LOUDON PARK NATIONAL CEMETERY

Civil War Baltimore

Slavery was legal in Maryland, but the state was divided over secession and the Civil War. President Abraham Lincoln called for volunteers to suppress the Confederate rebellion on April 15, 1861. Four days later, Massachusetts troops stopped in Baltimore en route to the U.S. capital. Pro-Confederate residents shouted insults, threw rocks, and otherwise attacked the soldiers. The soldiers fired into the crowd, killing dozens of civilians and wounding many more. On May 13, Lincoln ordered Union forces to occupy Baltimore. They remained throughout the war. Fort McHenry in Baltimore Harbor became a prison for disloyal Maryland civilians and captured Confederate soldiers.

Pro-Union Baltimore supported the war. Escaped slaves made their way to Maryland where many enlisted in the 4th U.S. Colored Infantry. Thousands of soldiers trained in and around the city. Sick and wounded soldiers were treated at Jarvis U.S. General Hospital, the Steuart Mansion, and other facilities.

Massachusetts troops entering Baltimore, c. 1861. Library of Congress.

National Cemetery

In December 1861, the U.S. Sanitary Commission designated a small area of Loudon Park Cemetery for the burial of Union soldiers who died in Baltimore hospitals. The half-acre lot in the northeast corner of this private cemetery became one of the first national cemeteries.

By 1874, an estimated 1,646 Union soldiers and five civilians lay here. In 1884, the remains of approximately 238 U.S. Colored Troops were relocated from a government lot in Baltimore's Laurel Cemetery to the national cemetery. Five notable Union monuments were installed between 1885 and 1898.

Jarvis U.S. General Hospital, c. 1864. Library of Congress.

Confederate Dead

In 1912, the Commission for Marking Graves of Confederate Dead identified 256 imprisoned soldiers and civilians who died in the Baltimore area during the Civil War. Twenty-nine, originally buried at Fort McHenry, had been reinterred at the national cemetery. The commission could not locate these graves, so it erected one granite monument with a bronze tablet listing the soldiers' names.

Medal of Honor Recipients

Two 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. James T. Jennings, 56th Pennsylvania Infantry, captured the flag of the 55th North Carolina Infantry at Petersburg, Virginia, on August 20, 1864. Jennings died at Jarvis U.S. General Hospital on March 22, 1865 (Section A, Grave 1410).

Second Lt. William Taylor, 1st Maryland Infantry, burned a bridge at Front Royal, Virginia, in May 1862 to prevent a Confederate pursuit. On August 20, 1864, he replaced a wounded officer at Petersburg and led a reconnaissance mission (Officers Section, Grave 16).

Civil War Medal of Honor. Gettysburg National Military Park.

Maryland Sons Monument, right, and Maryland Naval Monument, left, with private cemetery in background, 1908. National Archives and Records Administration.