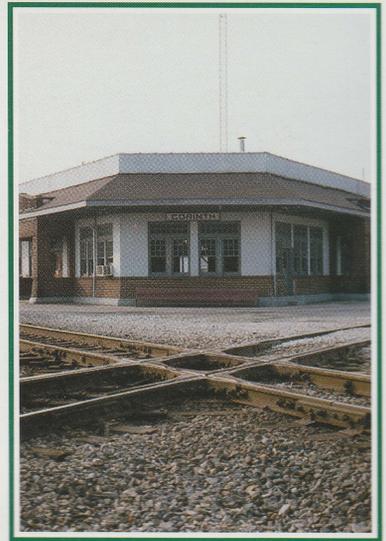


THE RAILROAD

Union forces had one primary objective in the Mississippi Valley during the spring of 1862: to capture the vital crossroads of the Memphis & Charleston and the Mobile & Ohio railroads at Corinth. Union General Henry W. Halleck, who was later appointed Lincoln's General in Chief, wrote early in 1862: "Richmond and Corinth are the greatest strategic points of the war, and our success at these points should be insured at all hazards." Possession of Corinth was critical because its rail junction connected the Confederate States from the Mississippi River to the Atlantic Ocean and from the Gulf of Mexico to Kentucky. And because rapid movement of men and materiel in this war must be by rail. The side that controlled these railroads would enjoy a tremendous logistical advantage.

Determined to keep the crossroads in Confederate hands, Albert Sidney Johnston, a close friend of Jefferson Davis and the man thought to be the South's leading general, poured thousands of troops by rail into Corinth in the spring of 1862. Advancing northward to destroy Halleck's army in detail, Johnston then began a great, bloody battle at Shiloh Church, Tennessee, on April 6. Following the Confederate retreat from Shiloh, Halleck's army of 120,000 men besieged General P. G. T. Beauregard's 65,000 Confederates at Corinth. The men of both sides dug almost thirty miles of fieldworks around the town; by late May the Union army, though frequently placed on the defensive by the aggressive Confederates, finally fortified positions that forced Beauregard to withdraw. On the night of May 29, 1862, the Confederates secretly slipped out of Corinth by rail, and Halleck occupied the coveted railroad junction the following day. General Earl Van Dorn tried to recapture Corinth and regain control of the vital crossroads on October 3-4, 1862. The final Confederate effort at Corinth failed, and the town remained in Union hands until January 1864, when the Federals abandoned it to supply soldiers for William T. Sherman's Atlanta Campaign.



The crossroads and current depot, built in 1920, as they appear today.

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Siege and Battle of Corinth Commission

