

CONFEDERATE MOUND IN OAK WOODS CEMETERY,  
CHICAGO, ILL.

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MAY 20, 1902.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union and ordered to be printed.

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Mr. JETT, from the Committee on Military Affairs, submitted the following

REPORT.

[To accompany H. R. 9360.]

The Committee on Military Affairs, to whom was referred the bill (H. R. 9360) for the improvement and care of Confederate Mound, in Oak Woods Cemetery, Chicago, Ill., and making appropriation therefor, report the same back to the House with the recommendation that it do pass.

A similar bill was reported in the Fifty-sixth Congress.

A copy of said report is herewith submitted and made a part of this report.

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[House report No. 1077, Fifty-sixth Congress, first session.]

The Committee on Military Affairs, to whom was referred the bill (H. R. 5789) for the improvement and care of Confederate Mound in Oak Woods Cemetery, Chicago, Ill., and making an appropriation therefor, beg leave to report and recommend that the bill be amended by striking out all of section 4, and that as so amended the bill be passed.

This bill authorizes the Secretary of War to enter into a contract with the Oak Woods Cemetery Association for the improvement and ornamentation of a plot of ground owned by the United States and known as Confederate Mound, located in Oak Woods Cemetery, Chicago, Ill., in which are buried 12 Union and 4,039 Confederate soldiers, who died at Camp Douglas, at Chicago, during the war of the rebellion, and limits the expense therefor to the sum of \$3,850, and makes an appropriation of that sum, or so much thereof as shall be necessary, for the purpose described. The bill also authorizes the Secretary of War to enter into contract from time to time for the proper care, protection, and maintenance of Confederate Mound at an annual expense not exceeding the sum of \$250.

During the war of the rebellion a considerable number of Confederate prisoners was kept in the military prison at Camp Douglas, Chicago. Four thousand and thirty-nine of these prisoners died while in prison and were buried in the Chicago city cemetery.

By two deeds dated, respectively, April 25, 1866, and May 1, 1867, the United

States acquired the title to a plot of ground in the then unimproved portion of Oak Woods Cemetery, and in the year 1867 the remains of the 4,039 Confederate soldiers, and also of the 12 Union soldiers, who had died from smallpox at Camp Douglas, were transferred from the Chicago city cemetery to this plot of ground, which has ever since been commonly known as Confederate Mound in Oak Woods Cemetery.

This cemetery is situated within the city limits of the city of Chicago, a short distance from Jackson Park, the site of the World's Fair. The Ex-Confederate Association of Chicago, with the consent of the War Department, has erected on the plot a monument in memory of the Confederate dead buried therein, and has made other efforts to have some improvements put upon the ground. By act of Congress approved January 25, 1895, the Secretary of War was authorized to issue four condemned iron guns and projectiles for the ornamentation of this lot.

While the plot is known as Confederate Mound, and was probably a slight mound located in the marsh which existed there at the time the Government acquired the title in 1867, yet from representations made to your committee, it appears that at the present time Oak Woods Cemetery, which entirely surrounds the Government plot, has been raised so that the plot itself is a low and depressed piece of ground, near the middle of which stands the Confederate monument, in something of a hollow.

No provision has ever been made by the Government for the care and maintenance of the plot, and no expenditure has ever been made by the Government for its improvement. The Oak Woods Cemetery Association has voluntarily cut the weeds growing on this plot twice a year, but no other care has been taken of it. The monument ought to be taken down temporarily, and then, after the mound has been properly filled in, the monument should be erected upon the raised ground. Most of the expense of this work will be the filling. As the Government plot is entirely situated within Oak Woods Cemetery the bill properly provides that the Secretary of War may enter into a contract with the Oak Woods Cemetery Association for the work to be done.

The graves of the dead buried there are unmarked. There is nothing there to show their names. They belong to those who laid down their lives in defense of what they believed to be the right. Their comrades from the South can not care for their burial places. The States from which they hailed can not watch over their last resting place. Mingled with the bones of the Confederate dead lies the dust of the twelve Union soldiers, whose graves are also unmarked and whose names are unknown. Around the place in which they sleep, under the weeds and water, lie those who have died in civil life, and whose graves are watched over by loving hands and hearts and made beautiful by all the arts that man can devise.

