

Kennesaw Mountain

NATIONAL BATTLEFIELD PARK • GEORGIA

When Ulysses S. Grant assumed command of all the Federal armies in 1864, Maj. Gen. William T. Sherman succeeded to the direction of the principal military operations in the West. In May 1864, Sherman, with a virtually independent command but coordinating his movements with those of Grant in the East, launched his three armies south from Chattanooga. His goal: Atlanta, rail hub and manufacturing center of the Confederacy. He intended throwing his force of nearly 100,000 men against Gen. Joseph E. Johnston's Confederate army of about 50,000, crushing it if possible, but certainly keeping the Southerners constantly on the defensive by a series of flanking movements that would threaten Confederate communications.

In a series of movements, Sherman forced Johnston back to the vicinity of Kennesaw Mountain. Here, by June 5, Johnston began taking up positions, turning the area into a fortress, and trusting that the difficult terrain and strong fortifications would make up for the disparity in numbers.

The weather also came to Johnston's aid. For

a month the rains poured, turning the roads into quagmires and preventing Sherman from again marching around the Confederate position. Still, Sherman forced Johnston's Southerners back to the mountain itself.

During June there were constant skirmishes and artillery duels. On June 22, the two armies met at Kolb's farm, 6 miles south of Big Kennesaw Mountain. The Confederates suffered heavily. In spite of this action, Sherman's men were still impatient. They were tired of the rain, the marching, and the interminable flanking movements. They wanted to fight. At 9 a.m. on June 27, Sherman gave them their wish and launched two major offensives against the Kennesaw line. Both thrusts failed; even the Southern defenders shuddered at the carnage.

The rains now ended. The roads began to harden, and Sherman, able to use his flanking tactics again, marched southeastward. On the night of July 2, Johnston abandoned Kennesaw Mountain and retired toward Atlanta. By the 9th he was across the Chattahoochee. The siege and fall of Atlanta soon followed. Then Sherman began his devastating March to the Sea.

A TRIP AROUND KENNESAW MOUNTAIN

For the best tour of the battlefield, we suggest that you follow the numbered route beginning at the visitor center.

1. Visitor Center. Here museum exhibits and a 15-minute slide program depict the history of the Atlanta Campaign with emphasis on the fighting around Kennesaw Mountain. You will find other exhibits along the drive through the park.

2. Summit of Big Kennesaw Mountain. The 1-mile mountain road beginning behind the visitor center leads to the summit of Big Kennesaw Mountain. From the parking area near the summit you can take the short, moderately steep trail to the top itself. Along the trail are an overlook, exhibits, and gun emplacements which will explain the action to you in detail.

The panorama below makes this area a vivid map on which you may readily imagine the scenes of battle which cost both Union and Confederate forces dearly in dead and wounded.

