

PREFACE

The Civil War was one of the most important events in American history and continues to fascinate persons, young and old. I have always been interested in the Civil War, and that enthusiasm has been inherited by two of my young grand nephews who live in Tennessee. Both of them enjoy reading books about the Civil War, as well as visiting Civil War battlefields and attending re-enactments.

When I was asked to undertake the project of nominating Department of Veterans Affairs national cemeteries to the National Register of Historic Places, it was to me not only a tremendous challenge, but a way for me to contribute personally to the preservation of America's history.

Many years ago, the National Register had determined that all national cemeteries are potentially eligible for listing in the National Register. Only nine had been listed.

A meeting was held with personnel of the National Register in December 1992, who advised that properties should be at least 50 years old before being nominated to the National Register. Since many VA national cemeteries were established during the Civil War, it was decided that a multiple property submission (MPS) would be the best approach to take. The MPS facilitates the evaluation of individual properties by comparing them with resources that share similar physical characteristics and historical associations. Information common to the group of properties is presented in the MPS.

Much thought and deliberation went into deciding which cemeteries should be included in the MPS. Since national cemeteries were initially established for those Civil War soldiers who died in the service of their country, I decided to include only the 59 national cemeteries which were established between 1862 and 1873, when burials were restricted only to those soldiers who died in battle. (By an Act of March 3, 1873, Congress approved a change to the eligibility criteria and extended burial rights to all honorably discharged soldiers, sailors, and Marines who served during the Civil War, not only to those who gave their lives in battle).

I then undertook the formidable task of preparing the MPS. I conducted extensive research from many different sources and after many revisions, reviews, and more revisions and reviews, I submitted the final product to the National Register on August 29, 1994. The MPS, titled "Civil War Era National Cemeteries," was accepted by the National Register on October 24, 1994, as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.

The intensive work continued. I needed to prepare individual nominations of 55 of the 59 cemeteries, four having already been listed in the National Register. For the next five-plus years, I would be conducting research, visiting each of the cemeteries, meeting and talking with historians and other interested persons, and writing and rewriting, before submitting final drafts to the respective State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPO's). After review and concurrence of each nomination, it would then be forwarded to the National Register for approval and eventual listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

In preparing the MPS, as well as the individual cemetery nominations, I included a great amount of information from many Civil War books and publications written by renowned authors. All sources are listed in the bibliography found on pages ____ to ____.

With the listing of San Antonio and Natchez National Cemeteries on November 22, 1999, this rewarding task was completed.

It is not possible for me to name individually all the persons who assisted me and supported me in this most worthwhile project. I must thank my supervisor, Mr. Robert B. Holbrook, for giving me this opportunity to meet so many knowledgeable and interesting people. He totally supported me throughout the entire project and commended me for my dedication. It was because of his encouragement that this book has been developed.

I also wish to thank Michael Nacincik of the National Cemetery Administration's Management Outreach Division for his willingness to apply his expertise to the layout and graphics of the book. Special thanks also go to Mrs. Karen Tupek, VA's Historic Preservation Officer, for proof-reading and editing the entire text.

This endeavor is truly "A Promise Made - A Commitment Kept."

During my 24+ years with the National Cemetery Administration, I have been involved in all stages of national cemeteries—the past, the present, and the future. My focus on the past culminated in the completion of the Civil War project in 1999.

For the present, the Technical Support Service where I work oversees projects that maintain national cemeteries, as well as those that restore historic structures within VA national cemeteries. I am closely associated with the acquisition of land to establish new national cemeteries and to expand existing ones.

An excellent opportunity was then afforded me to transition from blending the history of the past to focusing on the promise of the future. Near the beginning of the spring of 1999, I was asked to serve as a team member planning dedication ceremonies for four new national cemeteries scheduled to open during that year and the following year. The cemeteries are: Saratoga (NY), Abraham Lincoln (IL), Dallas-Fort Worth (TX), and Ohio Western Reserve (OH). Establishing new national cemeteries allows the Department of Veterans Affairs to continue providing burial space for veterans, a benefit which began over a century ago during the presidency of Abraham Lincoln.

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