

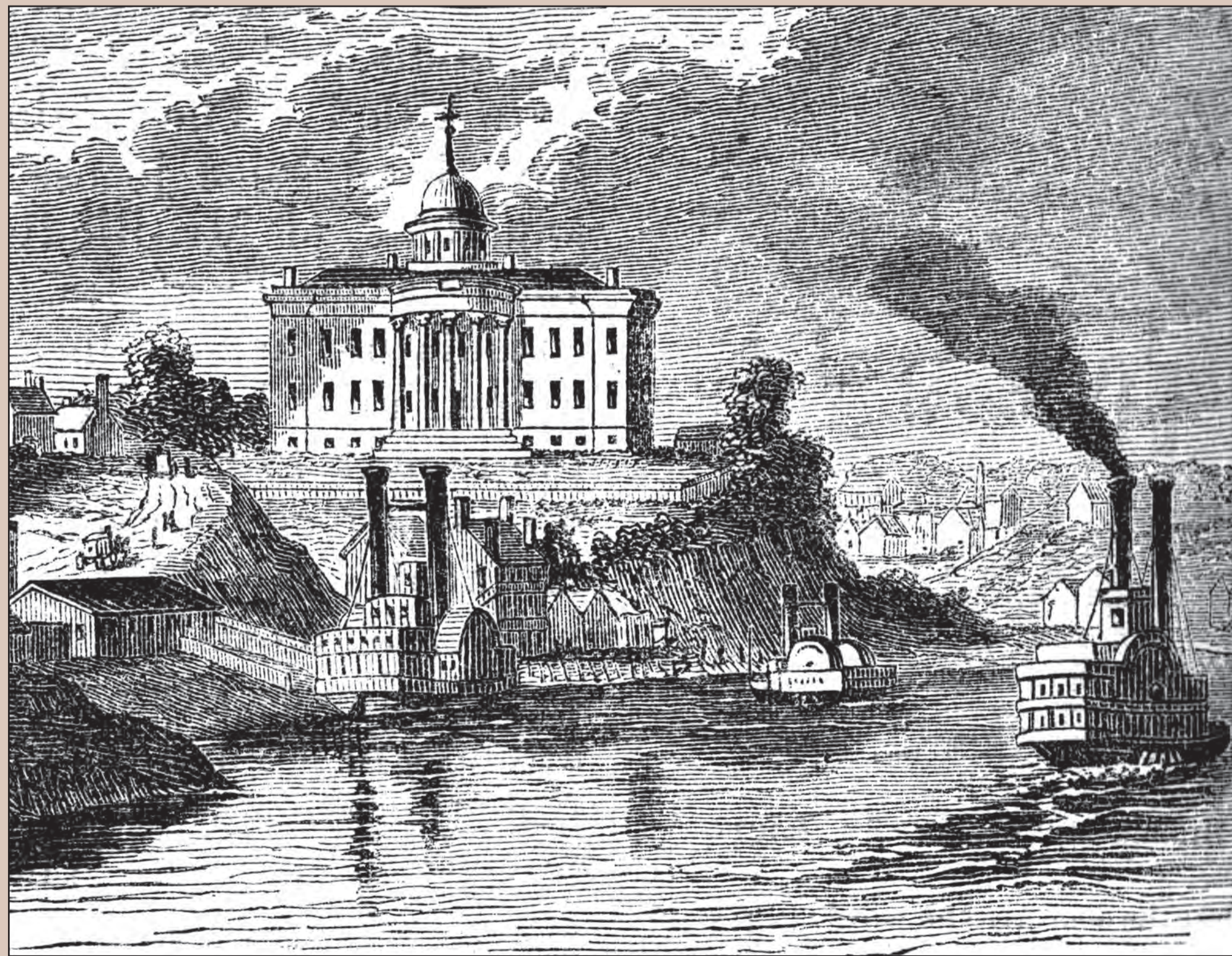
JEFFERSON CITY NATIONAL CEMETERY

Civil War Jefferson City

In spring 1861, Missouri was a slave state divided over the issue of secession. An uneasy peace existed between pro-Confederate state government militia and Union forces headquartered in St. Louis. On June 11, 1861, Union and pro-Confederate leaders met in the city. The conference ended abruptly when Union Gen. Nathaniel Lyon stormed out of the room yelling, "This means war!"

Four days later, Lyon's troops marched into Jefferson City, the state capital. They found that pro-secessionist government officials had departed two days earlier.

The Union Army established a garrison at Jefferson City that operated throughout the war. Soldiers who died in the city were buried on land adjacent to the old city cemetery and Woodland Cemetery.



View of Jefferson City from the Missouri River. Barber and Howe, Our Whole Country (1861). