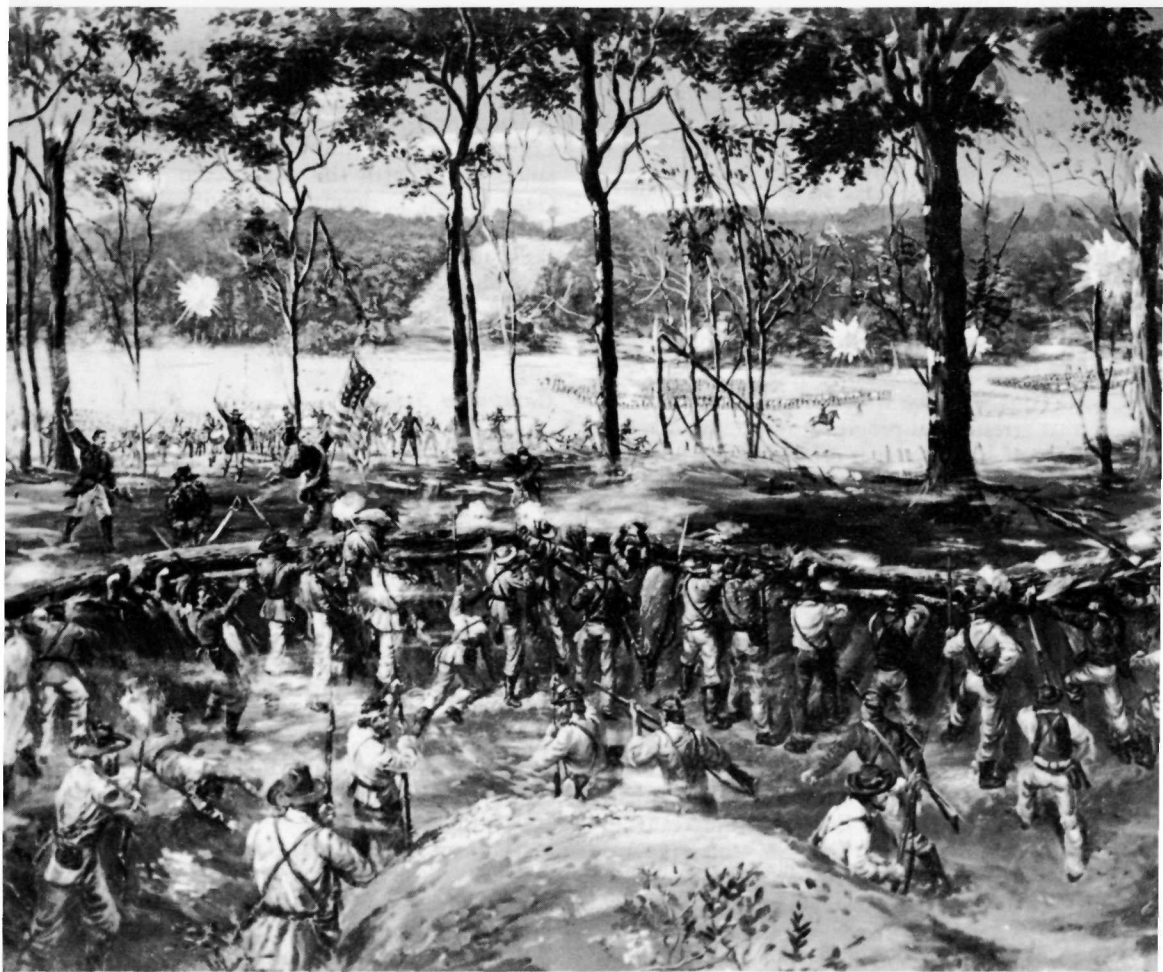
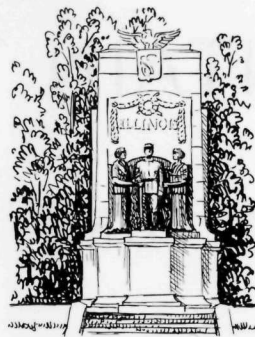


# KENNESAW MOUNTAIN

NATIONAL BATTLEFIELD PARK



GEORGIA



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Scene of a major engagement of the Atlanta Campaign—Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman's great flanking movement that split the heart of the Confederacy in two during the summer of 1864.

