Form 10-300 (July 1969)

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Georgia
COUNTY:
Fulton
FOR NPS USE ONLY
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The Atlanta Cyclorama is a 360-degree carefully detailed painted narration of actual historical events that took place during the Battle of Atlanta. The canvas is heavy gauge cotton duck, 400 feet in circumference and 50 feet in height, weighing 18,000 pounds.

A description of the entire painting would be too lengthy and detailed for this application. Three portions of the painting depicted in the three photographs appended to this form will be described.

NUMBER ONE: Confederate Brigadier General Arthur Middleton Manigault's brigade, having broken through the Federal line, fires from behind cotton bales in front of the Troup Hurt House. The tree beside the house, with the white flag affixed, was a Federal signal station.

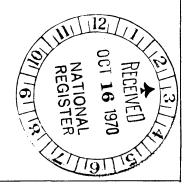
NUMBER TWO: The battle-damaged Georgia Railroad passes in front of a cabin used as a field hospital. The top of Stone Mountain is the background.

NUMBER THREE: As the Confederate forces under Brigadier General Marcellus Augustus Stovall met Colonel James S. Martin's Union forces, a Confederate courier's horse became excited and ran through the line, exposing its master to Federal bullets and bayonets. The Atlanta "skyline" and the Widow Pope House are visible in the upper right.

A description of the remaining portions of the painting may be checked by referring to The Atlanta Journal and Constitution Magazine, September 7, 1969

Between 1934 and 1936 a WPA project directed by Wilbur G. Kurtz, Victor Llorens and Weiss snell gave the painting a three-dimensional foreground. First, the canvas was thoroughly cleaned and retouched. Then, in effect, the painting was made into a 360-degree diorama by adding at the base of the canvas, plaster figures, exploded shells, fragments of rails and crossties, blasted stumps, simulated grass and bushes, and a great deal of Georgia clay. The effect is realistic to the last degree and brings the painting right up to the viewer. Painted figures in the foreground look lifesize, but are actually only thirty inches high. Plaster figures are not over forty inches tall, and the field artillery is only two-thirds actual size.

Although Atlanta's Cyclorama is in a comparatively good state of preservation, several small areas of the painting have reached an advanced stage of deterioration. In addition, experts note that the painting is in free suspension and is in danger of tearing, due to the great stress exerted on its upper edge. In this light, painting conservators have suggested a complete study of the Atlanta Cyclorama's preservation problems in order that it be saved as a historical document for the future.



SIGNIFICANCE			
PERIOD (Check One or More as	Appropriate)		
Pre-Columbian	16th Century	18th Century	20th Century
15th Century	17th Century	2 19th Century	
SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicat	te and Known) 1885-18	87: 1936	
AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Ch	eck One or More as Appropris	ite)	
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☐ Prehistoric	Engineering	Religion/Phi-	Other (Specify)
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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Cyclorama painting of the Battle of Atlanta is a graphic representation of the major conflict of the Atlanta Campaign. The campaign, climaxing with the Battle of Atlanta, resulted in Major General William T. Sherman's capturing and almost totally destroying Atlanta, with its supply depots and munition factories, the key city of the Southeast. Although it was more than a month before Sherman could report "Atlanta is ours, and fairly won," the July 22, 1864, conflict was one of the most dramatic conflicts of the Civil War. For 75 years the painting has remained as one of the few reminders to Atlantans of this most crucial time in the City's history, a humble birth from which grew the South's principal city. The Cyclorama is a carefully detailed narrative of the destruction from whence Atlanta rose and from which came its motto-RESURGENS-Latin for "rising again."

The painting of the Battle of Atlanta is one of the largest paintings in the world and one of three cycloramas extant today. Measuring 50 feet in height, 400 feet in circumference and weighing 18,000 pounds, the painting has had a remarkable history. Before the painting was actually started, intensive study of the terrain of the battle site in East Atlanta was done in the summer of 1885. Their field work completed, the artists returned to Milwaukee in the latter part of that year and, armed with notes, drawings, portraits of commanders on both sides and official maps and papers from the War Department, set to work on their undertaking. Work on the painting itself was done in the studios of the American Cyclorama Company, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, by a group of ten German artists under the direction of August Lohr and R.M. Heine The artists were sernhard Schneider, Wilhelm Schroeter and Franz Biberstein, landscape painters; Herr Zuckotinsky, Theodor Breidwise Franz Rohrbeck, Herman Michalowski, and Johannes Schultz, figure painters; and Richard Lorenz and George Peter, animal painters. William Wehrer was the proprietor of the company.

Following the first display of the picture in Detroit on February 26, 1887, it toured many of the major cities in the United States. In September, 1690, the painting was acquired by Paul M. Atkinson of Madison, Georgia, for \$2,500. He brought it first to Nashville, Tennessee, and finally, after a stap in Chattanooga, to Atlanta in February, 1892. After exhibiting the painting for one year, Atkinson sold it to H. H. Harrison of Florida for exhibition at the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. However, a series of disasters kept the painting in Atlanta where it was sold at the Fulton County Sheriff's Auction on August 1, 1893, to Ernest Woodruff for \$1,100. Woodruff subsequently sold the painting to G.V. Gress and Charles Northen, who persuaded the city to assign a place in one of the parks for a building

NATIONAL REGISTER

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9.	MAJOR	BIBLIOGRAPHICAL F	EFERENCES								1
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- 1	89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion										
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Form 10-300a (Dec. 1968)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

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Fulton						
FOR NPS USE O	NLY					
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70.11.13.0051	11/10/10					

(Continuation Sheet)

(Number all entries)

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

to house it. A wooden structure was erected near the Augusta Avenue entrance to Grant Park. In 1897, Mr. Gress offered to give the painting to the city, provided certain repairs were made on both the building and the canvas. The city accepted. By 1919, the deteriorated condition of the wooden building in Grant Park became a menace to the painting's safety. An amendment to the City Charter enabled the municipality to erect a marble and granite structure which still houses the painting. This building is situated on a rise of ground several hundred feet northeast of the site of the old wooden building. The figures which create the three-dimensional effect, as discussed on the facing page, were added to the painting in 1936. This addition makes the Atlanta Cyclorama unique in that, of the three extant cycloramas, only Atlanta's has a diorama effect.

In recent years, art restoration experts have cited the need to rehang and restore the painting. Prior to beginning restoration work, however, they advise that a comprehensive feasibility study be made under a "Project Study Plan." This plan would employ the services of an architect, an engineer, and a painting conservator, with additional experts added as needed. The group would present a proposal-or a series of alternative proposals-for the execution of all functions pertinent to the future housing, preservation, exhibition, and security of the painting.