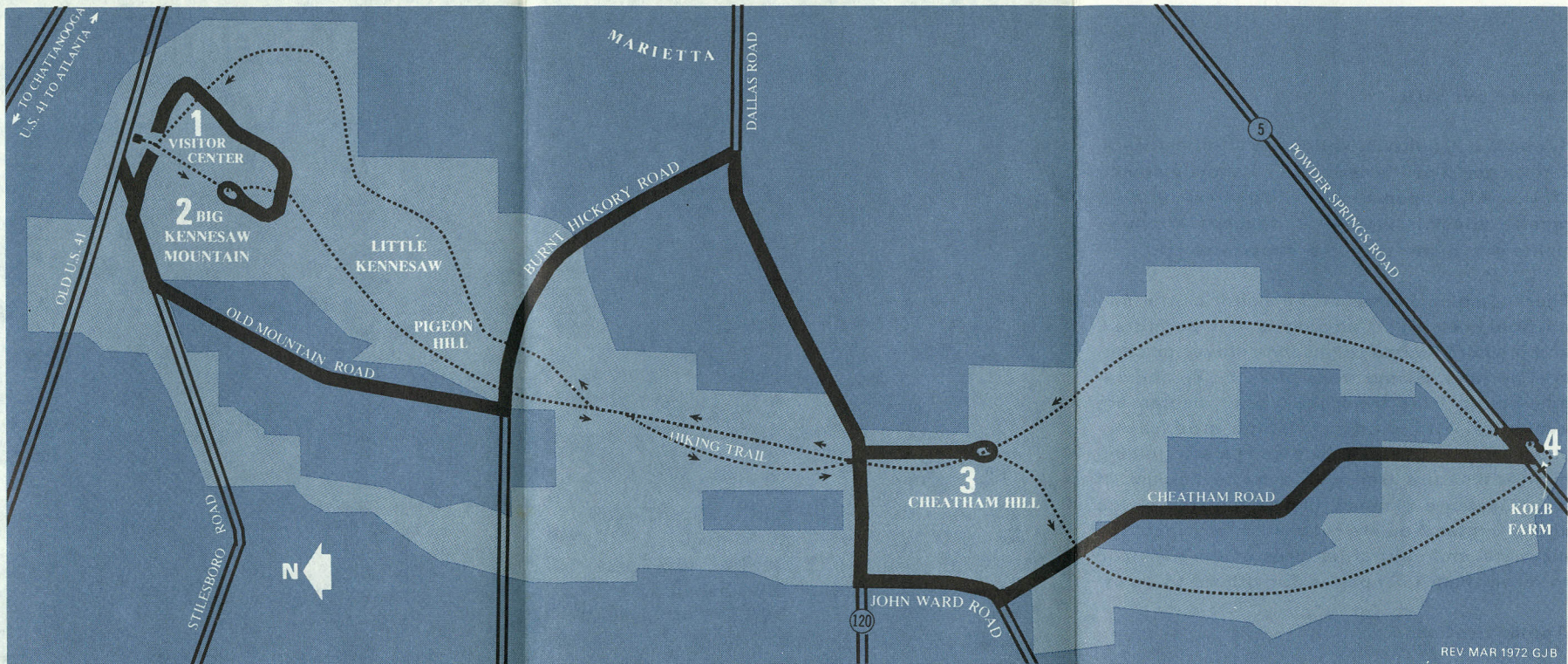
Returning to the base of the mountain, follow the signs to Cheatham Hill about 5 miles to the south by car from the visitor center.

3. Cheatham Hill. From the Cheatham Hill parking area take the 1/4-mile walk out to the Illinois Monument. Along the trail are exhibits, gun emplacements, and original Confederate earthworks.

Five Union brigades, 8,000 strong, assaulted the earthworks in this area. Two of the brigades, Kimball's and Wagner's, attacked Cleburne's Confederate division entrenched one-quarter mile to the north. The other three brigades, Mitchell's, McCook's and Harker's, hit this salient. Southern gunfire dotted the fields with casualties, forcing the Federals to stop and entrench short of their goal. Sherman lost 1,580 men at Cheatham Hill; Johnston, 206.

To see the Kolb Farm area of the park, drive back to the highway (Ga. 120) and follow the Kolb Farm signs.

4. Kolb Farm. Viewable from the exterior only, this farmhouse has been restored to its appearance during the Civil War. An exhibit and message repeater help recapture the scene when on June 22, 1864, Federal Gen. Joseph Hooker was setting up his headquarters at the Kolb House. About 2 p.m. John B. Hood's Confederate corps struck the Union position. Heavy fighting broke out on this farm and lasted until sundown, when the Southern forces withdrew, suffering heavy losses.



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Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park is administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. The nearest post office is located at Box 1157, Marietta, GA 30066. For more information, contact the National Park Service, Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park, P.O. Box 1157, Marietta, GA 30066.

About Your Visit.

Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park, 2 miles north of Marietta, Ga., a short distance off U.S. 41, is open all year. Organized groups receive special services if advance arrangements are made with the superintendent.

There are picnic areas at the visitor center and on Cheatham Hill. Camping is not permitted, and fires are limited to gasoline stoves or charcoal burners. Hiking trails of 2-, 5-, 8-, and 14-mile round trips from the visitor center are available. All encompass some moderately steep climbing. The 2-mile hike is a self-guiding historical-nature trail with a guide booklet. If long hikes are planned, please register at the visitor center. You are requested to respect the historical and natural features of the park and to leave them unimpaired for others to enjoy.

Administration

Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park is administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. The superintendent, whose address is Box 1167, Marietta, GA 30060, is in immediate charge.

As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has basic responsibilities for water, fish, wildlife, mineral, land, park, and recreational resources. Indian and Territorial affairs are other major concerns of America's "Department of Natural Resources." The Department works to assure the wisest choice in managing all our resources so each will make its full contribution to a better United States—now and in the future.

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