Kennesaw, the bold and striking twin mountain, lay before us, with a high range of chestnut hills trending off to the northeast. . . . To our right was a smaller hill, called Pine Mountain, and beyond it in the distance, Lost Mountain. . . .

On each of these peaks the enemy had his signal station, the summits were crowned with batteries, and the spurs were alive with men busy in felling trees, digging pits, and preparing for the grand struggle impending. The scene was enchanting; too beautiful to be disturbed by the harsh clamor of war; but the Chattahoochee lay beyond, and I had to reach it.

Thus Sherman wrote of the natural barrier that arrested his progress toward Atlanta, the goal of his summer campaign in 1864.

### Events Leading to Atlanta

But let us go back a year to the summer of 1863 and review the events that led Sherman to this battle at Kennesaw Mountain, and thence to Atlanta. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant's capture of Vicksburg on July 4, 1863, was the decisive action that gained for the North complete control of the Mississippi River. Late in November, Northern armies, based principally at Nashville, had won control of Tennessee in decisive actions around Chattanooga. Thus the Federals were ready to move southward into Georgia—the stage was set for the Atlanta Campaign.

General Grant, now commanding all Union armies, directed Sherman to start his drive on Atlanta in early May 1864. At the same time, Grant would begin his advance in Virginia. For the first time in the war, Federal forces in the East and in the West would be moving toward a common center. Grant would be the anvil and Sherman the

hammer in this great coordinated campaign to crush the Confederacy and end the war.

The Confederate army was entrenched at Dalton, Ga., 25 miles southeast of Chattanooga, one-fifth the distance to Atlanta. Gen. Joseph E. Johnston, commanding the Confederate forces at Dalton, prepared to resist the expected advance of the Federals.

On the 7th of May, Sherman with 100,000 troops moved against Johnston's 50,000 Confederates.

### Campaign Strategy

Sherman had to assume the offensive and penetrate hostile territory. Superior forces, ample supplies, and a rail line for communications favored the Federals.

Aware that he faced an opponent well schooled in military matters, Sherman carefully tested the positions on which Johnston offered battle. While he made assaults at both Resaca and New Hope, he did not commit his entire force to an all-out attack. Whenever reconnaissance or attacks demonstrated too much strength in the Southern positions, Sherman flanked or bypassed them, rather than permit one strong point to halt his entire force.

Sherman aimed each flank movement at Atlanta, thus threatening to interpose his force between Johnston and his base. Each one of his flanking moves caused the Confederates to retire to protect Atlanta.

Johnston, on the other hand, was outnumbered. He had to fight defensively, offering battle only when favorable terrain somewhat neutralized the advantage of Sherman's superior numbers. Johnston proved himself a

master of defensive strategy, but with his smaller army he could not prevent the flanking movements which threatened his line of supplies and communications. He had to protect this line by withdrawing from one position to another.