A great nation, grateful to those who died in her service, in loving forgiveness of those who fought against her, and in the hope of drawing nearer and closer together the hearts of all the people, ought not to permit this burial ground owned by it to remain untouched and uncared for.

Your committee attaches hereto and makes a part of this report a letter from the Quartermaster-General of the Army to the Secretary of War, dated June 15, 1899; also a letter from the secretary of the Oak Woods Cemetery Association, dated May 22, 1899, and in connection therewith a letter from the superintendent of the Oak Woods Cemetery Association, dated May 20, 1899.

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WAR DEPARTMENT, QUARTERMASTER-GENERAL'S OFFICE,  
*Washington, June 15, 1899.*

SIR: I have the honor to return herewith a communication from the Hon. James R. Mann, member of Congress, First district Illinois, Chicago, Ill., respecting the neglected condition of a plot of ground in the Oak Woods Cemetery, near that city, wherein were buried the Confederate soldiers who died at Camp Douglas, in Chicago, and requesting that he be informed of any facts in relation to the power of the War Department at present to improve the property, etc.

In reply thereto you are respectfully informed that it appears that the lot in question was acquired by the United States under two deeds from the president of the cemetery company, dated, respectively, April 25, 1866, and May 1, 1867, which deeds, with accompanying papers, were transferred to the Acting Judge-Advocate-General United States Army August 21, 1894, under orders from the Secretary of War dated May 15, 1894. It further appears that the remains buried in the lot were those of 12 Union soldiers, who died from smallpox at Camp Douglas, and 4,039 Confederate prisoners of war, originally buried in the Chicago City Cemetery, and which were

removed to the lot in 1867 under the direction of Col. J. D. Bingham, then chief quartermaster Department of the Lakes, at Chicago.

August 20, 1887, M. R. Scullin, assistant secretary ex-Confederate Association of Chicago, requested permission to erect in the lot a monument in memory of the Confederate dead buried therein, which permission was granted by the Secretary of War August 29, 1887, under such regulations as the Quartermaster-General may deem proper, and on August 31, 1887, the chief quartermaster Department of the Missouri was instructed to select a proper site for the monument.

August 22, 1890, the Hon. Frank Lawler, member of Congress, forwarded request by W. B. Phipps that the Confederate Association of Chicago be permitted to put the lot in good condition for the erection of the monument, and on September 6, 1890, Mr. Phipps was informed that permission is granted the association to repair and improve the lot, provided no part of the expense therefor be made a charge against the United States, and that the plans for said repairs be first submitted to and approved by the chief quartermaster Division of the Missouri.

By act of Congress (Public, No. 29) approved January 25, 1895, the Secretary of War was authorized to issue four condemned iron guns and projectiles for the ornamentation of the Government lot in Oak Woods Cemetery, near Chicago, Ill., "in which are buried both Union and Confederate dead."

May 15, 1895, permission was granted Gen. J. C. Underwood, commander northern department United Confederate Veterans, to erect an iron tablet in said lot without expense to the United States, and on August 1, 1895, permission was granted him to erect a suitable flagstaff in the lot, without expense to the United States, for the purpose of occasionally flying the national colors over the graves of the Camp Douglas prison dead interred therein.

From the foregoing report it will be noted that provision for the ornamentation of the lot has heretofore been made by the Government and also by the Confederate Veteran Association, but no appropriation has as yet been made by Congress for its care and maintenance. Such appropriations, if made, should be disbursed under the direction of the Secretary of War.

Very respectfully,

The SECRETARY OF WAR.

M. I. LUDINGTON,  
Quartermaster-General U. S. A.

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OAK WOODS CEMETERY ASSOCIATION,  
Chicago, May 22, 1899.

DEAR SIR: Your favor of the 18th instant to hand, in which you desire certain information concerning the plot of ground in our cemetery where the Confederate soldiers are buried. There are about two acres in the plot, and it was purchased by the United States May 1, 1867, of the Oak Woods Cemetery Association. No provision for the care of this plot has ever been made by anyone. When the Government bought this piece of ground it was in the unimproved part of the cemetery. Since then the ground around it has been filled and improved, leaving that plot much below grade and in a very uneven condition.

