

WOODLAWN CONFEDERATE MONUMENT



Confederate prisoners at Fort Donelson, The American Soldier in the Civil War, 1895.

The Confederate Prisoners

Fort Donelson, a Confederate stronghold on the Cumberland River west of Clarksville, Tennessee, surrendered on February 16, 1862. Suddenly, the Union Army needed to house 15,000 Confederate prisoners. Several training camps, including Camp Morton in Indianapolis, became prison facilities almost overnight.

A day or two after the surrender, a train pulled into the Terre Haute depot. It carried about 300 Confederate prisoners bound for Camp Morton. Col. Bernard F. Mullen's 61st Indiana Infantry marched the prisoners to an old pork-packing building. Colonel Mullen reported he had 279 prisoners. By mid-March, most had been sent to Indianapolis, forty-one were hospitalized in Terre Haute, and seven had died.

Woodlawn Cemetery

Eleven Confederate prisoners died in Terre Haute and were buried in Woodlawn Cemetery. Undertaker Isaac Ball recalled, “[The] Colonel commanding the regiment that was guarding them came to me and told me to bury them in a plain coffin with an outside box and use a hearse for transporting to the cemetery and to use a guard of U.S. soldiers as an escort.”

In summer 1907, the Commission for Marking Graves of Confederate Dead traveled to Terre Haute and discovered the cemetery records had burned. Mr. Ball told L. Frank Nye, Commission clerk, where he had buried the prisoners but had no record of their names. Subsequently, the U.S. Army adjutant general found the records of the men's names.



The paupers' section, near the eastern edge of the cemetery, in 2009.

Officials were unable to locate the individual graves in the cemetery's paupers' section. Instead, the City of Terre Haute donated to the federal government part of Section 37 on which to erect a single monument inscribed with the eleven names. M. H. Rice of Kansas City, Missouri, completed the gray Vermont granite obelisk in 1912. In 1951, the monument was moved from its original location to its current and more prominent location.

