

Mound City National Cemetery
Junction of Highways 37 and 51
Mound City, Illinois 62963

Description

The Mound City National Cemetery, established in 1864, is located approximately one mile from Mound City in Pulaski County, Illinois. The site is rectangular in shape and was completely surrounded by a strong levee because of the low level of the surrounding country. Part of this levee still remains on the southwest side of the cemetery, the remainder having been removed in 1968. The grounds are divided into two equal parts by a center avenue 25 feet wide. These divisions are again subdivided by cross avenues. The main entrance is located at the southwest corner and is protected by iron gates supported by granite piers, with a pedestrian gate on each side. These gates were constructed in 1941. A vehicular iron service gate with brick piers is situated to the right of the main entrance gate and leads to the maintenance area. The flagpole, constructed in 1931, is located just to the northeast of the main entrance, and a rostrum sits directly east of the flagpole. A lodge and utility building lie to the right of the main entrance. A committal service tent is located just inside the entrance to the left. Wrought iron fencing encloses the southwest side of the cemetery, and the remainder of the cemetery is enclosed by chain link fencing. Graves are marked with upright marble headstones.



The lodge, constructed in 1880, was designed by Quartermaster General Montgomery C. Meigs but departs from the more typical Second Empire design adopted for the lodges. It has an L-shaped plan, multiple gables, and decorative bargeboards and fascia, reminiscent of the Queen Anne style. The first floor of the two-story brick building contains four rooms and a porch that was enclosed in the early 1930's. The utility wing was added in 1935 to replace an earlier wood kitchen addition. The second floor contains three rooms. The lodge has a gable roof rather than the mansard typical of the Meigs lodges built in the 1860's and 1870's. The roof is slate. The windows, typical of the period but unusual in Meigs buildings, are double-hung with the lower panel having two panes with one vertical mullion and an upper panel with one central pane surrounded by 12 six-inch square panes.



The brick and concrete utility building was constructed in 1931. The flat roof is built-up asphalt. An addition, approximately 13 feet wide, was constructed across the entire east side (rear) of the building.

The rostrum was constructed in 1939, replacing the original 1880 cast iron rostrum. It is a rectangular, simple unadorned structure with brick columns raised six feet above grade on a concrete base and a hipped slate roof.



Significant Monuments/Memorials

Illinois State Monument - This monument is located at the center of the cemetery, and was erected by the State of Illinois circa 1874 at a cost of \$25,000. The base of the monument is 25 feet square by 4 feet in height and of granite and marble. Upon this base, a pedestal 15 feet high supports a marble shaft. The whole is surmounted by a statue of the Goddess of Liberty in marble, while two statues of the same material, a soldier and a sailor, stand at the foot of the shaft. The erection of the monument resulted from a bill introduced in the Illinois Legislature in 1872-1873, by the Honorable N. R. Casey for an appropriation. Many names are inscribed on all four sides of the monument.



In 1972, the statue of the Goddess of Liberty toppled from the pedestal and broke. A replacement statue was shipped from the quarry in Italy, but it never reached the United States. A second replacement was received in 1974 and placed on the original shaft.

A report of the inspector of national cemeteries shows that when the cemetery was inspected on June 1, 1871, there were four iron guns that were planted as monuments, two on each side of the flagpole. Only one of these monuments, made of an original cast iron sea-coast artillery tube and secured by a concrete base, remains. It is located in front of the rostrum. A bronze plaque affixed to the monument is inscribed as follows:



UNITED STATES
NATIONAL MILITARY CEMETERY
MOUND CITY
ESTABLISHED 1864
INTERMENTS 4827
KNOWN 2367
UNKNOWN 2460

As you enter the cemetery, there are two plaques along the left side of the drive. The first is inscribed with the language of the Act to Protect and Establish National Cemeteries (see full text in Appendix A).

The second plaque is inscribed with General Orders No. 80 of the War Department issued by the Adjutant General's Office in Washington, September 1, 1875, by order of the Secretary of War (see full text in Appendix B). These plaques were manufactured circa 1880.