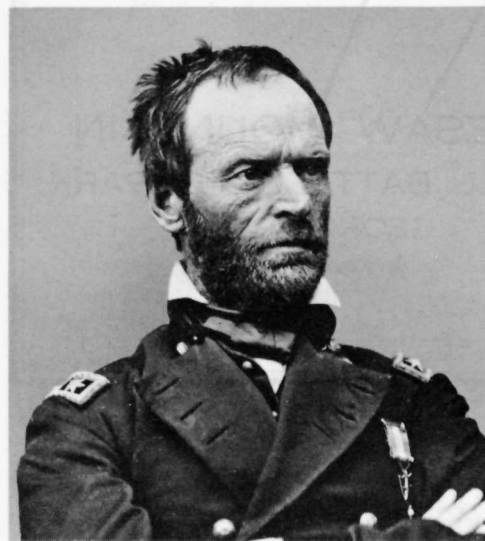
Hence, Johnston was trading space for time, hoping to find a chink in Sherman's armor, and defeat his opponent in detail. Sherman, using only a part of his force to pin the Confederates in position, flanked with the remaining force. Thus he repeatedly forced Johnston to retire, hoping to strike the Southern army while it was in motion and vulnerable. Although Sherman found no such opportunity, his tactics pressed Johnston deeper and deeper into Georgia, and closer to Atlanta.

Gradually Sherman pushed the Confederates back to the vicinity of Marietta to a position on and around Kennesaw Mountain. There, on June 5, Johnston entrenched on a line 10 miles long between Lost, Pine, and Brush Mountains. Sherman saw Kennesaw, Pine, and Lost Mountains as a triangle ". . . covering perfectly the town of Marietta, and the railroad back to the Chattahoochee."

### The Battle of Kennesaw Mountain

No one knows exactly why Sherman decided to risk this direct attack at Kennesaw Mountain. No doubt unrest and fatigue in

Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman. Courtesy National Archives.



his army, caused by the constant maneuvering, contributed to his decision. Also, he realized that his rail supply line through hostile territory was vulnerable. And the campaign had dragged on now for over a month. If his part in the war's grand strategy was to be fulfilled, Sherman had to seek a decisive action.

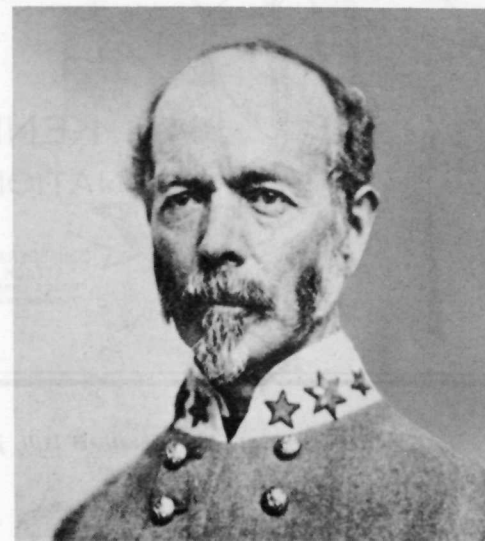
There was, of course, much to be gained by a successful direct assault. Sherman knew that once Johnston's army was defeated, the capture and destruction of Atlanta would be easy. In spite of the risk, he prepared for action.

This was to be no partial engagement. Artillery bombardments, feints, and flanking movements, with two simultaneous attacks in force on the Confederate center—these tactics based on numerical superiority and coupled with surprise, were calculated to overwhelm, disorganize, and destroy Johnston's army.

The frontal attacks on the Southern center Sherman expected to be the decisive blows. Gen. George H. Thomas' Army of the Cumberland was to make one assault at a point in the Confederate center, a hill south of the Marietta-Dallas Road, defended by Gen. B. F. Cheatham.

Gen. James B. McPherson's Army of the Tennessee was to assault the Confederate center at the south end of Little Kennesaw Mountain. Both assaults were to be made at the same time, June 27, so that troops from

Gen. Joseph Eggleston Johnston. Courtesy National Archives.



The truce during the Battle of Kennesaw Mountain. From a sketch by A. R. Waud, famous Civil War artist.

one part of the Confederate line could not be used to reinforce any other part of the line.

At 9 o'clock on the morning of June 27 the Confederate defenders, alerted by the heaviest artillery fire they had experienced thus far, sprang for their weapons. All along the line the cannons pounded, and when they subsided the first blue line of Federal infantrymen began to move forward.