Toward Reconciliation

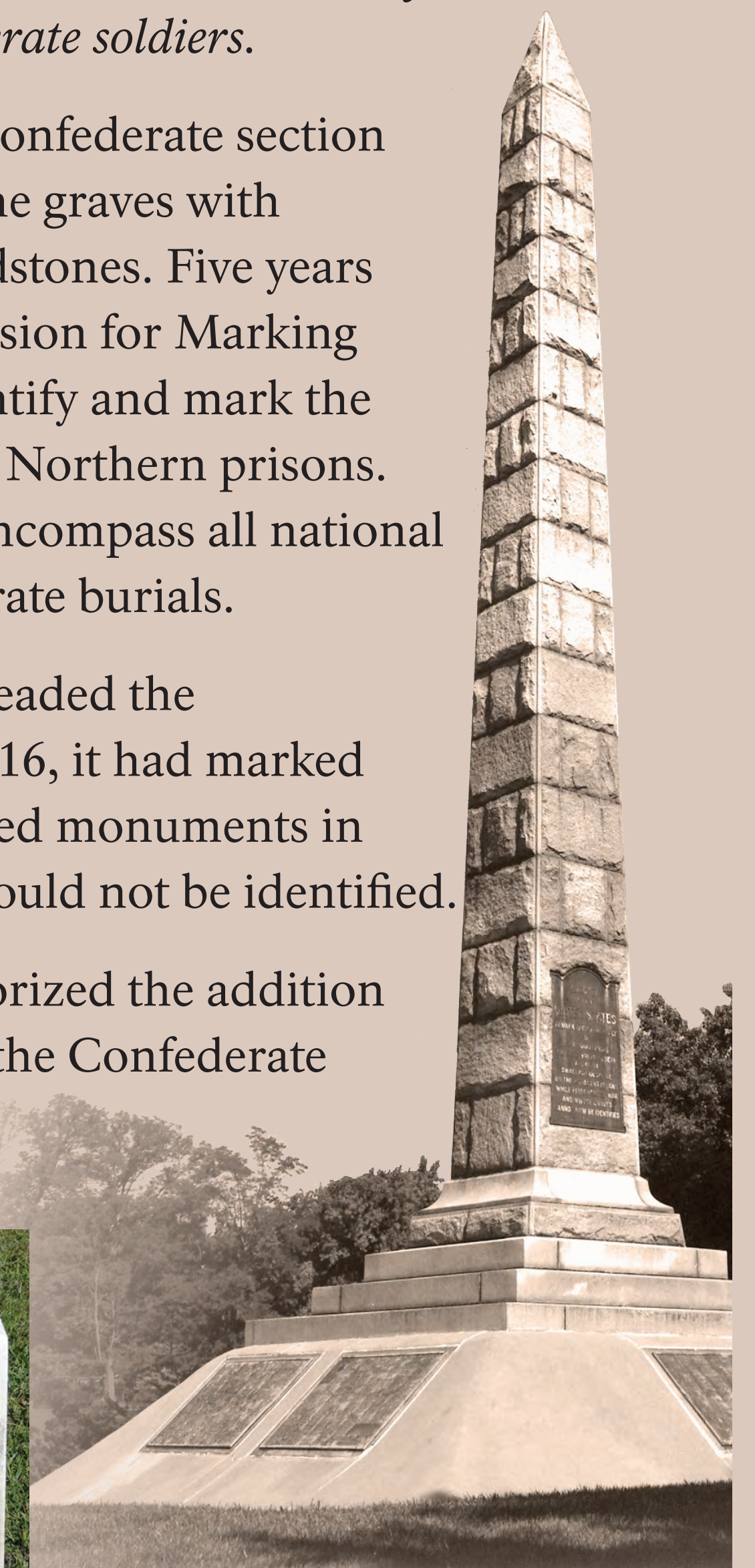
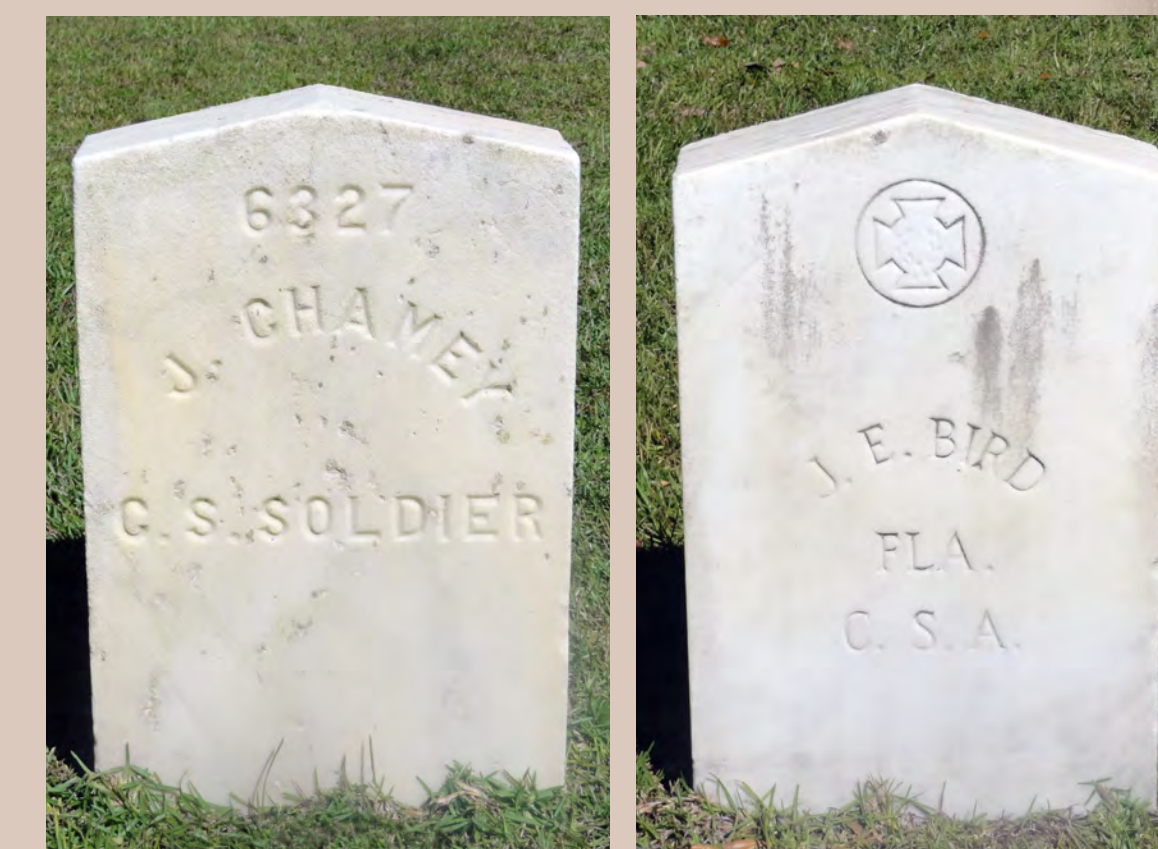
On May 30, 1868, the Grand Army of the Republic decorated Union and Confederate graves at Arlington National Cemetery. Thirty years later President William McKinley proclaimed:

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



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