

Gettysburg National Military Park

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



The Soldier's National Cemetery

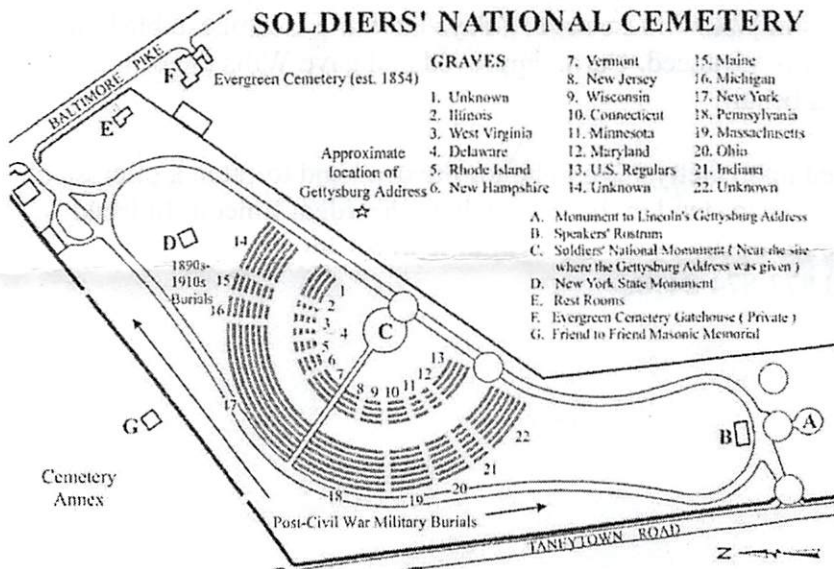
The Soldiers' National Cemetery at Gettysburg is the final resting place for more than 3,500 Union Soldiers killed in the battle of Gettysburg. At the cemetery's dedication on November 19, 1863, President Abraham

Lincoln rose to deliver a few appropriate remarks, now known as the Gettysburg Address. His two-minute speech served as a reminder of the sacrifices of war and the need of preserving the Union.

After the battle, bodies lay scattered throughout Gettysburg farmlands. Burial work commenced quickly as fears of an epidemic rose. The dead were hastily buried in shallow graves on the battlefield, often only crudely identified. Rain and wind began eroding the impromptu graves, and Gettysburg's citizens called for the creation of a soldiers' cemetery for the proper burial of the Union dead. Local attorney David Wills and Pennsylvania Governor Andrew Curtin spearheaded the

effort to create a fitting resting place for the Union dead. In dedicating this place, Lincoln's speech enshrined Gettysburg as the place where America was redefined.

Between 1898 and 1968, graves were added for veterans from the Spanish-American War, WWI, WWII, Korean War and the Vietnam Conflict. Today, more than 6,000 veterans lay at rest in the Soldiers' National Cemetery.



PLEASE SHOW SILENCE AND RESPECT AS YOU WALK THE SITE.

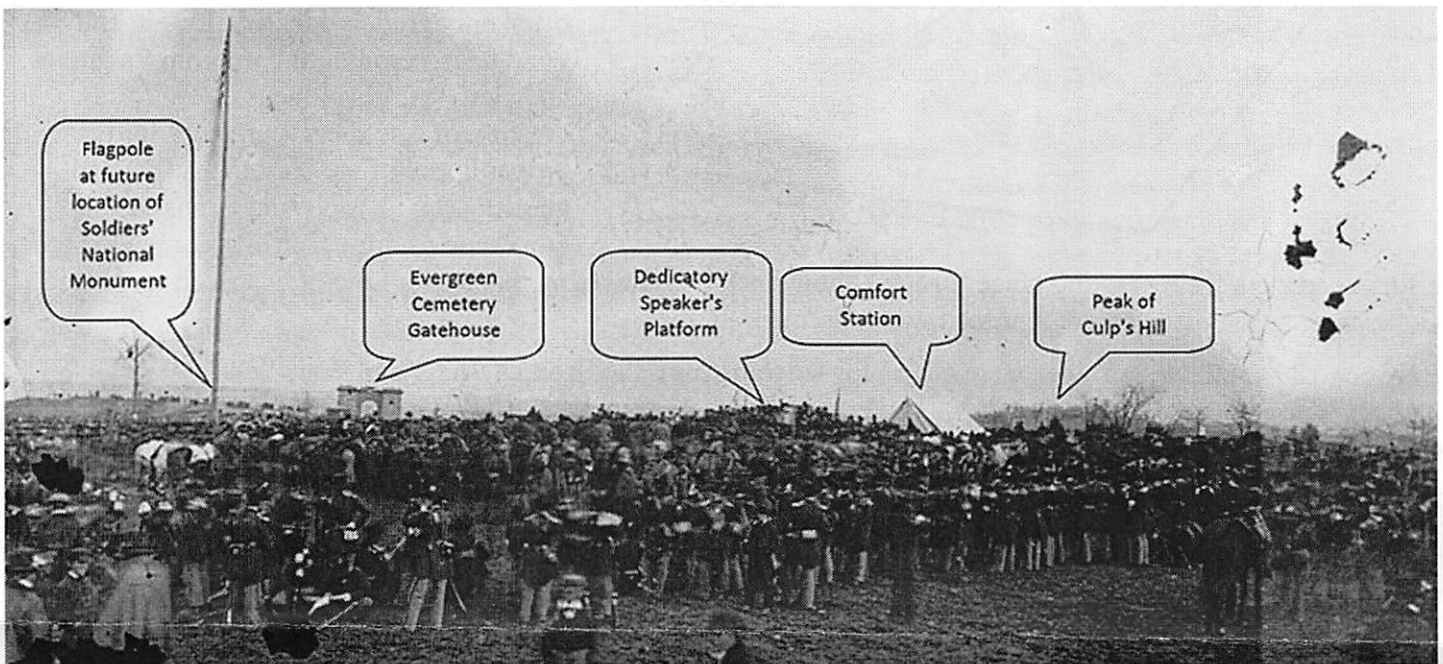
A more detailed walking tour booklet is available for purchase from the Event Network Bookstore in the National Park Visitor Center and Museum. Enjoy your visit to these grounds.

The Grand Plan

The Civil War came to the doorstep of Gettysburg Attorney David Wills' home in July 1863, forcing him and his family to take shelter in their basement. In the pivotal fight's aftermath, David Wills performed many of the duties of today's American Red Cross. He gathered and warehoused supplies for the wounded and fought for the compensation of farmers who suffered during the battle. Wills also helped arrange the construction and consecration of the Soldiers National Cemetery and President Abraham Lincoln's visit.

Pennsylvania governor Andrew Curtin visited the battlefield with David Wills on July 10, 1863 and was shocked by the conditions. He designated Wills as the state agent charged with seeing to the proper burial of Pennsylvania's dead. At a meeting of state agents in Wills' house several days later, the idea of establishing a permanent national cemetery for all Union dead was advanced. Curtin approved and gave Wills the official authority to oversee its construction on the state's behalf.

On November 19, 1863, 15,000 people converged upon Gettysburg to honor the dead and to catch a glimpse of visiting dignitaries. At the **David Wills House**, you can stand in the room where President Lincoln finished revising his Gettysburg Address. **Self-guided tours of the home are available at 8 Lincoln Square. For hours of operation and other information call 877-874-2478.**



The Gettysburg Address

Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field, as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that this nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

But in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us – that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion – that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain – that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom – and that government of the people, by the people, for the people shall not perish from the earth.