

Cave Hill National Cemetery
701 Baxter Avenue
Louisville, Kentucky 40204

Description

The Cave Hill National Cemetery, established in 1863, consists of six burial sections in the northwest corner of the 300-acre privately-owned Cave Hill Cemetery, about two miles from the center of Louisville. A wrought iron gate supported by brick piers is located in the northwest corner at Payne Street, but is not used by the public as an entrance gate. When visiting the national cemetery, one must first enter the Cave Hill Cemetery. A flagpole, constructed circa 1898, is located in the northeastern portion of the national cemetery. At the base of the flagpole is a bronze plaque inscribed with "Cave Hill National Cemetery" and the seal of the Veterans Administration (now the Department of Veterans Affairs). Near the center of the north boundary of the national cemetery is a rostrum situated to the side of a lily pond. Graves are marked with upright marble headstones.

The stone rostrum, 22 feet by 36 feet, with concrete columns, was constructed in 1898. The floor and steps are concrete. The open trellis roof was removed about 1955.



Significant Monuments/Memorials

German Monument - A stone tablet mounted on a solid stone pedestal. The base of the monument is 16 inches wide, 67 inches long, and 8 inches above ground. The inscription in German is illegible, but National Cemetery Administration microfilm records state that the inscription, transcribed into English, reads as follows:



HERE REST THE FIRST HEROES OF THE 32ND INDIANA GERMAN REGIMENT WHO LAID DOWN THEIR LIVES FOR PRESERVATION OF THE FREE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES OF NORTH AMERICA. THEY WERE KILLED DECEMBER 17, 1861, IN A FIGHT WITH THE REBELS AT ROWLETT'S STATION, KENTUCKY, IN WHICH ONE REGIMENT OF TEXAS RANGERS, TWO REGIMENTS OF INFANTRY, AND A BATTERY OF SIX CANNON, OVER 3,000 STRONG, WERE DEFEATED BY 500 GERMAN SOLDIERS.

IN MEMORY OF THE FIRST
VICTIMS
OF THE 32 REG. INDIANA VOL.
WHO FELL AT THE BATTLE OF ROWLETT'S
STATION
DECEMBER 17, 1861

1ST LIEUTENANT MAX SACHS, BORN 1826
SERGEANT WILLIAM STAUBE, BORN 1819
PRIVATE GEORGE BURKHARDT, BORN 1843
PRIVATE JOHN FELLERMAN, BORN 1843
PVT. GARRI KIEFFER, BORN 1817
PVT. CHARLES KNAB, BORN 1843
PVT. HENRY LOHSE, BORN 1835
PVT. CHRISTOPH REUTER, BORN 1820
PVT. ERNST SCHIEMANN, BORN 1826
PVT. DANIEL SCHMIDT, BORN 1834
PVT. THEODOR SCHMIDT, BORN 1839
PVT. FRIEDRICH SCHUMACHER, BORN 1834
PVT. RICHARD WEBE, BORN 1832

The 13 soldiers served with the 32nd Indiana Infantry Regiment, commanded by Brigadier General August Willich, and were killed during a battle at Rowlett's Station near the Green River in Kentucky, on December 17, 1861. They were originally buried within the enclosure at Fort Willich near Munfordville, and their graves were marked by a stone tablet bearing the inscription neatly sculpted in German.

The Commonwealth of Kentucky gratefully recognized the sacrifice of these men by purchasing the ground on which they were buried and protecting it by an enclosure. With the consent of the Governor of Indiana, they were removed to the Cave Hill National Cemetery and reinterred in individual graves in the order of their original burial (Graves 2348 to 2360, Section C). Only two markers are inscribed with names (Schiemann and Reuter). The pedestal on which the stone tablet is mounted was donated by Germans living in Louisville.

Research is in progress to verify that this memorial is the first Civil War monument in the Nation.

A stone tablet is located at the corner of West and Maple Avenues and is inscribed as follows:

IN MEMORY OF
UNKNOWN UNION SOLDIERS
BURIED IN THIS CEMETERY
1861 - 1865
ERECTED BY
KENTUCKY COMRADES
1914



Civil War Activity in Area

In 1861, the Cave Hill Cemetery Company donated to the United States a parcel of land dedicated to the burial of soldiers who should die in the service of the United States. The national cemetery was later expanded by purchase of additional land.

Original interments in the Cave Hill National Cemetery were of soldiers who died in the hospitals established at Louisville, Kentucky, and of troops encamped in the neighborhood. Subsequent interments included the dead gathered up at other locations.