Sam Watkins of Company H, 1st Tennessee Regiment, defending Cheatham Hill, recalled that

. . . all at once a hundred guns . . . opened upon us, and for more than an hour they poured their solid and chain shot, grape and shrapnel right upon this salient point, . . . all of a sudden . . . a solid line of blue coats came up the hill. . . .

Column after column of Federal soldiers were crowded upon that line. . . . It seemed impossible to check the onslaught, but every man was true to his trust, and seemed to think . . . the whole responsibility . . . rested upon his shoulders . . . above all, the roar of battle made it a perfect pandemonium.

For 2½ hours the Union troops tried to push up the mountainside and take the Confederate positions. They faced steep grades in front of the Confederate earthworks, bristling with formidable abatis (felled trees with their branches pointing toward the en-

emy). These obstacles, coupled with dogged resistance from Confederate infantrymen, whose rifles poured deadly fire into the advancing Federals, stopped a breakthrough—object of the furious attack.

By 11:30 a.m. the assault was over, and Sherman's troops were repulsed.

On this battlefield Sherman failed to break the Confederate lines. Johnston's battlewise troops halted the equally combat-tested Federal forces and demonstrated the awful penalty exacted upon attackers when brave and experienced men fought from behind trenches, barricades, and field fortifications.

Sherman lost 2,500 men and Johnston 800 in these attacks. Having learned that frontal assaults would prove too costly, Sherman resumed the flanking tactics that had served him so well.

### Fall of Atlanta

When Sherman outflanked them, the Confederates retired from their Kennesaw Mountain position to the vicinity of Atlanta. At this critical moment, on July 17, Johnston received a telegram which relieved him of command and put Gen. J. B. Hood in his place. Since Johnston's defensive campaign had not pleased those in Richmond, the new commander, of course, would be expected to

attack. General Hood accepted the command, and with it, the implied condition.

In July, Hood attacked Sherman in three major battles. In each of them, Sherman, the victor, inflicted heavy losses on the Confederates. In a fourth battle Sherman cut the last railroad into Atlanta, and the Confederate army evacuated the city. Sherman entered Atlanta on September 2.

The occupation of Atlanta opened the way for Sherman's devastating sweep across Georgia to Savannah—"The March to the Sea."

### The Park

In 1899 a group of Union soldiers acquired 60 acres at Cheatham Hill and in 1917 donated it to the U.S. Government as a battlefield site. Since then, it has grown from a battlefield site of 60 acres to a battlefield park of 3,000 acres. The National Park Service has administered Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park since 1933. The park includes the principal points of combat in the vicinity of Kennesaw Mountain. Many of the Federal and Confederate earthworks constructed during the battle are well preserved.

### How To Reach the Park

The park is 2 miles north of Marietta, Ga., and about 20 miles northwest of Atlanta. You may reach it by U.S. 41, following Park Service signs to the visitor center located near the point where old U.S. 41 passes the northern tip of Big Kennesaw Mountain.

In season (April to August) there is a 50-cent fee for automobiles and motorcycles to use the road from the visitor center to the top of Big Kennesaw. A permit, good for

the season, may be purchased for \$1. All fees are deposited in the U.S. Treasury and partially offset appropriations made for operating the park.

### About Your Visit

Come first to the visitor center. Here, a museum, library service, and general information are available. You will appreciate more fully the Battle of Kennesaw Mountain if you take the walking tours of Big Kennesaw and Cheatham Hill illustrated in this folder.

From the top of Big Kennesaw you have a sweeping view of the battlefield, and a number of exhibits there depict the major troop movements and actions. In the Cheatham Hill area you will see well-preserved earthworks typical of those used in the entire Atlanta Campaign.

If you plan to visit in a group we suggest you make advance arrangements with the superintendent for special service.

### Administration

Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park is administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. A superintendent, whose address is Marietta, Ga., is in immediate charge.

### Mission 66

Mission 66 is a program designed to be completed by 1966 which will assure the maximum protection of the scenic, scientific, wilderness, and historic resources of the National Park System in such ways and by such means as will make them available for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.

