



KELLIE MANIER | DISPATCH

Ann Hartman of Griffin, Ga., addresses the Memorial Day service at Camp Chase Cemetery on the Hilltop, where the body of her great-great-grandfather Hiram Bland, a Confederate soldier, was stolen Nov. 24, 1864.

Confederate soldier gets his peace

By Meredith Heagney
THE COLUMBUS DISPATCH

Hiram Bland can rest now, at least in spirit, next to his wife, Jincy, in Georgia.

Bland was a Confederate soldier whose body was stolen hours after it was buried at Camp Chase Cemetery on Nov. 24, 1864, said his great-great-granddaughter, Ann Hartman of Griffin, Ga.

His descendants finally get a memorial stone long after the 1864 grave robbery.

Hartman was at the Hilltop cemetery yesterday to accept a memorial stone in Bland's honor.

It was part of a Memorial Day service hosted by the Sons of Confederate Veterans Camp No. 1535.

They sang *Dixie* and sprinkled Southern soil on the cemetery ground.

The bodies of more than 2,000 Confederate prisoners of war are buried in the cemetery.

The stone was the idea of Dennis Ranney, a member of the Sons group and an amateur historian who has researched the grave-

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robbing incident for five years.

Hartman said she has spent 30 years trying to piece together her family history, but Bland's story always proved perplexing.

Here's what she and Ranney have figured out about what happened to him:

Bland was captured during the Battle of Atlanta in July 1864 and taken to Camp Chase, where he died Nov. 24. He would've been about 40 years old.

His body was at rest for just a few hours in grave No. 513, just steps from Sullivan Avenue.

A team of three grave robbers, led by Columbus Dr. Joab Flowers, stole six bodies with the intention of selling them to a Cleveland medical school for dissection and research. Flowers would have received \$20 for each body, Ranney said.

The bodies were to have been transported by train, but it's unclear how far they got because the three robbers were arrested two days later.

Even now, no one knows what happened to the bodies.

Jincy, Bland's wife, waited on the porch after the war ended for a homecoming that would never be, Hartman said.

Hartman is grateful that she could provide that reunion, no matter how belatedly, even with the disap-



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Even now, no one knows what happened to the six bodies stolen Nov. 24, 1864.

pearance of Bland's body still unsolved.

"We can't take him home, but we can honor him," she said.

After all, Jincy waited a long time.

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ABOVE: Civil War re-enactor LeAnne Jones, 16, of Marysville, walks amid the grave-stones at Camp Chase. The bodies of more than 2,000 Confederate soldiers are buried there.

LEFT: Robert L. Croye of Columbus, a member of the Sons of Confederate Veterans Camp No. 1535, looks over Hiram Bland's memorial stone, which will be placed beside his wife's in Georgia.