

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office  
Washington, D.C. 20402 - Price 10 cents



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

National Park Service



### About Your Visit

Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park, located 2 miles north of Marietta, Ga., a short distance off U.S. 41, is open every day of the year.

There are picnic areas at the visitor center and on Cheatham Hill. Hikers are encouraged to use the park's trail. If long hikes are planned, please register at the visitor center. Camping is not permitted, and fires are limited to gasoline stoves or charcoal burners. You are requested to respect the historical and natural features of the park and to leave them unimpaired for others to enjoy.

Organized groups receive special services if advance arrangements are made with the superintendent.

### Administration

Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park is administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior.

The National Park System, of which this area is a unit, is dedicated to conserving the great historical, natural and recreational places of the United States for the benefit of all the people.

The superintendent, whose address is Box 1167, Marietta, Ga., 30060, is in immediate charge of the park.

THE DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR—the Nation's principal natural resource agency—has a special obligation to assure that our expendable resources are conserved, that our renewable resources are managed to produce optimum benefits, and that all resources contribute to the progress and prosperity of the United States, now and in the future.



## KENNESAW MOUNTAIN NATIONAL BATTLEFIELD PARK • GEORGIA

A MAJOR BATTLE IN GEN. WILLIAM TECUMSEH SHERMAN'S GREAT FLANKING MOVEMENT THAT SPLIT THE HEART OF THE CONFEDERACY IN MID-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 General Sherman wrote of the natural barrier that arrested his progress toward Atlanta, the goal of his late spring and summer campaign in 1864.

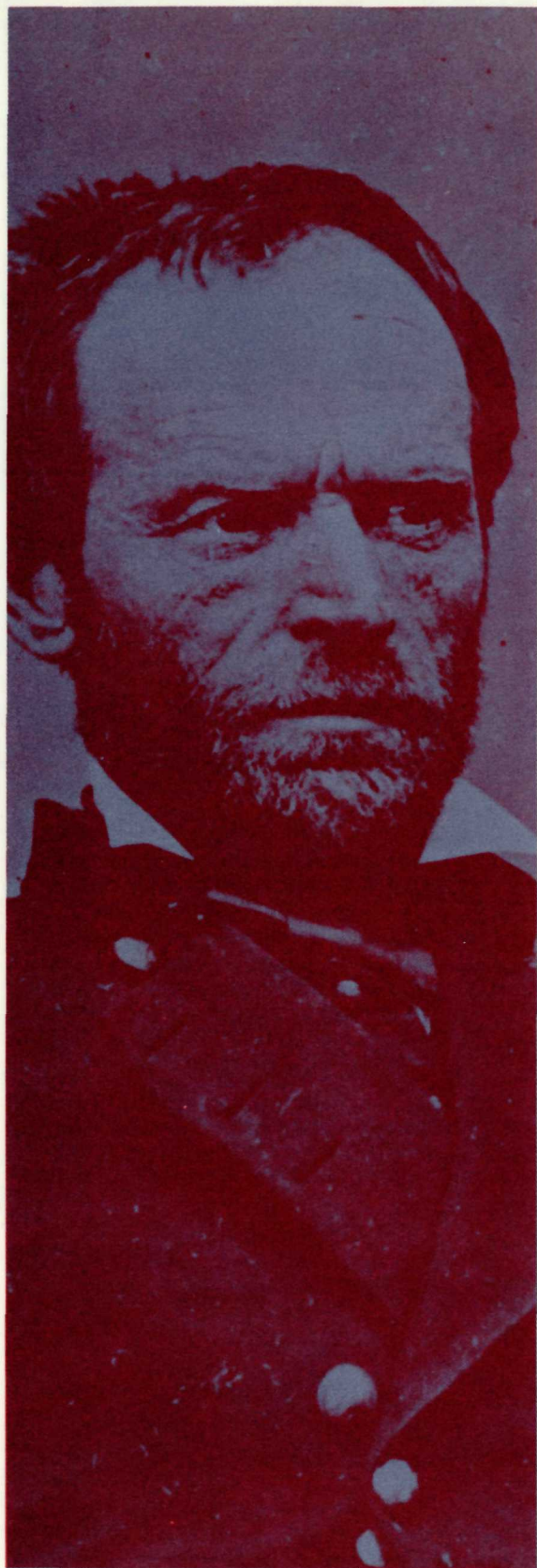
The Atlanta Campaign grew out of a series of hammer blows that Gen. Ulysses S. Grant dealt the Confederacy in the West during 1862-63. At Forts Henry and Donelson early in 1862, Grant won handy victories that secured much of middle and west Tennessee for the Union, and at Shiloh in April he repulsed the Confederates as they sought to recover the initiative. Then in a masterful and decisive campaign a year later he captured the strategic citadel of Vicksburg, giving the North control of the Mississippi and splitting the Confederacy in two. When he raised the siege of Chattanooga in November 1863 and drove a Confederate army into retreat, most of east Tennessee fell into Union hands. The way was now open for the Federals to plunge southward into the heartland of the Confederacy.



