

placed five names into a hat, agreeing the name drawn would be the name of the new city. Recalling the seven hills of ancient Rome on the Tiber River, Rome was Colonel Mitchell's suggestion.

**9 Dr. Robet Battey**

Dr. Robert Battey was an eminent surgeon recognized world-wide for performing the first oophorectomy (operation to remove the ovaries). Dr. Battey's procedure is still taught in medical schools today more than a century later. Following the Civil War, he returned to Rome to practice medicine and later served as President of the Georgia Medical Association. The Battey Mausoleum is the largest mausoleum in Myrtle Hill Cemetery. It contains more than 40 bodies, with the identity of many unknown. Before modern burial techniques and refrigeration, Romans whose out-of-town relatives died while visiting, received permission to store the bodies in the mausoleum until cooler weather. Many never returned to retrieve the bodies.

**10 Augustus Wright**

One of four United States Congressmen buried in Myrtle Hill, Wright was also a member of the Confederate Congress. During the Civil War, President Lincoln urged Wright to ask both Georgia Governor Joseph Brown and the President of the Confederacy, Jefferson Davis to surrender. Both refused. Even though Wright did deliver this message from President Lincoln, he remained loyal to the South. After the Civil War, he remained in Rome practicing law, and was a member of the Georgia Constitutional Convention of 1877. He died at his home "Glenwood" in 1891.

**11 Colonel Alfred Shorter**

Alfred Shorter was born in Washington, Georgia on November 3, 1803. Orphaned as a child, he was reared by relatives near Eufaula, Alabama. He eventually left there with his total possessions in a hand satchel along with a pet rooster under his arm. At the age of 16, he found employment as a clerk in the store belonging to John Baldwin of Monticello, Georgia, eventually becoming a partner. In 1834, he married Baldwin's widow, Martha Harper Baldwin, who was 4 years his senior. They moved to Floyd County in 1837. An astute businessman, Colonel Shorter traded in cotton, merchandise and real estate. He was part owner of a

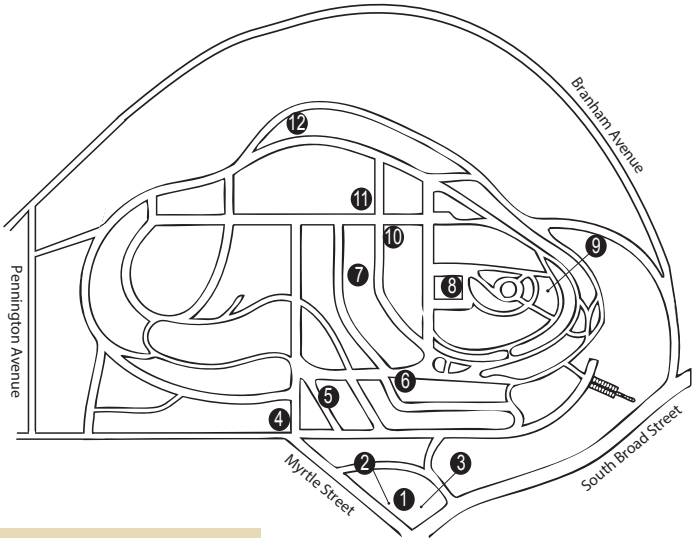
local steamboat line, banks, an insurance company, the Rome Railroad Co. and had extensive farming interests. For almost 25 years he owned 2 bridges crossing the Etowah and Oostanaula Rivers, charging a toll for their use. He and Mrs. Shorter were very active in the Rome Baptist Church, contributing 6 of the 8 thousand dollars needed to build the church. It was in the basement of the church in 1873 that final plans were made for the organization of the Cherokee Baptist Female College with Alfred Shorter chosen as President of the Board. The name would later be changed to Shorter College to honor Alfred and Martha for their contributions.

**12 Gammon Family**

The Gammon Family lived on E. Third Avenue near the Etowah River. Rosalind and John Gammon were parents of three sons, Montague, Von Albade and Will. All three boys were outstanding athletes. Following his graduation from Rome High School, Von entered the University of Georgia in the fall of 1896. He was the quarterback of the football team that year the first undefeated season for the University. In 1897, he was moved to fullback. On October 30 of that year, during a game with the University of Virginia, Von suffered a severe head injury and died the next day. He was eighteen years of age. On November 1, 1897, Von's funeral was held at the First Presbyterian Church. All of his teammates sat together near the front of the church. That day, a move began in the state that would make football illegal in Georgia. The Georgia legislature was called into session and passed a bill that would put an end to the game. Rosalind Gammon, who in 1897 could not vote, was upset that a game so loved by her son was being abolished in his name. She sent an impassioned letter to Governor Atkinson asking that he veto the bill. She signed her letter, "Von Gammon's Mother". The bill was vetoed. Memorials dedicated to Rosalind Gammon as "The Woman Who Saved Football in Georgia", are located in Rome on Broad Street and in Athens at the University of Georgia.