On each side along the avenue from the main entrance to the rostrum are located seven plaques containing verses from Theodore O'Hara's "Bivouac of the Dead" (see full text in Appendix C). The plaques are inscribed as follows:



- PLAQUE 1 NO RUMOR OF THE FOE'S ADVANCE
 NOW SWELLS UPON THE WIND
 NO TROUBLED THOUGHT AT MIDNIGHT HAUNTS
 OF LOVED ONES LEFT BEHIND
- PLAQUE 2 REST ON EMBALMED AND SAINTED DEAD
 DEAR AS THE BLOOD YE GAVE
 NO IMPIOUS FOOTSTEP SHALL HERE TREAD
 THE HERBAGE OF YOUR GRAVE
- PLAQUE 3 NO VISION OF THE MORROW'S STRIFE
 THE WARRIOR'S DREAM ALARMS
 NO BRAYING HORN NOR SCREAMING FIFE
 AT DAWN SHALL COME TO ARMS
- PLAQUE 4 THE NEIGHING TROOP THE FLASHING BLADE
 THE BUGLE'S STIRRING BLAST
 THE CHARGE THE DREADFULLY CANNONADE
 THE DIN AND SHOUT ARE PAST
- PLAQUE 5 ON FAME'S ETERNAL CAMPING GROUND
 THEIR SILENT TENTS TO SPREAD
 AND GLORY GUARDS WITH SOLEMN ROUND
 THE BIVOUAC OF THE DEAD
- PLAQUE 6 YOUR OWN PROUD LAND'S HEROIC SOIL
 SHALL BE YOUR FITTER GRAVE
 SHE CLAIMS FROM WAR HIS RICHEST SPOIL
 THE ASHES OF HER BRAVE
- PLAQUE 7 THE MUFFLED DRUM'S SAD ROLL HAS BEAT
 THE SOLDIER'S LAST TATTOO
 NO MORE ON LIFE'S PARADE SHALL MEET
 THAT BRAVE AND FALLEN FEW

Civil War Activity in Area

Mound City, Illinois, was founded at the abandoned settlement of Trinity in 1854. The city was located at the confluence of the Ohio and Cache Rivers. With the coming of the civil conflict, the river front became an extremely important Union naval facility for the Mississippi Squadron. A repair facility for the squadron was moved to Mound City due to the lack of space at Cairo. Throughout the Civil War, the Mound City naval depot was the only repair facility for the Mississippi Squadron, a fleet that numbered 80 ships. In addition to repairing and refitting vessels, the Mound City naval depot also shared in the construction of three ironclad gunboats. These were the U. S. S. Cairo, Cincinnati, and Mound City.

Heavy battles along the Tennessee, Cumberland, and Mississippi Rivers necessitated the establishment of hospital facilities to care for the wounded. Mound City was in a strategic location and the city's hotel and foundry were converted into hospital facilities. High death rates from wounds and disease led to the establishment of the Mound City National Cemetery.

On April 7, 1862, the gunboat, Mound City, captured a side-wheel river steamer named the Red Rover which had been used by the Confederates as a floating barracks. The Red Rover was taken to St. Louis to be refitted as a floating hospital for the Western Flotilla. The ship was assigned to the U. S. Navy Hospital at Mound City. The Red Rover accompanied the flotilla through most engagements with the enemy, making many trips with wounded and dead to the Memphis and Mound City hospitals and cemeteries, treating the wounded along the bank of the Mississippi, scrounging for food and transporting medical supplies.

Although Mound City and nearby Cairo, Illinois, were not in the combat theater of the Civil War, their location near the confluence of the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers made these areas important staging points for the Tennessee and Cumberland Rivers for the Union forces. Three of the famous Eads ironclad gunboats were built at the Mound City marine ways and shipyard. These specially designed shallow draft ironclads played an important part in the western campaign, giving valuable support to the Union troops on the Tennessee and Cumberland Rivers and at Vicksburg.

In 1861, a large brick building in Mound City was taken over by the United States Government for use as a general hospital. In service throughout the war, it was one of the largest military hospitals in the west. Another large hospital was established at Cairo, located approximately five and one-half miles south of Mound City. Roman Catholic nuns of the Order of the Holy Cross at Notre Dame, South Bend, Indiana, were utilized as nurses to staff these hospitals. The establishment of these large hospitals at Mound City and Cairo was a determining factor in the location of the Mound City National Cemetery. The hospital at Mound City was able to accommodate from 1,000-1,500 patients and has been described as one of the best administered of the military general hospitals. Mother Angela, who was in charge of a school at South Bend operated by the Sisters of the Holy Cross when the war began, became a supervisor of nurses at the Mound City hospital and rendered outstanding service. Among the outstanding surgeons at the hospital were Dr. E. S. Franklin and Dr. H. Warder, who was later in charge of the Illinois State Hospital at Anna, Illinois. The first patients at the Mound City General Hospital were the wounded from the Battle of Belmont, Missouri, November 7, 1861. Heavy fighting at Fort Donelson in February 1862 and at Shiloh in April 1862, brought many more patients to the Mound City and Cairo hospitals. The death rate from wounds and all prevalent diseases was high in the hospitals of the Civil War period.