In the spring of 1864 President Abraham Lincoln brought the hard-driving Grant east and placed him over all the Federal armies. Grant in turn gave William T. Sherman, his capable lieutenant, command of most of the Federal forces between the Appalachians and the Mississippi and directed him to start his drive on Atlanta in early May of 1864. While he advanced on Robert E. Lee's army in Virginia, Sherman would strike south, destroy the Confederate army in Georgia, sweep up through the Carolinas, and close in on Lee from the rear. For the first time in the war Federal armies in the East and 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.

On May 5, 1864, Sherman set out with an army of about 100,000 men. Opposing Sherman was Joseph E. Johnston's veteran Army of Tennessee, a 50,000-man force entrenched on Rocky Face Ridge near Dalton, some 25 miles southeast of Chattanooga.

Though Sherman would be operating in hostile territory, superior forces, ample supplies, and a rail line for communications gave him the advantage. Aware that he faced an able opponent, Sherman carefully tested the positions at which Johnston offered battle. In the assaults at Resaca, New Hope Church and Pickett's Mill, he did not commit his entire force to an all-out attack. Whenever reconnaissance or attacks proved the Southern positions too strong, Sherman bypassed them rather than permit one strong point to halt his entire force. By aiming each flank movement at Atlanta, Sherman threatened to interpose his force between Johnston and his base.



William T. Sherman

The outnumbered Johnston had to fight defensively, offering battle only when favorable terrain somewhat neutralized Sherman's superior numbers. He proved himself a master of defensive strategy, but he could not prevent the flanking movements. Thus he had to withdraw from one position to another, trading space for time and hoping to find a situation where he could defeat his opponent in detail. Sherman's strategy was to use part of his force to pin the Confederates in position and to flank with the remainder. His hope was to strike the Southern army while it was in motion and vulnerable. He found no such opportunity, but his tactics pressed Johnston deeper and deeper into Georgia and closer to Atlanta.

By June 5 Johnston's army held an entrenched position in front of Kennesaw Mountain. Their line ran for 10 miles from Brush Mountain to an anchor point across the Dallas road and dominated Marietta and the railroad over which Johnston's supplies moved. Sherman saw Kennesaw, Pine, and Lost Mountains as a triangle "covering perfectly the town of Marietta, and the railroad back to the Chattahoochee." Twice over the next 2 weeks Union pressure compelled Johnston to draw back, the last time under the cover of darkness on June 18-19. His army retired into a strong position extending from the Canton road on the right past the Powder Springs road on the left, a distance of 8 miles. While the two armies confronted each other before Marietta, hardly an hour passed without the thunder of artillery and the crackling of musketry.

No one knows exactly why Sherman decided to depart from his flanking strategy and risk a direct attack at Kennesaw Mountain. No doubt unrest and fatigue in his army, caused by the constant maneuvering, contributed to his decision. He also realized that his rail line through hostile territory was vulnerable. And the campaign had dragged on for well over a month now. 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 assault. Sherman knew that once Johnston's army was defeated, the capture and destruction of Atlanta would be easy. So in spite of the risk, he prepared for action.

