

DA 0679879

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

DATA SHEET

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RECEIVED SEP 15 1976
DATE ENTERED JUL 28 1977

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC
Confederate Monument

AND/OR COMMON
First Monument to Unknown Confederate Dead

LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
Summer Street at the intersection with Edwards Street NOT FOR PUBLICATION
CITY, TOWN Union City VICINITY OF Seventh CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
STATE Tennessee CODE 47 COUNTY Obion CODE 131

CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC See continuation sheet	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME
See Continuation Sheet

STREET & NUMBER
CITY, TOWN VICINITY OF STATE

LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Obion County Courthouse
STREET & NUMBER Courthouse Square
CITY, TOWN Union City STATE Tennessee

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE Tennessee Historical Commission
DATE August 1976 FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS Tennessee Historical Commission
CITY, TOWN Nashville STATE Tennessee

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

EXCELLENT DETERIORATED
 GOOD RUINS
 FAIR UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED
 ALTERED

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The monument, approximately forty feet in height, was constructed of locally made brick in 1869 and covered with a smooth, stucco-like finish and painted white. The monument consists of four square tiers, decreasing in size from bottom to top from eight to four feet, which support a slender obelisk approximately twelve feet in height. Each of the four sides of each tier has recesses approximately six inches deep which are cut in various geometrical patterns. In the north recess of the second tier from the ground, there is a half-round marble marker with a broken sword and the inscription "UNKNOWN CONFEDERATE DEAD." Surrounding this monument is a large circle of plain, marble headstones and footstones marking the graves of twenty-nine unknown Confederate soldiers, who were reinterred here in 1869. There were possibly forty reinterments, but some of the stones have disappeared. North and south of the monument, respectively, are the graves of a young doctor from Kentucky who served in the Confederate Army and a Negro body servant of General George Maney. Both of these graves are marked by small headstones with inscriptions. There are several large oaks and smaller ornamental trees in the cemetery which is enclosed by a fence of concrete posts joined with a single chain, painted black.

The original appearance of the monument is believed to be very much like that of the present, however several items placed inside the monument when it was built, including a Bible, Confederate rifle and a history of the inception of the monument, were removed years ago by vandals. Original access to the monument and cemetery, before the streets were built, was up wooden steps from the railroad on the north. The cemetery was surrounded by a paling fence with double, arched gates, inscribed, "UNKNOWN CONFEDERATE DEAD." There were walks, probably of crushed stone, throughout the cemetery which divided it into quadrants.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) Commemorative
	<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES 1869

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Dedicated on October 21, 1869, this monument was the first ever erected to honor unknown Confederate dead. This combination of age and symbolic value has thus invested the memorial with its own historical significance.

Constructed in 1868-9, within the shadow of the Civil War, the monument and its associated burials have been thoroughly documented by research. During the Civil War Centennial, an effort was made to locate the oldest such memorial. Contacts with centennial organizations in the various states and with Civil War Roundtables failed to produce a memorial of prior date. It should be noted that interest in Civil War history was at a peak during these years, lending additional weight to the results of the search. Since that time, no prior claim has been brought forth.

Additionally, the design and construction of the memorial are considered of interest in the context of the times. Made of almost entirely local materials and from funds raised in a small town during the difficult days of Reconstruction, the monument seems all the more elaborate and ambitious in size, detail of construction, and design of both it and the surrounding burials.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

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The ownership of the Unknown Confederate Cemetery, in which the monument herein nominated is located, has been unresolved for many years, but there have apparently been no disputes or controversies regarding the matter. F. W. Mathews owned a large tract of land, including that occupied by the cemetery, when the cemetery was established in 1869. When his property was sold in the early 1870s to Dr. T. J. Edwards, the cemetery was excluded from the description as being "sold by Edwards during his lifetime." However, Dr. Edwards never had title to it. An extensive search of the records in the Obion County Register's Office in Union City, Tennessee, has not revealed a recorded deed from either Mathews or Edwards. The city of Union City cuts the grass and otherwise maintains the cemetery as a part of the city cemetery program. However, neither the city, the county nor any organization or group apparently claims ownership of it. An article in a local newspaper shortly after the dedication on October 21, 1869, written by one of the three members on the committee which established the cemetery and built the monument asked that permanent trustees be selected to "secure the deeds to the property and provide for perpetual care." It is not known if any trustees were selected and if so, who they were; however, the names of the members of the committee are known. Ownership would seem to be quasi-public, with no person or organization, governmental or otherwise, being able to clearly show legal title.