The National Park System, of which this park is a unit, is dedicated to conserving the scenic, scientific, and historic heritage of the United States for the benefit and inspiration of its people.



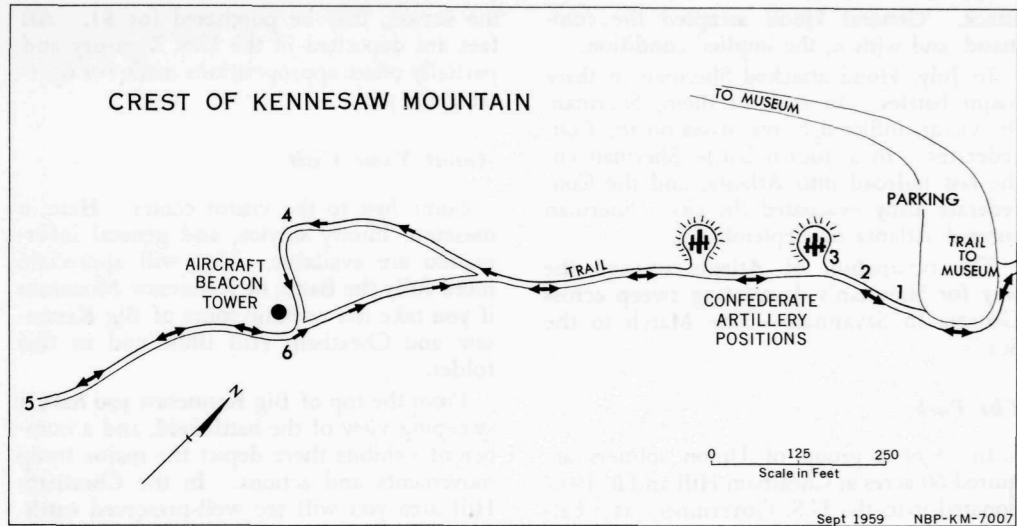
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Fred A. Seaton, Secretary

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE • Conrad L. Wirth, Director







**CREST OF KENNESAW MOUNTAIN (Elevation 1,808 feet)**

Up the short trail from the parking area is an overlook where an exhibit (1) faces Marietta and Atlanta.

Marietta was Confederate headquarters during the battle, and after Johnston's army retired south, Sherman used the city as his base for operations in the Atlanta area.

As you start up the foot trail toward the crest you will note a marker (2) with a map on your right.

This map describes the terrain from Chattanooga to Atlanta over which the Atlanta Campaign was fought in 1864. Beside the map is a list of important events and dates connected with the campaign.

Farther up the trail is a Confederate artillery pit, dug in 1864. A gun of the period is mounted here (3).

These guns commanded the road and railroad below, forcing Sherman to stop and engage the Confederates in a series of artillery duels. However, they proved more spectacular than decisive, and at this point Northern forces made no major attempt to storm and capture Kennesaw—the terrain was too unfavorable.

If you continue up the trail and turn right you will reach an exhibit (4).

The armies fought their way to Kennesaw from the northwest; the panorama below makes this area a vivid map on which you may readily imagine the scenes of engagements that took place at Lost Mountain, Pine Mountain, Gilgal, and finally at Brush Mountain where Sherman entrenched to face Kennesaw.