This was to be no partial engagement. Sherman would hurl two full-scale assaults, preceded by artillery bombardments, against the Confederate center, while a strong force of infantry and cavalry would demonstrate on the Confederate right. These tactics, based on numerical superiority and coupled with surprise, were calculated to overwhelm, disorganize, and destroy Johnston's army.

Expecting the frontal attacks on the Confederate center to be decisive, Sherman selected Gen. George H. Thomas's huge Army of the Cumberland for the assault on a hill south of the Dallas road, defended by the divisions of B. Frank Cheatham and Pat Cleburne. Gen. James B. McPherson's Army of the Tennessee was to strike the Confederates at the south end of Little Kennesaw Mountain. Both assaults were to be made at the same

time to prevent troops from one part of the Confederate line from reinforcing other parts of the line.

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

Confederate private Sam Watkins, on Cheatham Hill, recalled:

*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 Federals tried to push up the hill-sides. But they faced strong Confederate earthworks and grades bristling with formidable abatis (felled trees with their branches pointing toward the enemy). Crouching behind these obstacles, Confederate infantry poured a deadly fire into the advancing Federals. Their dogged resistance finally halted the furious attack.

By 11:30 a.m. the fighting was over; Sherman's troops were repulsed all along the line. In stopping the Federal advance, Johnston's veterans 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 the June 27 attacks. Having learned that frontal assaults would prove too costly, Sherman resumed the flanking tactics that had served him so well during the past 2 months.

The outflanked Confederates now retired from their Kennesaw Mountain positions to the vicinity of Atlanta. At this critical moment Confederate President Jefferson Davis relieved Johnston of his command and put Gen. John B. Hood in his place. Since Johnston's defensive campaign displeased his superiors in Richmond, the new commander would be expected to assume the offensive. Hood accepted command and, with it, the implied condition.

Between July 20 and 28 Hood assailed Sherman on three different occasions. Each time Sherman emerged the victor, inflicting heavy losses on the Confederates. In a fourth battle at Jonesboro at the end of August, Sherman cut the last railroad into Atlanta, and the Confederate army evacuated the city. Sherman entered Atlanta on September 2. Soon preparations began for Sherman's devastating sweep across Georgia to Savannah, the renowned "March to the Sea."

