

Natchez National Cemetery
41 Cemetery Road
Natchez, Mississippi 39120

Description

The Natchez National Cemetery, established in 1866, is located on a bluff overlooking the Mississippi River in Adams County. The site is of an irregular shape, and the grounds are laid off in various shaped burial sections which are separated by drives and walks that follow the steep topography of the site. Many of the roads are grass or grass with gravel and are terraced into hill-sides, creating a unique appearance. The main entrance is situated at the southwest corner of the grounds and is protected by a double wrought iron gate constructed in 1932. From the entrance a road leads to a circle, upon which stands the flagpole. The grounds are enclosed by a brick wall constructed in 1873. The lodge is located to the northeast of the main entrance, and a service building is located along the eastern side. A rostrum is situated to the north of the lodge, and a committal service tent is located in the southeast corner of the cemetery. Graves are marked with upright marble headstones.



In 1931, the lodge was constructed. It is a one-story hollow tile and stucco Colonial Revival structure with a slate roof and a finished basement. The porch was remodeled in 1937, and screen wire removed and enclosed with drop siding wainscoting and double-hung sash. The roof was replaced in 1964, aluminum awning installed in 1966, and the kitchen remodeled in 1968. A public restroom facility was added in 1984. The lodge is now used as the administrative office.



The brick and concrete service building, 20 feet, 4 inches by 43 feet, 4 inches, with an asbestos shingle roof, was constructed in 1931. New garage doors were installed in 1951.

The rostrum, 15 feet square, was constructed in 1931. The roof was removed in 1957.



Noted Burials

There is one Medal of Honor recipient buried in the national cemetery: Wilson Brown, Landsman, United States Navy (Section G, Grave 3152). His grave is marked with a special marker inscribed with an enlarged gold-leafed replica of the medal of the United States Navy and the words "MEDAL OF HONOR."

Civil War Activity in Area

After Mississippi seceded from the Union in 1861, the Bonnie Blue Flag of the Sovereign State of Mississippi was, for a short time, the flag of Natchez. The Stars and Bars became the sixth flag to which its citizens swore allegiance when Mississippi joined the Confederacy. Although the population of Natchez was small, 1,444 volunteered for the Confederate Army. The highest ranking Natchez officer was General William Martin of Montaigne who rode with J. E. B. Stuart. Since it was not considered a strategic point like Vicksburg, 72 miles to the north, Natchez suffered only minor damage.

On April 24, 1862, a Union fleet under the command of David G. Farragut captured New Orleans. Farragut next moved up the Mississippi River, capturing Baton Rouge on May 8. Four days later, on May 12, 1862, Natchez surrendered to the Federal deep-water fleet without firing a shot. Following the fall of Vicksburg in July 1863, and the capture of Meridian in February 1864, most Federal forces were transferred to other theaters of operations, but strong Federal fortifications remained at Vicksburg, Memphis, Baton Rouge, New Orleans, and Natchez. These fortifications not only protected Union shipping on the Mississippi River, but served as bases for Union raids into the interior of Mississippi and Louisiana. The main fortification at Natchez was named Fort McPherson. Significantly, many of the Union occupation forces and raiding parties were composed of United States Colored Regiments. Natchez remained under Federal control throughout the Civil War.



One of the old Natchez homes, "The Gardens," adjacent to the national cemetery, served as a military hospital for Federal troops, and some of the original interments are those who died in this hospital.