

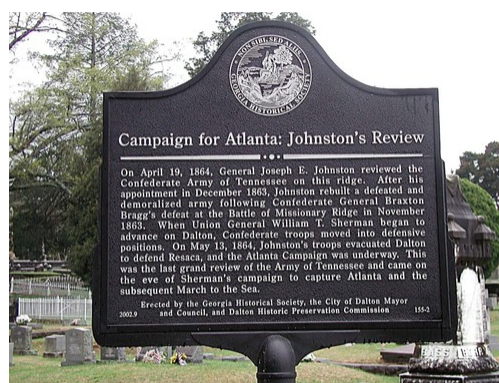


The Army of Tennessee in Dalton, Georgia: Where Did They All Fit?

Robert D. Jenkins, Sr., February 12, 2021
blueandgrayeducation.org

Dalton, Georgia, was home to the Confederate Army of Tennessee from late November 1863 to the second week of May 1864. With a force of 40,000 to 50,000 men and camp followers and servants, the little town swelled to look in size, populace, and scope much like Dalton looks today during the encampment. They did not all stay at the Downtown Inn.

A Georgia Historical Society marker located near the West Hill Cemetery along Ridge Street (near its intersection with Cuyler Street) in Dalton explains that on April 19, 1864, Gen. Joseph E. Johnston conducted a review of his army as various units lined up and marched along Ridge Street in front of him. Many people today have mistakenly believed that due to the marker, this was the location of the soldiers during their six-month stay in Dalton.



Georgia Historical Society marker in Dalton, Georgia

With a populace of just 3,000 before the invasion of the friendly horde, Dalton suddenly found herself a city of tents, huts, and makeshift cabins for miles around. The 40,000-plus army settled all around the city much in the manner that the neighborhoods surround Dalton today. Most of the men thus were within 3 to 5 miles of downtown Dalton, easy walking distance for these veteran foot soldiers to come and go from camps into town to purchase things, go to church meetings, and, of course, to see the ladies, provided that they had a pass to leave camp. Coming to see the ladies—some of whom had also recently arrived in camp to “ply their wares”—became such a problem that newly appointed Confederate General Johnson banned from the city all women who did not have legitimate business in town or proof of a legal residence in Dalton before the arrival of the army.



The famous Dalton snowball fight in winter 1864 | LOC

Cleburne's Division of perhaps 5,000 men lived out on today's Underwood Street, which was then known as the Upper Spring Place Road. General Cleburne resided at the Hill family residence, which was called Beechland, and his men spread out along the Underwood corridor, which today covers J&J Industries and the neighborhoods surrounding it.

Stewart's Division, also of about 5,000 men, occupied a good part of what is today Brookwood Subdivision and Dug Gap Road. Cheatham's all-Tennessee Division lived out around Airport Road and Walnut Square Mall, while Stevenson's Division took up residence in Crow Valley. Meanwhile, Bate's Division settled down north of Dalton with the Kentucky Orphan Brigade camped between the Hamilton House and Mt. Rachel; Tyler's Georgia and Tennessee Brigade located at today's Rocky Face exit off of I-75 and between it, around the hill just east of today's Kimberly Park Drive; while Finley's Florida Brigade stayed around old US 41 Hwy. from the bypass to the new county jail.

Other divisions found places to stay in the Dalton area as well, as they all waited for the war's drama to unfold in the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains in northwest Georgia.



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