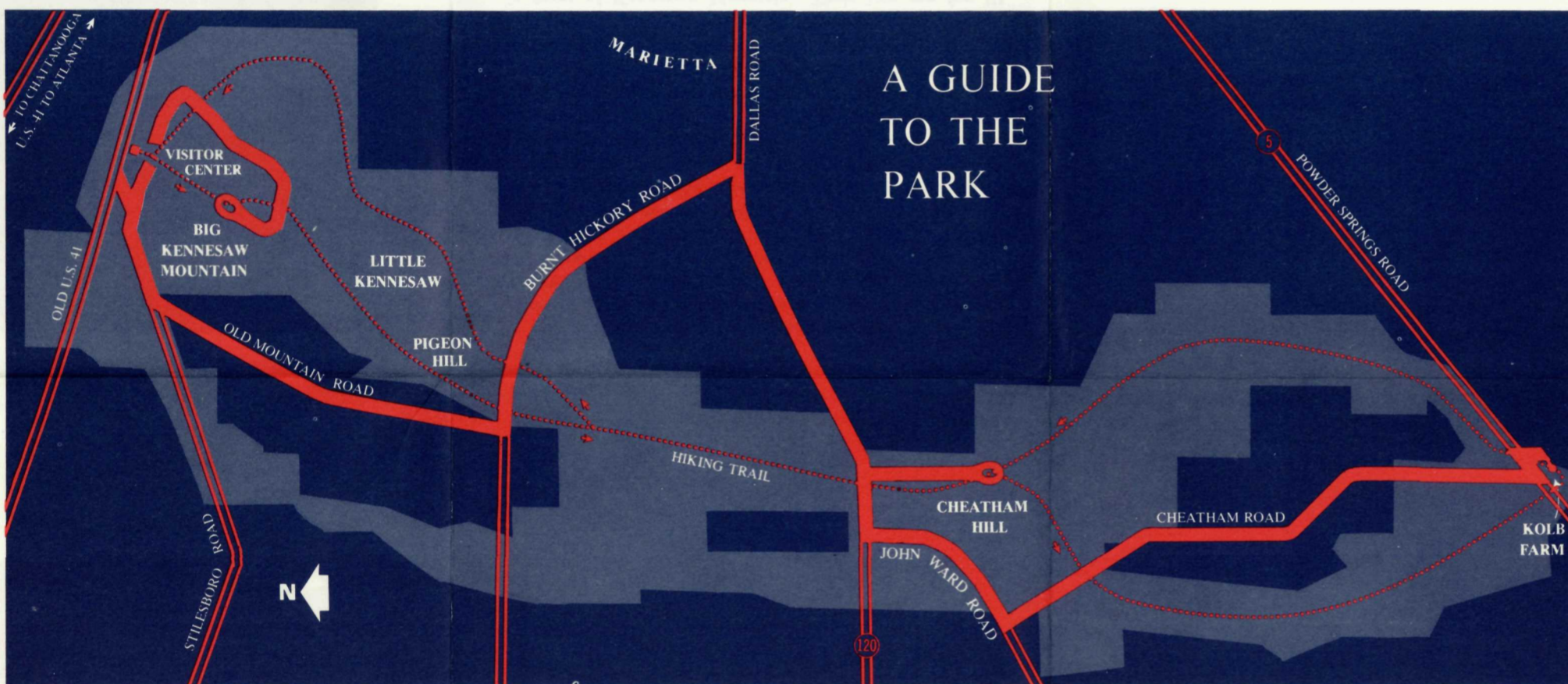
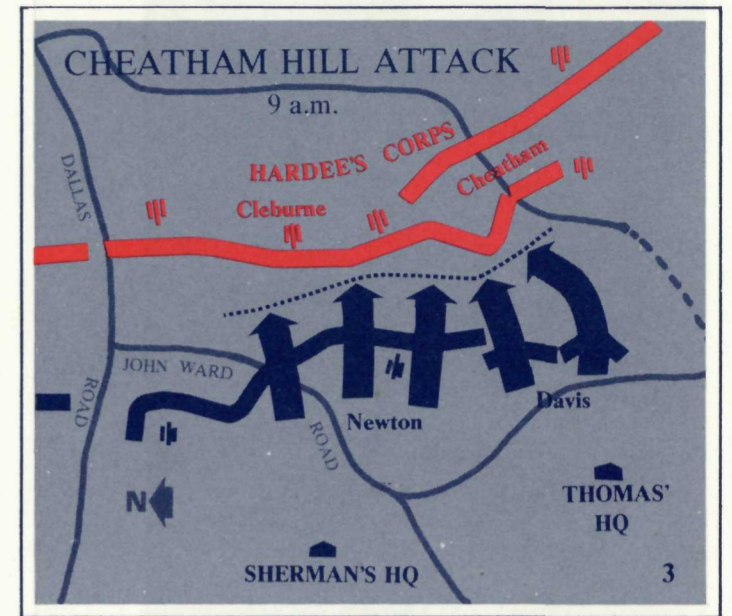
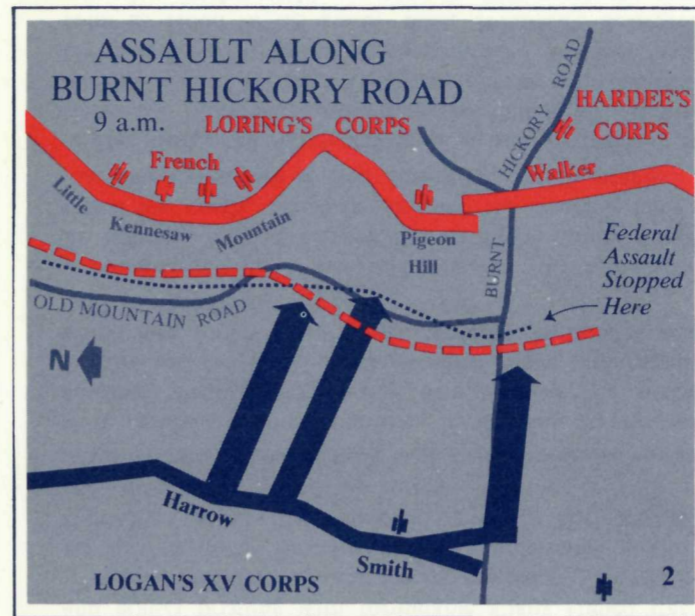
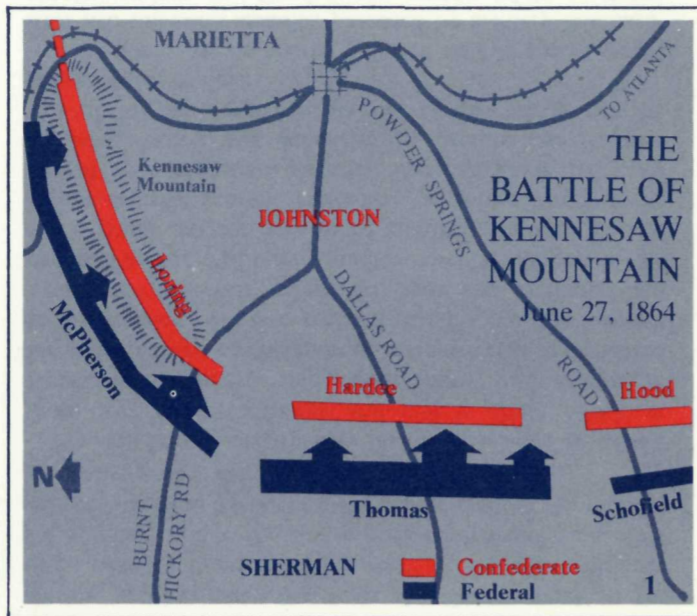