MYRTLE HILL CEMETERY



Myrtle Hill Cemetery is a special place with scenic views of the city located at the confluence of three rivers. Picturesque markers and monuments line the terraces of this "field of history". These are but a few of the many interesting men and women who have enriched our community.

- 1 Charles W. Graves.....1892-1918
- 2 Nathan Bedford Forrest Monument
- 3 Women of the Confederacy Monument
- 4 Civil War Soldiers' Area
- 5 Julia Omberg.....1842-1922
- 6 Ellen Axson Wilson.....1860-1914
- 7 Thomas Berry.....1821-1887  
Frances Rhea Berry.....1838-1926
- 8 Daniel R. Mitchell.....1803-1876
- 9 Dr. Robert Battey.....1828-1895
- 10 Augustus Wright.....1813-1891
- 11 Alfred Shorter.....1803-1882  
Martha Baldwin Shorter.....1799-1877
- 12 Gammon Family

Be safe and preserve the integrity of this historic site:  
Respect funeral services • No gravestone rubbings • Do not lean or sit on walls or markers  
Cemetery tour information: 706-295-5576 | Help locating a grave: 706-236-4534

ROME'S HISTORIC

Myrtle Hill Cemetery



Georgia's Rome



**M**yrtle Hill Cemetery is Rome's most tangible link to the past. This National Register of Historic Places site was established in 1857 and is the final resting place for more than 20,000 people who have shaped Rome's history. Among these are four Congressmen, a U.S. Senator, America's Known Soldier, and a First Lady of the United States. It is significant that three of the seven hills of Rome were chosen as burial grounds. Rome's first cemetery, Oak Hill, located on Lumpkin Hill was established in 1837. The third cemetery located on one of Rome's seven hills is the Rodeph Sholom Cemetery. Situated atop Mount Aventine, this cemetery was established in 1875.

## *Cemetery, meaning a "sleeping place"...* *Myrtle Hill Cemetery, "Where Romans Rest".*

By the 1850's the citizens of Rome realized that more room would be needed; therefore, a tract of 32 acres was purchased from Colonel Alfred Shorter. Colonel Cunningham Pennington, a civil engineer, drew plans for interment on six levels. Vinca Minor, more commonly called Myrtle, or the "flower of

death", grew wild on the hill and gave the cemetery its name. Rome's early history of floods and river rampages presented challenges to everyone, including the funeral director. Boats were often used in removing the body of a deceased person from the home to the funeral parlor during such difficult times. None worried, however, that the final resting place of their loved ones would suffer from the ravaging floods. In those days Myrtle Hill was the cemetery most often used by Rome urbanites for the burial of their dead. Myrtle Hill stood high and dry a century ago just as it does today.



Angels abound on Myrtle Hill

## VETERANS PLAZA

The centerpiece of this plaza is the tomb of America's Known Soldier, Charles Graves, which is guarded by three 1904 water cooled automatic machine guns. A bronze replica of a World War I "Doughboy" also enhances this inspiring site. More than 3,000 engraved bricks honor and memorialize military veterans and civilians for their service to this country in war or peace throughout all of American history.



Veterans Plaza

### 1 **Charles W. Graves**

Charles W. Graves died on the Hindenburg Line in 1918 and was buried in France. Four years later, in 1922, Charles' body was loaded onto a huge troopship that was bringing bodies home for burial. With this last load of bodies, it was decided that a Known Soldier should be chosen to join the body of the Unknown Soldier for burial at Arlington National Cemetery. A sailor was blindfolded and asked to run his finger down the long list of "known

dead". His finger stopped at the name of Charles Graves of Rome, Georgia. Mrs. Graves had waited four years for the return of her son's body and she wanted him brought home for burial. The War Department agreed to her request, but decided to honor America's Known Soldier with a parade down Fifth Avenue in New York. Accompanying his flag draped coffin was an honor guard of Admirals, Generals, three Governors, five U.S. Senators, members of Congress, the Secretary of War and the Mayor of New York. President Warren Harding spoke



Women of the Confederacy Monument

about Charles and the other young men who had paid the ultimate price in the "great war". On April 6, 1922, Charles was laid to rest in the cemetery at Antioch Church. Charles would not stay in this grave for long. Plans were developed to create a more prominent gravesite in a special memorial garden section of Myrtle Hill Cemetery where no burials had been allowed. After his mother's death, his brother agreed to move the body to this site. There were Romans who felt his mother's wishes should be kept. A hearing for a court injunction was set. Late on the night before the hearing, a group of citizens went to Antioch and removed the coffin by lantern light. They brought it to Myrtle Hill and buried it in the place where it is now located. Thus, Charles Graves, America's Known Soldier, was buried for the third and final time on September 22, 1923.