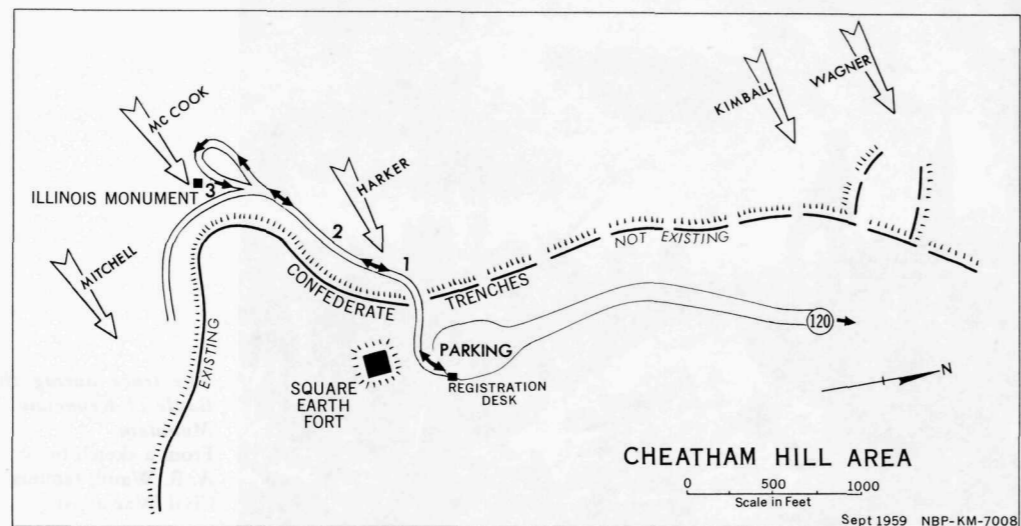
Follow the trail to the beacon, turn right, and proceed downhill to the next exhibit (5).

Vistas here highlight Kolb Farm, Little Kennesaw, Cheatham Hill, and adjoining areas where hard fighting cost Sherman 7,500 men and the Confederates 6,000. After his unsuccessful frontal attacks Sherman flanked to the south, and the Southern army moved out to defend Atlanta, thus ending the Battle of Kennesaw Mountain.

Now, return to the beacon and view the exhibit (6).

Atlanta, on the horizon, was Sherman's goal. He fought four hard battles to gain the city, and his destruction of railroads and factories there hastened the end of the war. This completes the first tour.

(From the parking area there is a foot trail leading to the museum.)



**CHEATHAM HILL AREA**

Sherman, hoping to crush the Confederates at Kennesaw, aimed five brigades, 8,000 strong, at Cheatham Hill. The hill was named for its defender, Confederate Gen. B. F. Cheatham.

At the south end of the parking area is a registration desk.

After you have registered and read the marker, look back along the road to the high ground where Cleburne's Confederate Division was entrenched. Kimball and Wagner bravely attacked him, suffering heavy losses, but Cleburne held his line. Both sides agreed to a truce to rescue wounded from a forest fire, then resumed fighting: One minute saving life, the next, taking it.

(Later, when you drive back toward State Route 120, on the high ground you will see a marker describing this incident.)

The foot trail leads to the Southern trenches (1).

These works are typical of the well-preserved earthworks in the park.

The trail continues on to a marker (2) erected in honor of Sgt. C. H. Coffey.