I herewith inclose you a small diagram of the plot and a statement from our superintendent as to the condition of the ground and what it would cost to put it in proper shape; also the cost per annum to maintain same to conform to the rest of the cemetery. Any further information you may wish we would be pleased to furnish you.

Yours, very respectfully,

OAK WOODS CEMETERY ASSOCIATION,  
WM. E. VANDERVORT, Secretary.

HON. JAMES R. MANN,  
No. 175 Dearborn Street, City.

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CHICAGO, May 20, 1899.

DEAR SIR: With reference to the Confederate mound I submit the following: The section is at present in deplorable condition. It is 3 to 4 feet lower than the burial mounds immediately adjacent to it, which, with the irregularity of the surface, leaves no way to dispose of the water except to slowly filter away through the sand. Then, again, the surface of the mound itself is very uneven, the north end being fully 7 inches higher than the center, at which latter point the monument stands. This feature—viz, the monument standing at the lowest point of the mound—is one

of the principal defects in the appearance of the section. The surface is also broken by depressions, and in some places actual holes appear, and very little grass is growing, the weeds being thick. At present we cut the section with scythes twice yearly. As for trees, there are about 40 old soft maples, every one of which has been broken off at the top during wind storms, and this necessitated our cutting and trimming them until they appear little better than stumps.

To bring the mound up to the standard of the surroundings the following is suggested:

The center of the section, where the monument stands, should be raised 3 feet and a gradual slope given to the mound toward the edges, the principal pitch to be south, and this could be done in such a manner as to take care of the water very nicely, and also to make a symmetrical connection with the adjacent property. The rise may be varied, that is, made less toward the center of the mound, if thought best, and this arrangement would allow of the placing of the cannon now on the ground to good advantage. Either way the expense would be equal. The surface would require seeding for grass, and water pipes should be laid through the section to provide for the sprinkling of the grass and watering of such young trees as may be set out. The old trees should be entirely removed and some suitable planting scheme followed with hardy nursery stock, such as the experience here approves. A suitable arrangement would be to plant in concentric lines to conform to the elliptical shape of the mound, placing the outside trees about 25 feet apart and the inner lines 50 feet apart.

As to the cost of this improvement, about 5,000 yards of filling would be required. This varies in price at different seasons according to the supply in the neighborhood. A fair average price, including the handling and grading, would be 50 cents per yard. To take down and set up the monument would cost \$500, and 3 feet of foundation to bring it up to the new grade would cost \$250. The seeding for grass would cost \$25. Piping to meet our point of distribution would require 500 feet of 2-inch and 1,000 feet of 1-inch pipe, which at the present market price, with the necessary valves installed complete, would be worth \$175.

The trees planted as suggested above would require about 80, and in selected nursery stock of an average height of 10 feet, properly watered to insure their growth, would be worth \$5 each.

It is possible to secure a much better appearance than at present with less expense than the grading above suggested by simply resurfacing the section, although the effect would not compare with the other. This latter arrangement would require about \$75 worth of filling and a labor expenditure of \$250, and would mean that the monument should be left in its present low position and the section given a flat field-like appearance. While this would not conform with the surroundings, it would give an opportunity to keep well cut and trimmed. The removal of the old trees would in either case be in order, at a cost of \$100.

As to the permanent care of the grounds to correspond with the surrounding property, this would mean the cutting of the grass with lawn mowers, the trimming of the same about the trees, monument, etc., the trimming of the trees in season, and the usual raking to keep the ground free from litter. This would require an outlay of \$100 annually. In addition to this, the grass should be watered similarly as is done on the private lots in the cemetery. The watering would be worth \$150 annually. The above figures are made after a careful survey of the ground and a due consideration for getting them as low as the work can be properly performed, with a view, if possible, of having the Government section brought up to the park standard of our own grounds.

Yours, truly,

EDWARD G. CARTER,  
*Superintendent*

WM. E. VANDERVOORT, Esq., *Secretary, Chicago.*