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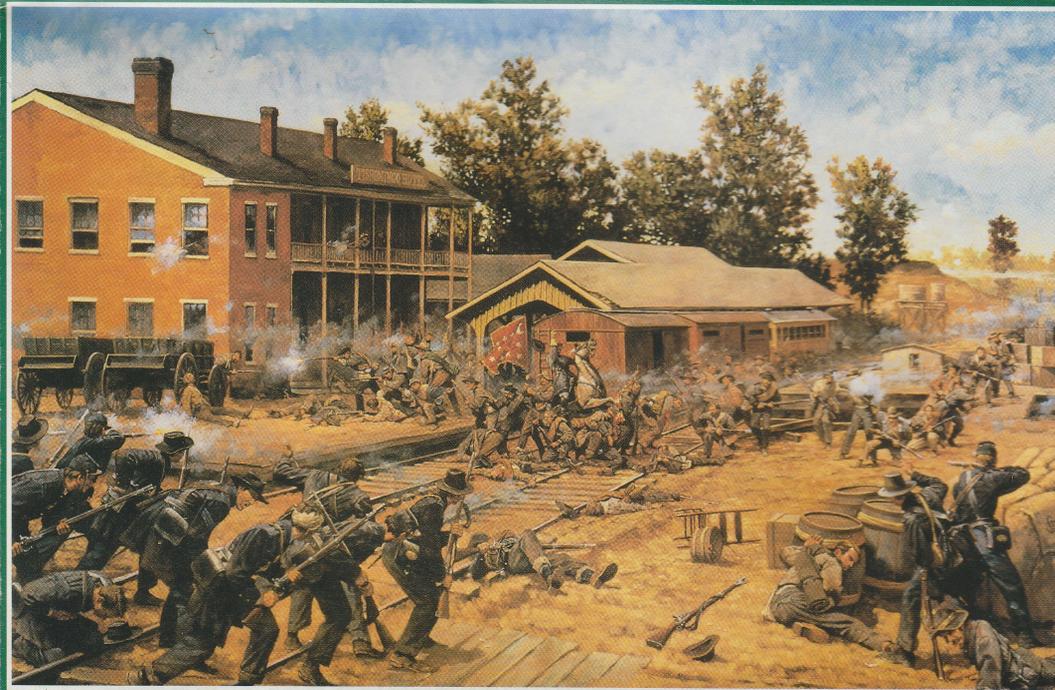
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Jum plantations and houses, underground sites, cemeteries, and other destina-
The Civil War Discovery Trail, an initiative of The Civil War Trust, links more than 420
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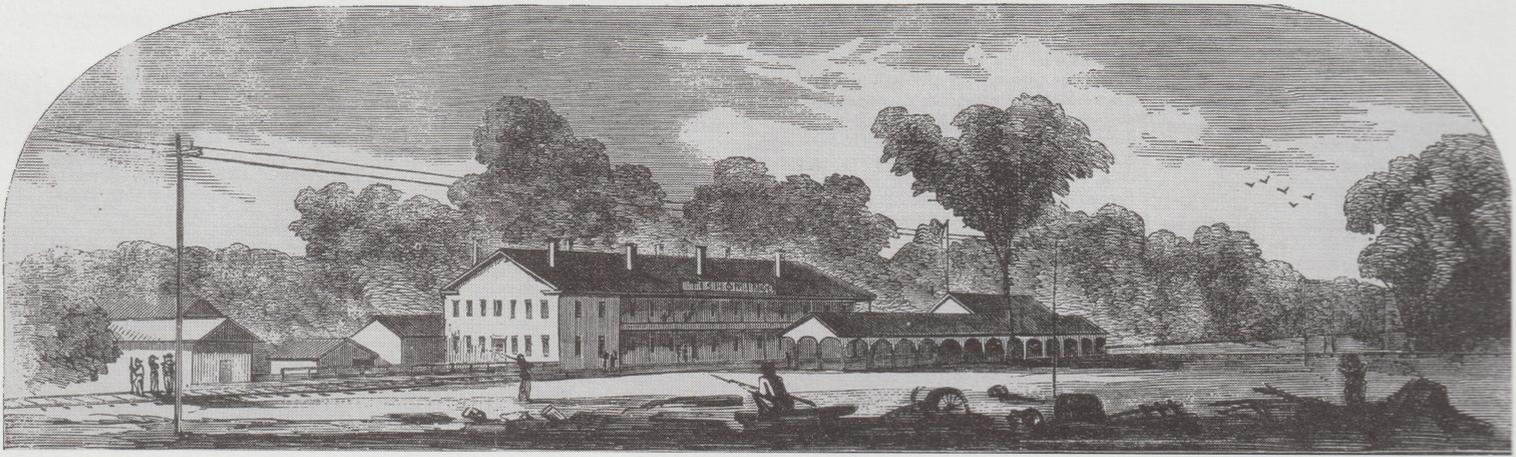


VISIT THE HISTORIC
CORINTH AREA
MISSISSIPPI'S GATEWAY CITY



A Walking Tour
of Civil War
CORINTH





Railroad junction at Corinth from Harper's Weekly, June 21, 1862. Ulysses S. Grant regarded Corinth as "the great strategic position at the west between the Tennessee and Mississippi Rivers and between Nashville and Vicksburg." From the summer of 1862 until the winter of 1864, Union troops garrisoned here protected the northeastern flank of Union forces in the lower Mississippi Valley.

