MARIETTA NATIONAL CEMETERY

Confederates destroyed this ordnance train prior to evacuating Atlanta, August 1864. Library of Congress.

Atlanta Campaign

During the Civil War, the fight for Atlanta began in early May 1864 in north Georgia. It ended when Union troops marched into the state capital on September 2. Over four months, Union and Confederate armies met in sixteen battles.

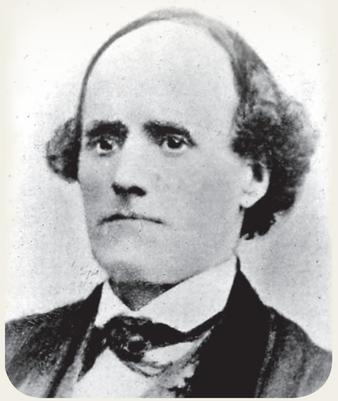
Union Gen. William T. Sherman started with 110,000 troops and Confederate Gen. Joseph E. Johnston with 69,000. Johnston tried to force Sherman to assault fortified positions. Sherman instead used his larger army to out-flank the Confederates, forcing a retreat to Atlanta.

On August 31, the Union Army cut the last rail lines into Atlanta and Confederate forces evacuated the city. By the campaign's end both armies were staggered by losses. The Union sustained losses of approximately 37,000 men killed, wounded or missing. The Confederates lost 32,000.

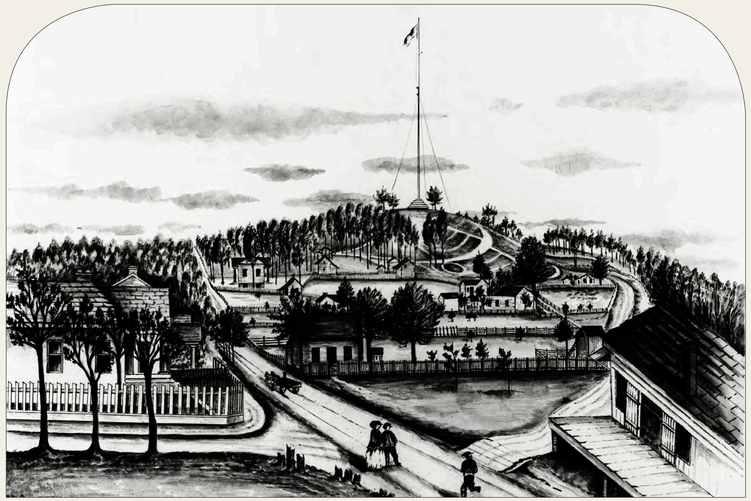
National Cemetery

The U.S. Army established this 23-acre cemetery in 1866 on land donated by Henry Green Cole. He had moved to Georgia from New York in 1838 to work as a civil engineer for a railroad. Later he became a successful businessman in Marietta.

During the Civil War, Cole remained loyal to the Union and spied for federal forces. Confederate officials arrested and imprisoned him in 1864 for these activities. After the war Cole returned to Marietta, where he lived until his death in 1875. He is buried in a family plot at the national cemetery.



Henry G. Cole (1815-1875), c. 1865, is buried in Grave 1, Cole Section. Courtesy of the Marietta Museum of History.



Sketch of cemetery from Brvt. Lt. Col. E. B. Whitman's final report on the reinterment of Union soldiers within the Military Division of Tennessee, c. 1869. National Archives and Records Administration.

Monumental archway at cemetery entrance, 1904. In 1883, the U.S. Army Quartermaster General's Office constructed the 35-foot-tall structure. This is one of five classically inspired arches built at national cemeteries in the South. National Archives and Records Administration.

Thomas Budd Van Horne, former chaplain with the 13th Ohio Infantry, laid out twenty-one burial sections tailored to the natural landscape of the property. By 1868, about 10,000 remains, including Union dead from the Atlanta campaign and those removed from a discontinued national cemetery in Montgomery, Alabama, were reinterred here. Two monuments were donated—one to the 2nd Division, 20th Corps, and one to soldiers who died in area hospitals.

A stone wall enclosed the picturesque cemetery in 1870. A brick lodge, built near the entrance, was replaced in 1921. The Wisconsin Monument, dedicated on Memorial Day 1925, was the last Civil War memorial placed in the cemetery.

One Civil War Medal of Honor recipient, Dennis Buckley, is buried here (Section G, Grave 6686). Private Buckley, 136th New York Infantry, received his commendation posthumously for bravery at Peach Tree Creek, Georgia, July 20, 1864.