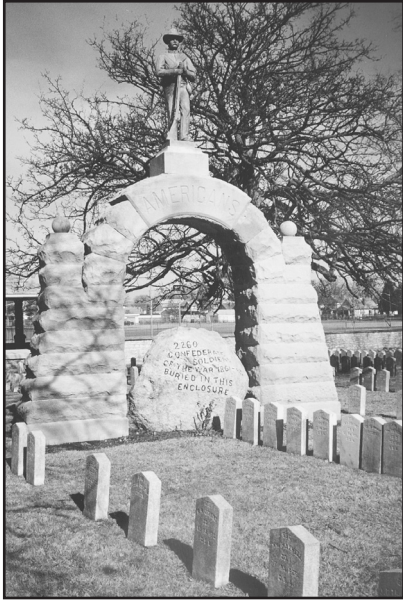


Camp Chase Military Prison & Confederate Cemetery

Located in Columbus, Ohio, Camp Chase was one of the five largest prisons in the North for Confederate prisoners of war. It has been reported that as many as 150,000 Union soldiers and 25,000 Confederate Army prisoners came through the prison during the years 1861-1865. The prison was officially dedicated June 20, 1861. It was named in honor of Salmon Portland Chase, who had been a governor of Ohio, United States Secretary of the Treasury and Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court.



Camp Chase Cemetery
Courtesy of the *Mount Vernon News*

It was first designed to be a training camp for new recruits in the Union Army, but was later converted to a military prison. During the month of February 1862, 800 prisoners of war came to Camp Chase. Seventy-five of these prisoners were African Americans, about 37 of whom were slaves; the remaining men were servants to the imprisoned Confederate officers. The servants were forced to continue to serve their masters in prison. Because of public protests, the African American servants were released in April and May 1862. Some of them then joined the Union Army.

Prisoners at Camp Chase had poor living conditions. Some of the men lived in huts made of planks and thin wood frames that measured 20-feet-long by 14-feet-wide. Their living conditions and lack of proper food led to malnourishment, and deaths from smallpox, typhoid fever and pneumonia.

On July 5, 1865, Camp Chase officially closed. By September 1867, all the structures had been taken down and the building materials reused.

All that is left of the prison today is the cemetery. It holds the remains of 2,260 Confederate soldiers. The land where Camp Chase once stood is now made up of homes and businesses in the area of Columbus known as Westgate.