THE VITAL CROSSROADS

THE TOWN

At the beginning of the Civil War, Corinth was a frontier boom town built on what had been Chickasaw Indian land only a quarter-century earlier. As early as 1854, the survey lines for two railroads, the Memphis & Charleston (completed in 1857) and the Mobile & Ohio (finished in 1861), had crossed in a remote corner of old Tishomingo County, spurring the development of a new trade center for the farms of western Tennessee and northeast Mississippi.

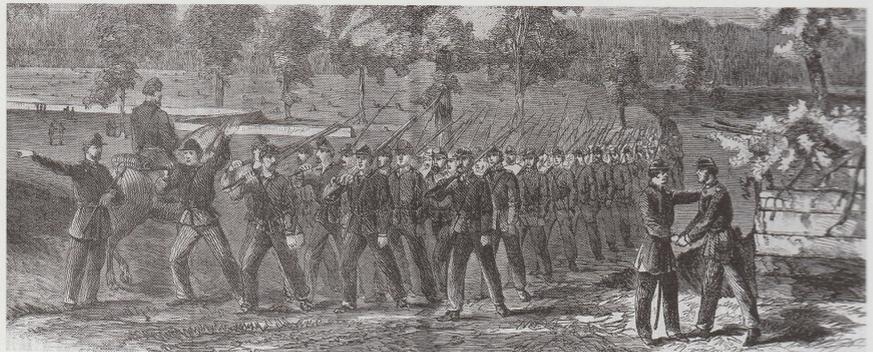


A sketch of Corinth from Beauregard's Headquarters, the Fish Pond House, from Harper's Weekly, June 21, 1862

Originally named Cross City, a half-section of land surrounding the planned rail junction was surveyed by Eli and Houston Mitchell and Hamilton Mask, who laid out a plan of blocks and lots and streets for the new community in 1855. Incorporated as Corinth in March 1856, by 1858 the new town already boasted a population of 1,500 people and numerous brick business houses, five churches, three hotels, several substantial residences, and Corona College, a school for young women. Speculation and the community's rapid population growth resulted in the addition of six new property plats to the original survey between 1855 and 1860. Located north and east of the business district, this residential area contains the vast majority of Corinth's extant antebellum structures. Though none of the antebellum commercial structures remain today, many of them continued to stand well into the twentieth century, insuring the survival of the block and lot pattern of Corinth's historic business district.

RAVAGED BY WAR

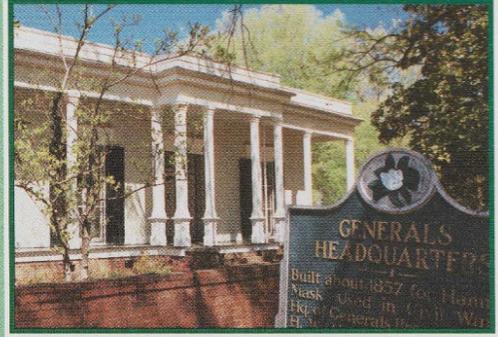
In the spring of 1861, the railroad junction became a liability for Corinth. Both the Union and Confederate armies wreaked havoc on the town and its citizens. Though the majority of the district had opposed secession, they raised a local company called the Corinth Rifles, which eventually became part of the 9th Mississippi Infantry Regiment. More significantly, Corinth became a mobilization center for the South in 1861, and soldiers and units bound for Mobile, Pensacola, Bowling Green, and Richmond passed through the town. After the Battle of Shiloh, Corinth was nearly overwhelmed with sick and wounded southern soldiers. The town responded as best it could, providing hospital space in its public buildings and many of its homes. Its women, aided by volunteers from as far afield as New Orleans and Mobile, nursed the sick and tended the wounded and dying as Halleck's forces closed in around them.



