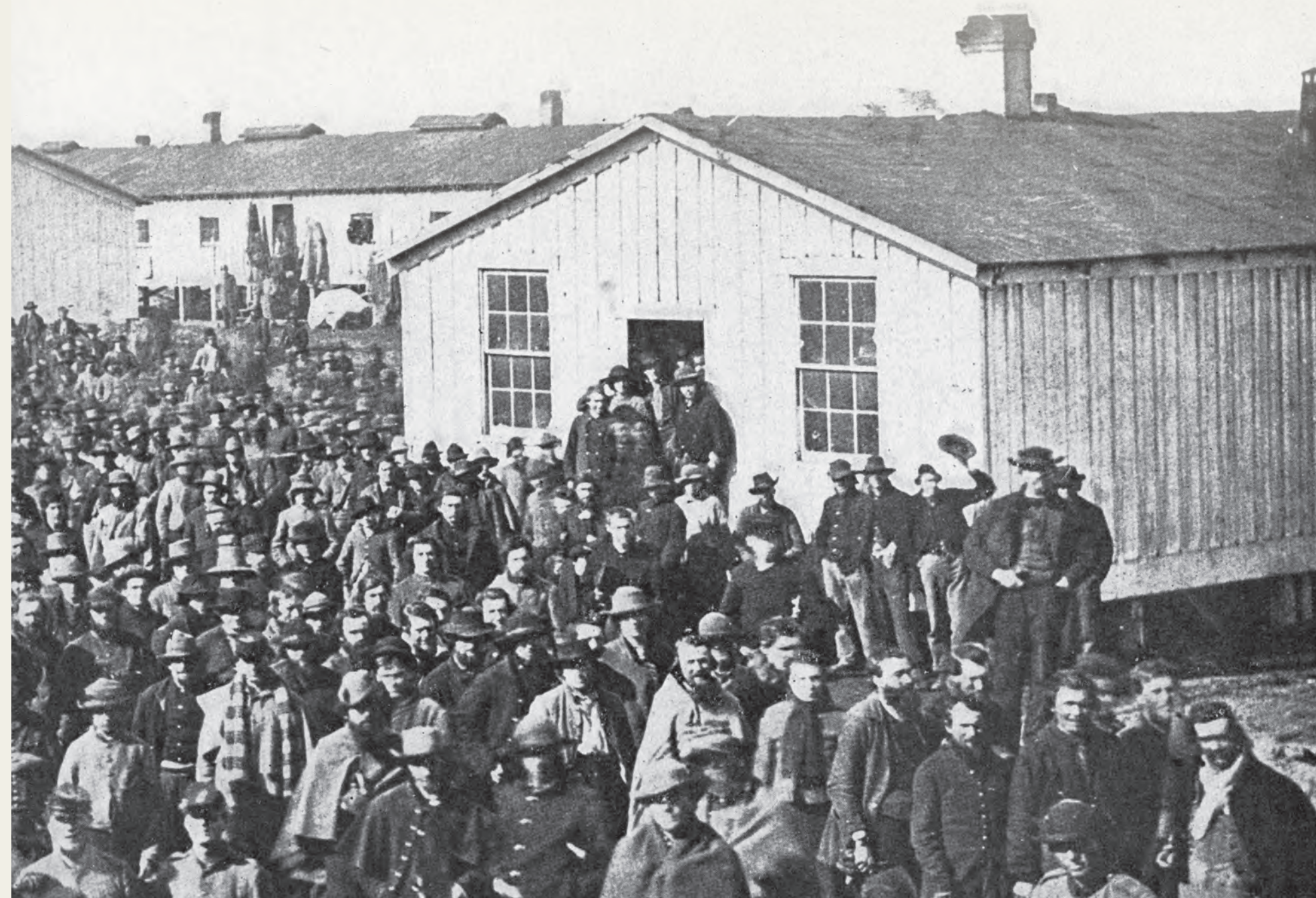


CONFEDERATE MOUND

Camp Douglas Prison

Camp Douglas was established as a Union training camp on the south side of Chicago. When Fort Donelson, a Confederate stronghold on the Cumberland River west of Clarksville, Tennessee, surrendered in February 1862, the federal government hastily converted Camp Douglas and other training camps into military prisons. More than 26,000 Confederate prisoners passed through Camp Douglas; more than 4,000 died there.

Men who died at Camp Douglas were buried at City Cemetery, now Lincoln Park, and at a smallpox cemetery. In late 1865, when local ordinances forced the U.S. Army to move the remains of an estimated 5,000 Confederate prisoners buried in the city, the federal government purchased this 5-acre lot in Oak Woods Cemetery. The remains of 655 Confederates and at least twelve Union guards from the smallpox cemetery were reinterred in Oak Woods. Two years later, the army moved an additional 3,384 bodies here from the City Cemetery. This lot became known as Confederate Mound.