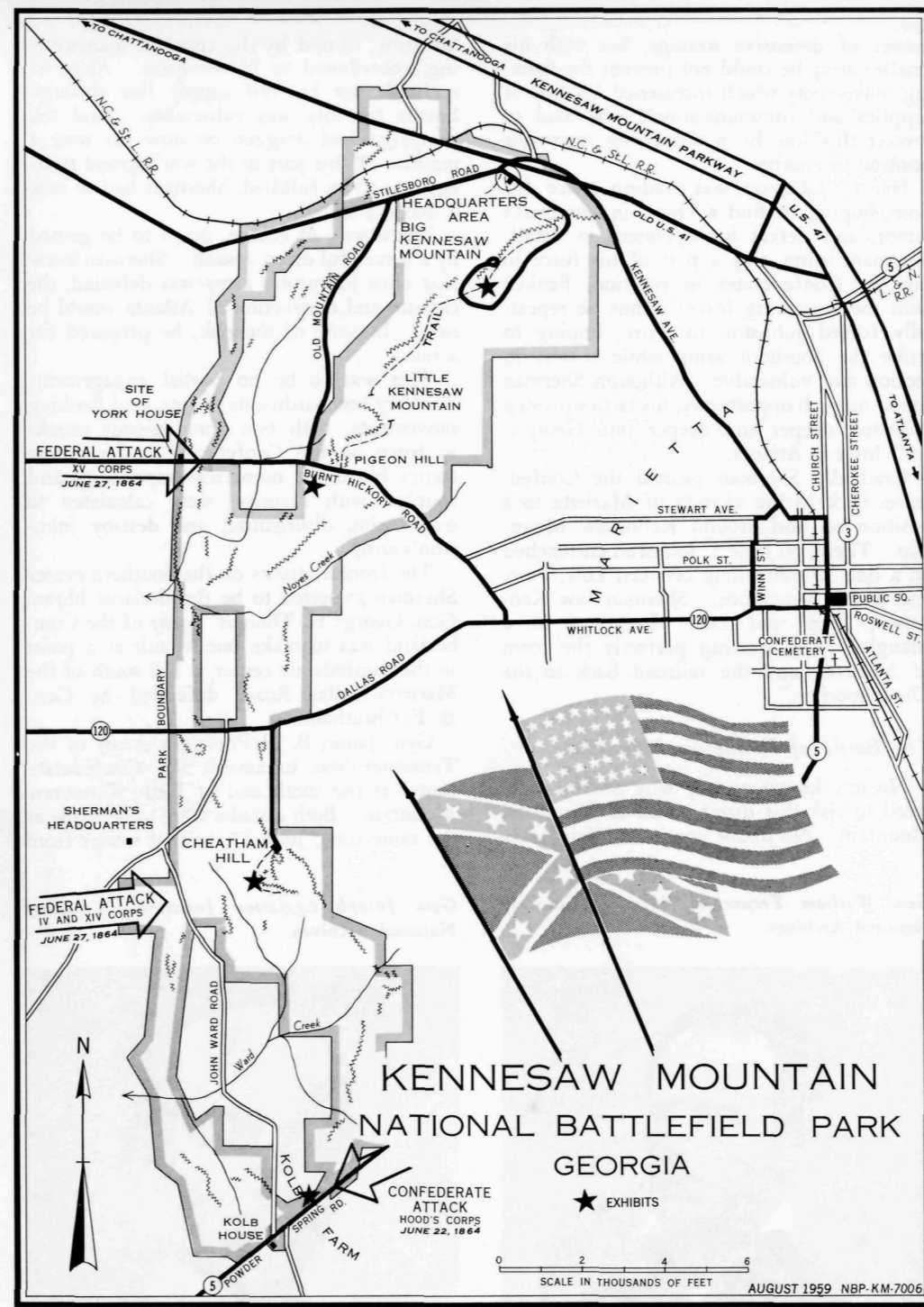
Kolb Farm is another interesting area at the south end of the park. It is a 20-minute drive from Cheatham Hill east on State Route 120 to Marietta, then south on State Route 5 to the farmhouse. There a special exhibit describes the fight of June 22.

From the west, Harker's Brigade charged directly toward where you stand. Harker fell mortally wounded, and his brigade lost heavily. A few men reached this area, but Cheatham's line was never in danger.

Farther along the trail an exhibit (3) is in front of the Illinois Monument.