Union Major General John Pope's army entering Corinth on May 30, 1862. from Harper's Weekly, June 21, 1862

On the night of May 29, 1862, the Confederates evacuated, taking many of Corinth's civilians with them and leaving the town open to a Union occupation that would last for more than a year and a half. Corinth was not prepared for the thousands of soldiers, contraband slaves, and white southern Unionists who had suddenly swollen its population, contaminating the community's surface water, which caused diseases such as dysentery and cholera. Following the Battle of Corinth on October 3 - 4, 1862, the town was again filled with the cries of the wounded and sick and dying, but, this time, the women of the North came to care for their wounded.

WHEN FEDERAL TROOPS left Corinth in late January 1864, they burned most of the public buildings, including Corona College, to prevent their use by Confederate forces. By May 1865, when the war finally ended for Corinth's exhausted citizens, at least 300,000 soldiers had passed through the town. Some 200 Confederate and Union generals had spent time here, quartered in the best houses they could find. More than 100 battles, skirmishes, or raids had been fought in or near Corinth. Thousands had been killed or maimed fighting for possession of this tiny part of Mississippi. Countless others died of disease and illness in its camps. In four years of occupation both sides had taken what they needed and destroyed whatever remained of military value.



The Curlee house, built in 1857, was used as headquarters by generals Braxton Bragg, H. W. Halleck, and John B. Hood.



The Duncan House, completed in 1862, sheltered Confederate General Pierre G. T. Beauregard during the Siege of Corinth, and Union General William Rosecrans probably lived here during June of 1862.

Union private Elisha Stockwell, who passed through the town in January 1865, observed, "Corinth is all burned down... the country as far as we went is destroyed." Few communities had endured so much hardship and suffering for so long during the Civil War.

