

Raleigh National Cemetery
501 Rock Quarry Road
Raleigh, North Carolina 27610

Description

The Raleigh National Cemetery, established in 1865, is located in Wake County. Located in a neighborhood of mixed residential and commercial development, the cemetery is a nearly seven-acre, largely flat, grassy rectangle on a north-south axis. The main entrance is off the west boundary defined by Rock Quarry Road, and is located in the northwest quadrant of the acreage that is further defined by an enclosing brick wall erected circa 1875. Behind the wrought iron gates installed in 1936, a paved drive runs east, then south, to form an interior formal rectangular loop drive that forms the landscape structure around which the entire site is divided into numbered rectangular sections shaded by mature deciduous trees. The cemetery lodge and support buildings are located adjacent to the main entrance on the south side of the drive, and an octagonal concrete and iron rostrum is located in the south central portion of the cemetery within the rectangular loop drive. Graves are marked with upright marble headstones, except for Sections 16 and 20, which are marked with flat granite markers.



The lodge, constructed in 1938, is a two-story, six-room Colonial revival lodge, brick veneer on frame construction, with a slate roof. This lodge was the national cemetery standard during the late 1930's. The windows are six-over-six double hung. The lodge contains a basement. The rear porch was enclosed in 1960.



A brick and concrete utility building, 13 feet, 6 inches by 54 feet, 3 inches, containing public restrooms, was constructed in 1916, and a garage was added in 1931. The roof is metal.

An octagonal concrete and iron rostrum was constructed in 1931. It is located near the southern end of the grounds in Section 18. The original tin roof was removed in 1957.

Noted Burials

There is one Medal of Honor recipient buried in the cemetery: (William Maud Bryant, Sergeant First Class, U. S. Army, Company A, 5th Special Forces Group, 1st Special Forces, Vietnam Conflict). He is buried in Section 15, Grave 1227, and his grave is marked



with a special marker inscribed with an enlarged gold-leafed replica of the medal of the United States Army and the words "MEDAL OF HONOR."

Significant Monuments/Memorials

A monument made of an original cast iron seacoast artillery tube, secured by a concrete base, is located in Section 16. Three cannonballs have been placed at its base. The cast bronze plaque affixed to the monument is inscribed as follows:

UNITED STATES
NATIONAL MILITARY CEMETERY
RALEIGH
ESTABLISHED 1866
INTERMENTS 1161
KNOWN 648
UNKNOWN 513



Civil War Activity in Area

During the Civil War, the city of Raleigh was the site of a general hospital as well as that of a clothing factory to produce clothing for the troops. North Carolina was the only Confederate state to clothe her own troops.

During the latter part of March 1865, General William T. Sherman had visited General Ulysses S. Grant at his City Point, Virginia, headquarters in the hope of organizing a joint offensive against General Robert E. Lee. The mission proved futile, as Grant was not willing to delay his own push against the Confederates at Richmond until the Federal troops could arrive from Goldsboro, North Carolina. Sherman returned to Goldsboro. His next move would depend upon how Grant fared at Richmond. On April 5, rumors began to circulate that Richmond had fallen on April 4. This killed all hopes that Sherman harbored of marching into Virginia. On April 6, he wrote to Grant advising him that his army would move straight on General Joseph Johnston. The Federal troops broke camp on the 10th and started their march. Sherman's movements were reported to Johnston, who immediately put his army in motion for Raleigh. During the night, Sherman learned of General Robert E. Lee's surrender on April 9. Johnston received the news at 1 a.m. on April 11 while encamped at Battle's Bridge. The news brought rampant joy to the Federal camps and, in the Confederate camps, was met with skepticism.

A day prior to the surrender, David Lowry Swain, former governor of North Carolina, had met with W. A. Graham, also a former governor, and agreed to a course of action to effect their common purpose; that is, peace. They felt that they should meet with Governor Zebulon B. Vance in Raleigh on April 10. Graham had recently discussed this topic with Vance and felt that he need not attend. He suggested that Swain stop by his home at Hillsboro. Swain spent April 9 with Graham, and a course of action was agreed upon and presented to Governor Vance the next day. Swain suggested to the Governor that he convene the legislature, have it pass resolutions expressing a desire to stop the war, and invite the concurrence of other states. If, in the meantime, General Sherman advanced upon Raleigh, the Governor should send a commission to him to ask for a suspension of hostilities until final action of the state could be ascertained. Vance

agreed to the latter part of this plan on the condition that General Johnston's approval be obtained, but before he put the plan into effect, he wished to have another interview with Graham. Vance consulted Johnston as to what was best for him to do. Johnston frankly advised Vance to remain in Raleigh. The Governor wired Graham on April 11 to join him that night in Raleigh. At 3 a.m. on April 12, Graham arrived in the city and later that morning, Vance, Swain and Graham composed a letter to Sherman over Vance's signature. The letter requested a personal interview with Sherman on the subject of a suspension of hostilities. The Governor then appointed Graham and Swain as commissioners to visit General Sherman and deliver this letter to him. The commissioners presented Vance's letter and were gratified to find that Sherman was ready to make an amicable and generous arrangement with the state government. The General wrote a letter to Governor Vance, advising him that he would aid him in all his power to contribute to the end he aimed to reach, the termination of the existing war. With this communication went an enclosure that ordered the Federal troops to respect and protect the Governor of North Carolina and other state officials, as well as the Mayor and civil authorities of Raleigh, provided no hostile act was committed against the invading army between Gully's and Raleigh.