Camp Douglas, c. 1864. Miller's Photographic History of the Civil War.



The unveiling of the monument in 1895. Library of Congress.

The 1895 Monument

In 1887, the War Department approved an Ex-Confederate Association of Chicago proposal to place a memorial at Confederate Mound. John C. Underwood, a former Confederate officer, designed the memorial and raised funds to erect it. The army supplied four artillery pieces and enough projectiles to create six pyramidal stacks around the monument. The May 30 dedication in 1895 was a lavish spectacle witnessed by an estimated 100,000 people.

In 1911, the Commission for Marking Graves of Confederate Dead hired Van Amringe Granite Company of Boston, Massachusetts, to raise the nearly 40 foot monument and place it on a new base surrounded by a low mound. The mound features sixteen bronze plaques containing the names of 4,275 Confederate soldiers that the Commission was able to document as having perished at Camp Douglas.

Toward Reconciliation

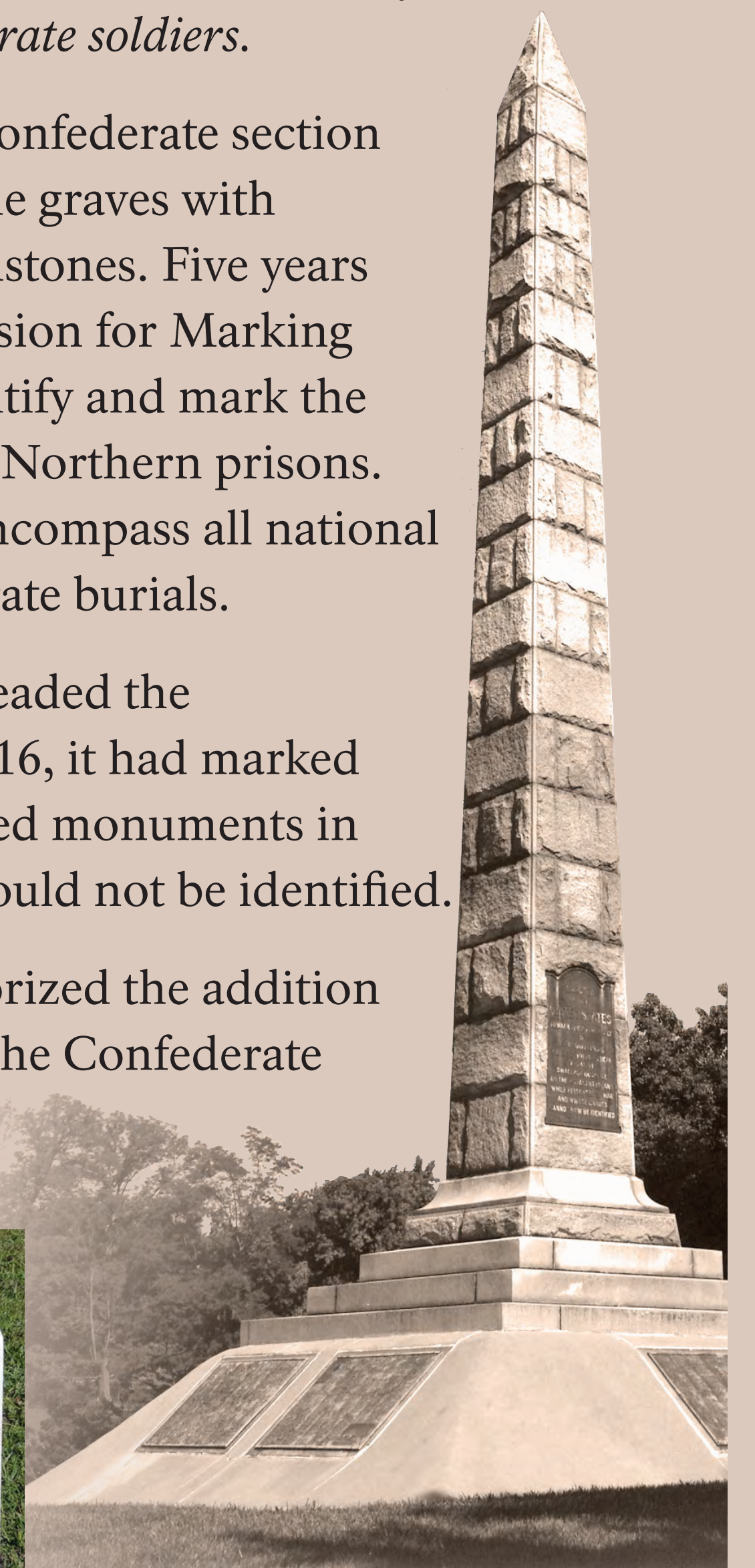
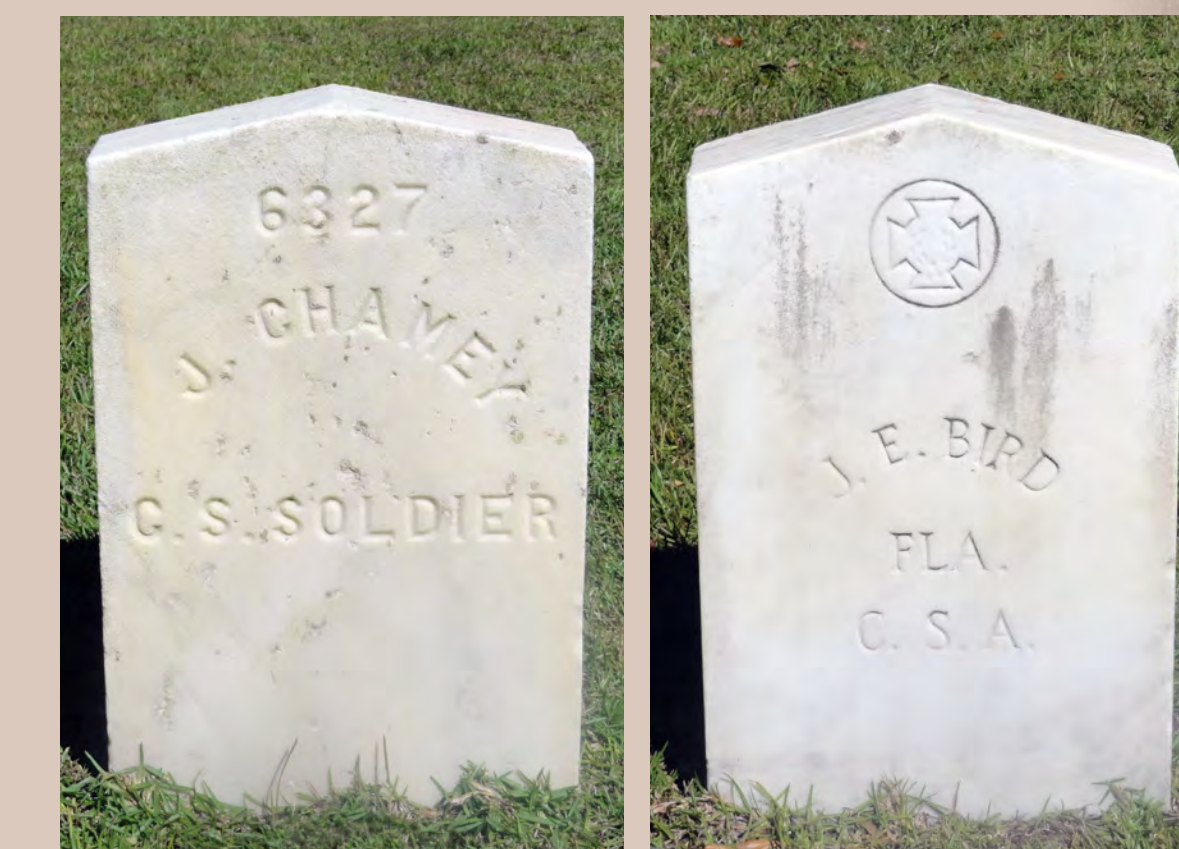
On May 30, 1868, the Grand Army of the Republic decorated Union and Confederate graves at Arlington National Cemetery. Thirty years later President William McKinley proclaimed:

The Union is once more the common altar of our love and loyalty, our devotion and sacrifice . . . Every soldier's grave made during our unfortunate Civil War is a tribute to American valor . . . in the spirit of fraternity we should share with you in the care of the graves of the Confederate soldiers.

The War Department created the Confederate section at Arlington in 1901, and marked the graves with distinctive pointed-top marble headstones. Five years later, Congress created the Commission for Marking Graves of Confederate Dead to identify and mark the graves of Confederates who died in Northern prisons. Its mission was later expanded to encompass all national cemeteries that contained Confederate burials.

Four former Confederate officers headed the Commission over its lifetime. By 1916, it had marked in excess of 25,500 graves and erected monuments in locations where individual graves could not be identified.

In 1930, the War Department authorized the addition of the Southern Cross of Honor to the Confederate headstone.



North Alton Confederate Cemetery Monument, 1909, Alton, Ill.

Original Commission headstone (left) and headstone with Southern Cross of Honor (right).

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
National Cemetery Administration

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