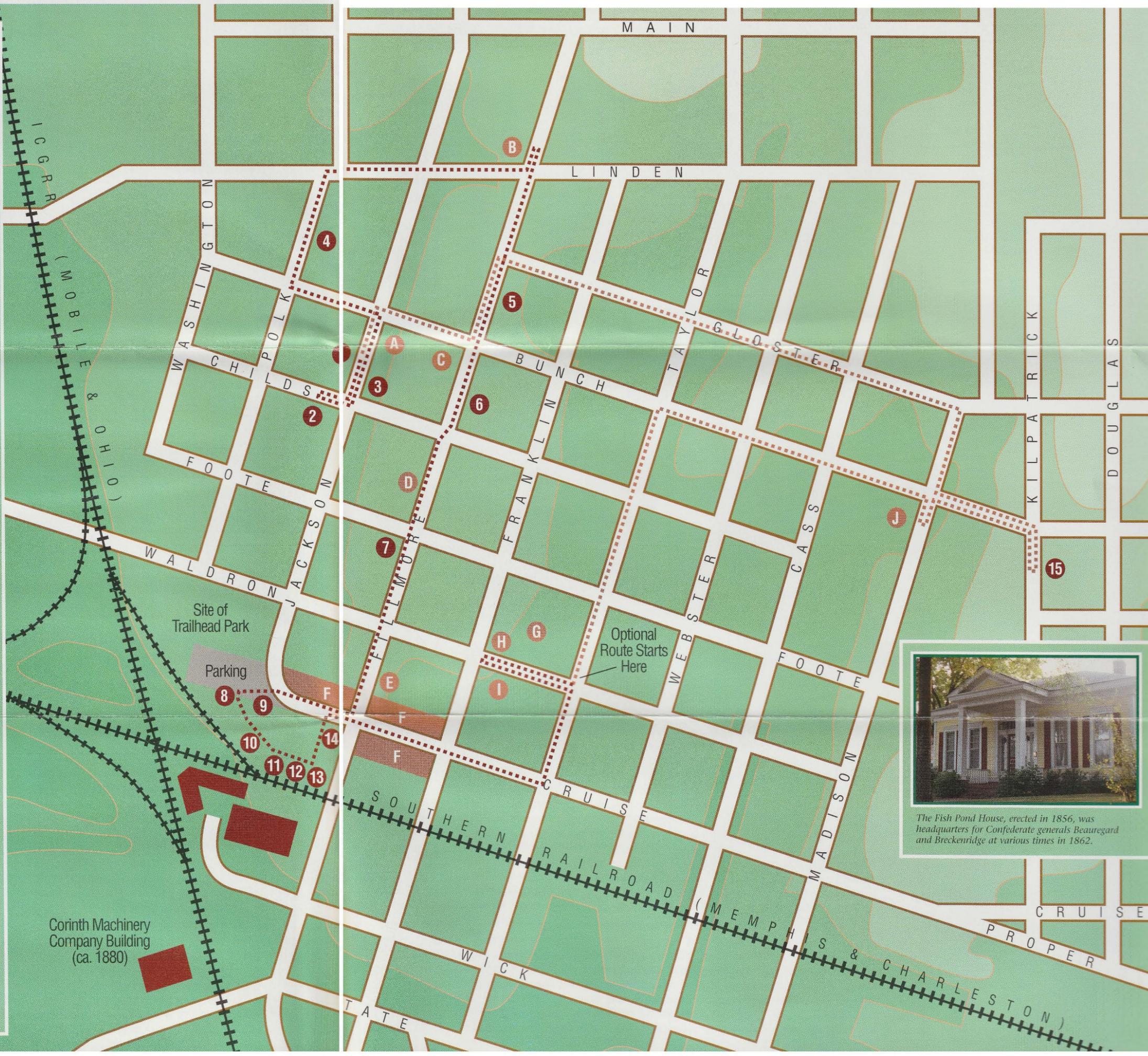
CIVIL WAR SITES OF INTEREST

- 1 Curlee House Interim Information Center
- 2 Mitchell House site Grant's Headquarters
- 3 General Thomas speech site
- 4 Duncan House
- 5 Oak Home
- 6 Rose Cottage site
- 7 Moss House site Provost Marshal Headquarters
- 8 Decision at the Crossroads
- 9 Corinth Panorama, 1862
- 10 View toward Batteries Williams & Robinett
- 11 Union Troops near the crossroads
- 12 Tishomingo Hotel site
- 13 Depot & Old Tishomingo Hotel site
- 14 Corinth House Hotel site
- 15 Fish Pond House

OTHER SITES OF INTEREST

- A Sekeles Home (ca. 1869) Constructed for Leopold Sekeles, a former Confederate soldier who established a business here after the war.
- B Stewart Home (ca. 1858) Home of James Erskine Stewart, one of Corinth's early mayors.
- C First United Methodist Church (1871) Built for the Fillmore Street Cumberland Presbyterian Church, established in 1857, this is the oldest extant church building in Corinth.
- D Rankin Printery (ca. 1870) Formerly the Tishomingo Savings Institution, then the only bank in northeast Mississippi. This bank was robbed by the Jesse James gang in December 1874.
- E Waits Jewelry (ca. 1872) James Waits, a Confederate veteran, established this shop in 1865.
- F Cruise Street The historic buildings on this street, erected mostly between 1870 and 1880, were used for everything from saloons to ladies shops.
- G Alcorn County Courthouse (1918)
- H Col. William P. Rogers Statue (1895) Erected to honor Colonel Rogers for his leadership and courage during the Battle of Corinth.
- I Borroum's Drugstore (ca. 1872) Established in 1865 by Dr. A. J. Borroum, a CSA surgeon, today exhibits Indian and Civil war artifacts.
- J New Home (1875) Built by L. M. New who served here as a Confederate lieutenant during the war and was mayor of Corinth in the late 1880s.

The area depicted on this map was listed on the National Register of Historic Places as the Downtown Corinth and the Midtown Corinth historic districts in 1993.



The Fish Pond House, erected in 1856, was headquarters for Confederate generals Beauregard and Breckenridge at various times in 1862.