Joseph E. Johnston

**“We have already lost heavily today without gaining any material advantage; one or two more such assaults would use up this army.” Thomas to Sherman**

**Maps of the Battle**

1. Sherman's June 24 orders to his field commanders spelled out his strategy: "Thomas will assault the enemy at any point near his center to be selected by himself. . . . McPherson will feign by a movement of his Cavalry, and one Division of infantry, on his extreme left approaching Marietta from the north . . . but will make his real attack at a point south and west of Kennesaw. . . . Schofield will feel to his extreme right and threaten that flank of the enemy. . . ." Thus Sherman planned no major engagement. He hoped only to break "the enemy line and make a secure lodgement beyond and [to] be prepared for following up towards Marietta and the Railroad in case of success."
2. A strong force of Gen. James B. McPherson's Army of the Tennessee attacked the Confederate line that crossed the Burnt Hickory Road at the base of Little Kennesaw Mountain. The assault turned into a desperate hand-to-hand struggle before the Confederates, fighting doggedly, held and then threw back the Federals.
3. Five brigades of Gen. George H. Thomas' Army of the Cumberland led the main attack on the entrenched Confederates. Three brigades assaulted Cheatham's salient and two hit Cleburne's line. When the attack subsided, the rebel position remained unbreached, and over 1,500 Federal dead and wounded littered the field.



**Visitor Center.** Services include a slide program, museum exhibits, information, library service, and a picnic area. The motor road to the crest and several hiking trails of varying distances begin here.

**The Crest of Kennesaw Mountain.** A ¼-mile, moderately steep trail from the parking area leads to the crest. Along the way are interpretive exhibits and devices, and gun emplacements.

**Cheatham Hill.** Exhibits, monuments, and earthworks along the trail recount the Battle of Cheatham Hill. Picnicking permitted.

**Kolb Farm.** Markers describe the June 22 fight. The Civil War farmhouse is partly restored.

Sherman used the railroad as none had before him. Troops and vital supplies rolled through the pass at Allatoona.



Sherman's attack at New Hope Church on May 25-28 failed largely because of Confederate earthworks such as this.



Federal earthworks on a farm at the base of Little Kennesaw.



Palisades and spiked timbers guarding Atlanta in July 1864.



Federal officers mass their troops and prepare to move on the "Kennesaw Line." The sketch is by the Civil War artist Alfred Waud.