Late in the day of April 12, Wheeler informed Vance that the commissioners had been captured. At sunrise on April 13, the commissioners began their return trip to Raleigh. They intended to meet Governor Vance, consult with him, and return to General Sherman with Vance's answers before the Federal troops should enter the city. Five miles from Raleigh their train was stopped by General H. Judson Kilpatrick, who informed the commissioners that they might proceed under the flag of truce but warned them that "we will give you hell" if any resistance is met in Raleigh. Within a mile of the capital, flames could be seen rising from the railway station, which first had been plundered and then set on fire by General Wheeler's troops who were evacuating the city at the time. The Commissioners found Raleigh nearly deserted. After a hasty consultation, the commissioners decided that Swain should remain at the Capitol until the Federal army entered the city and Graham should make his way, as well as he could, to Hillsboro where it was supposed the Governor had stopped. Thus Raleigh, without defenders and without a government, awaited the invaders.

It had been anticipated that Sherman would arrive in Raleigh, and the local papers had kept the citizens posted on the progress of his march. Citizens hid their possessions in an effort to save them. At dawn on April 13, the skies were threatening. At approximately 7:30 a.m., General Sherman, traveling with the 14th Corps, reached Raleigh and immediately set up headquarters in the Governor's mansion. General Johnston had previously received a telegram at Raleigh directing him to leave his troops under General Hardee's command and report immediately to President Davis at Greensboro. There he was met by General Beauregard who accompanied him to Davis's office. During the afternoon, Major General John C. Breckenridge arrived in Greensboro with the official announcement that the Army of Northern Virginia had capitulated. The news of this disaster fully convinced Johnston that the Confederacy was doomed. In Johnston's opinion, President Davis had only one governmental power left, that of terminating the war, and he thought this power should be exercised immediately. At a meeting of the President's cabinet on the morning of the 13th, the General was able to get Davis, after much discussion, to authorize him to send Sherman the communication of April 14 asking for a suspension of hostilities. Sherman replied by letter that he was fully empowered to arrange any terms to suspend hostilities. Johnston suggested a meeting at a point on the Hillsboro road an equal distance between Durham and Hillsboro. In Durham, the General and his staff were met by Kilpatrick, who escorted them to his flag-draped headquarters in the home of a Dr. Blackwell. At 11:20, the party set out to meet

Johnston. After shaking hands and introducing their respective aides, Sherman asked if there was a place nearby where they might talk in private. Johnston replied that he had passed a small farmhouse a short distance back. Side by side the two generals rode to the small log home of James Bennett. When the generals closed the door to the Bennett home behind them, there were no witnesses to their conference. Also, there was debate over the disposition of President Davis and his cabinet. No decision was reached on this latter point by mid-afternoon.

That night in Raleigh, Sherman officially announced Lincoln's death. During the evening of April 17 and the morning of the 18th, Sherman talked with Generals Schofield, Slocum, Howard, Logan, and Blair and, without exception, they urged him to make terms with Johnston. Sherman reached the Bennett home around noon, and Johnston arrived later. The conference was on the same cordial level of the previous day. Johnston addressed Sherman on the possibility of an amnesty that would specifically include Davis, but Sherman turned a deaf ear to him. In a short while, Sherman handed a paper to Johnston, stating he was willing to submit it to President Johnson. On the evening of April 18, Sherman sat down at his desk in the governor's mansion to write letters to Grant and Henry W. Halleck that contained details of the momentous events of the day. But he was unaware of the full political and legal implications of his concessions. Thus, he was taken by surprise when Grant arrived in Raleigh early on the morning of April 24, bearing the news that civil authorities had turned down the agreement signed at the Bennett home. Greatly disappointed, but with little show of emotion, Sherman sat down and addressed two notes to Johnston. In the first, he informed the Confederate general that the suspension of hostilities would cease 48 hours after the note reached his lines. In the second dispatch, penned shortly after the first, Sherman informed Johnston that he was empowered to offer only the terms Grant gave Lee at Appomattox. Later in the day, Sherman issued orders for all commands to be ready to move within 48 hours. Johnston was more convinced than ever that it would be a great crime to prolong the war. He suggested to Sherman that they meet again to discuss terms of surrender. Sherman once more went to Durham by rail. There he was met by Kilpatrick and escorted to the place of meeting. Sherman and Johnston were unable to meet an agreement. After leaving Bennett's farmhouse, Johnston announced the termination of hostilities in two dispatches; one to the governors of the states, and the other to the Confederate army. Early in the evening of the 26th, Sherman reached Raleigh. He proceeded directly to his headquarters in the Governor's mansion. He hastily entered the house, for he wished to show Grant the terms he had in his pocket. Upon Sherman's request, the General wrote his approval on the terms. Grant remarked that the only change he would have made would have been to put Sherman's name before Johnston's. The next morning, with the original of this agreement in his possession, Grant departed for New Bern. News of the final surrender did not bring the "exciting freshness" that accompanied the first announcement of the previous week. On April 28, Sherman summoned to his headquarters in the Governor's mansion all corps and army commanders. He explained their duties after his departure. The necessary orders were completed and on April 29, Sherman departed by rail for Wilmington. His departure from Raleigh brought to an end the Campaign of the Carolinas.

The site of the national cemetery was originally designated as "Camp Green," an army post used as headquarters of the occupation forces stationed in the Raleigh area. This is evidenced by the establishment of a "post" cemetery, wherein a total of 32 burials were made of troops and members of their families. The post cemetery is now Section 10 of the Raleigh National Cemetery.