### 2 **Nathan Bedford Forrest Monument**

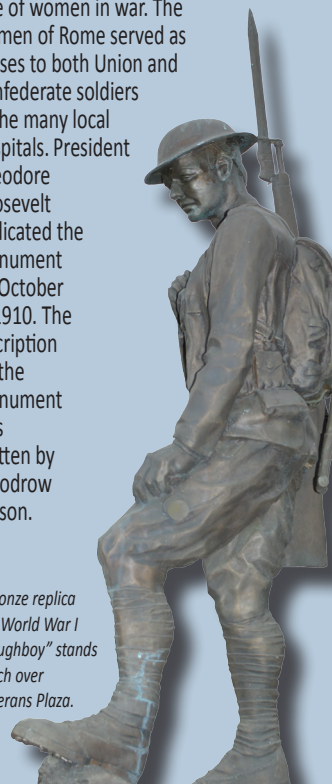
General Forrest was a dashing cavalryman

and a popular hero of the Civil War. This monument was erected by the United Daughters of the Confederacy to honor Forrest for his role in capturing a Union raiding party led by Colonel Abel Streight in 1863.

### 3 **Women of the Confederacy Monument**

This monument is believed to be the first monument in the world to honor the role of women in war. The women of Rome served as nurses to both Union and Confederate soldiers in the many local hospitals. President Theodore Roosevelt dedicated the monument on October 8, 1910. The inscription on the monument was written by Woodrow Wilson.

A bronze replica of a World War I "Doughboy" stands watch over Veterans Plaza.



### 4 **Confederate Section**

These are the graves of more than 300 soldiers, both Confederate and Union who represent all eleven states of the Confederacy, as well as the border states. There are 81 unknown Confederate and two unknown Union soldiers. Rome was a hospital center during the war. When Union troops under the command of General Sherman left Rome in November 1864, he ordered all of Broad Street burned except for a few buildings that were used as hospitals. Several of our downtown churches were also used as hospitals, which spared them from being burned. Many of the soldiers buried here were in those hospitals.

### 5 **Julia Omberg**

In 1872, Dr. Robert Battey performed the first oophorectomy (removal of the ovaries) in the world. The patient was 30 year old Julia Omberg. The surgery took place on the kitchen table of the Omberg residence, which is located on W. First Street. A lynch mob waited outside to hang Dr. Battey if the operation was unsuccessful. Julia Omberg lived 50 more years and died at age 80 of natural causes.

### 6 **Ellen Axson Wilson**

Ellen Axson Wilson was born May 15, 1860 in Savannah, Georgia and moved to Rome in March of 1866. She graduated from Rome Female College and attended the New York Art Students League. Her father, Reverend Samuel Edward Axson, was pastor of Rome's First Presbyterian Church. It was in this church that Woodrow Wilson, who later would be elected as the 28th President of the United States, first saw Ellen. They were married in Savannah in June of 1885. A professional artist, she gave her earnings to numerous causes, including the Berry School. As America's First Lady, Ellen Wilson was a strong activist, devoting much of her time to

the improvement to working conditions for women and to promote better housing for Washington's impoverished. Eleanor Roosevelt considered Ellen as her mentor on social issues. Ellen died in the White House on August 6, 1914 at the age of 54. Funeral services were held at Rome's First Presbyterian Church. Her graveside service was the largest ever to be held at Myrtle Hill. In 1998 the Rome Area Heritage Foundation dedicated a bronze plaque in memory of Ellen Axson Wilson.

### 7 **Captain Thomas Berry & Frances Rhea Berry**

This is the gravesite of several members of the Berry Family, including Thomas and Frances Rhea McChesney Berry, the daughter of one of the wealthiest men in Alabama. At the time of their marriage, Thomas was 39 and Frances was 18.

Thomas was 21 when he moved to Rome from Tennessee to work as an apprentice to a storekeeper. His industriousness and ambition led Thomas to own a store of his own. As Rome rapidly developed into an important cotton trading center on the Coosa River, he sold the store and opened a cotton brokerage. As his business flourished he was able to buy Oak Hill, a stately white house surrounded by farmlands, gardens, outbuildings, and servant's quarters. It was here that Thomas and Frances raised eleven children, eight of their own, and three orphaned children of her brother. Their second born child was Martha McChesney Berry, founder of Berry College. (Martha Berry is buried on the campus of Berry College beside the Mount Berry Chapel.)

### 8 **Daniel R. Mitchell**

One of the five founders of Rome, Col. Mitchell wrote the town charter, was a noted attorney and engineer, and was responsible for laying out the streets in downtown Rome. The five founders

## **MYRTLE HILL CEMETERY** **Free Mobile App Tour**

Experience the history of the cemetery through a free Mobile App Tour with GPS navigation, audio, video and historic photos. It's just like having a historian guide you through the cemetery.

To download, search "Myrtle Hill" in the Apple App Store or Google Play.

## **Myrtle Hill Cemetery**