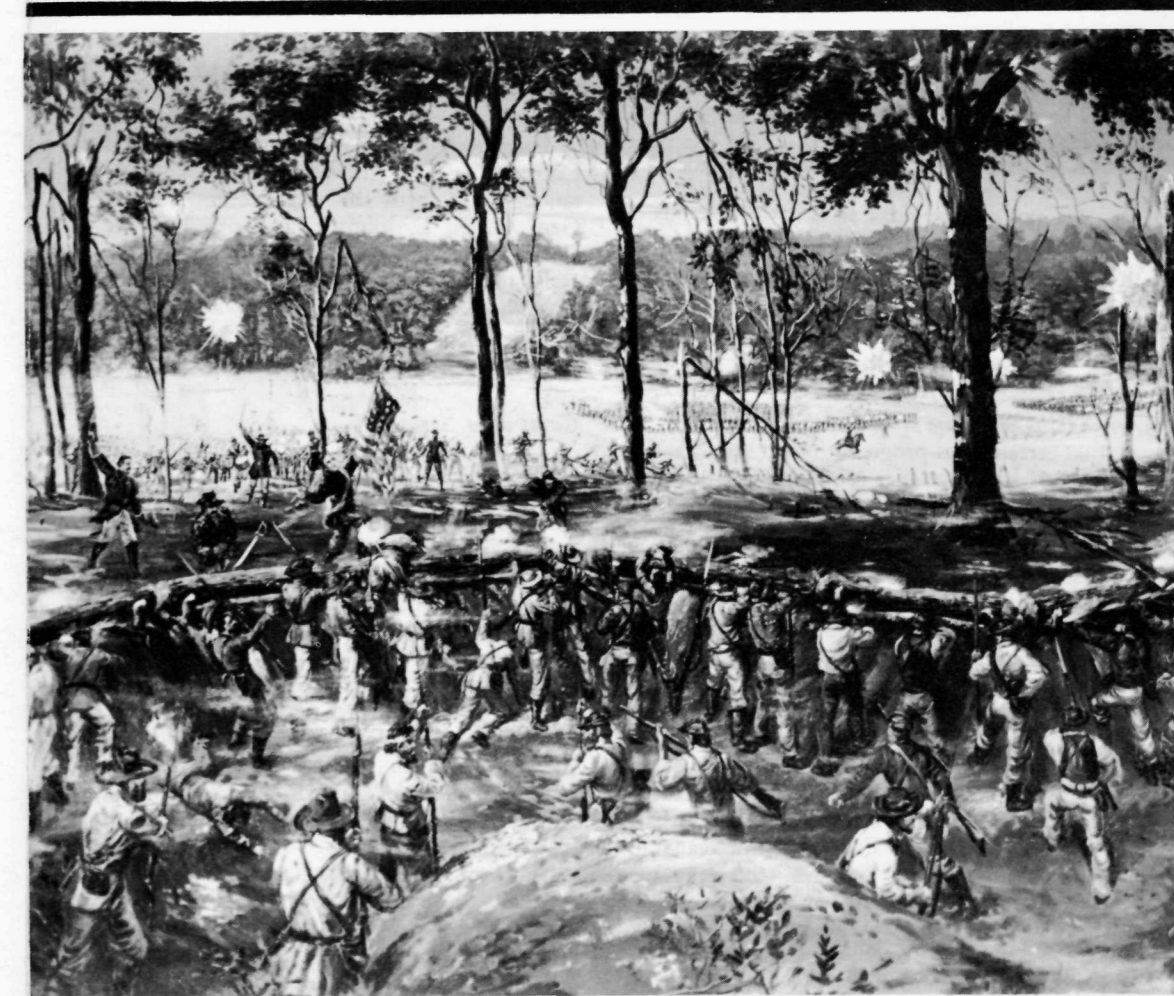
McCook and Mitchell charged from the ridge on the west toward your position. Southern gunfire dotted the wheatfield in front of you with casualties. McCook fell, and his successor, Colonel Harmon, was hit. Many Federals stopped and entrenched under the brow of the hill. You can see their works nearby. This maneuver had some advantage, for another attack could have been launched from this point. But there was no other gain at Cheatham Hill. Sherman lost 1,580 out of 8,000 men, while the Confederates lost 206 out of 8,000. Sherman resumed his flanking tactics and moved toward Atlanta.

This ends the tour of Cheatham Hill. The large map shows the way to the visitor center and to major highways in the Marietta area.



Cover: Federal attack at Cheatham Hill, June 27, 1864. From a painting by Sidney King.

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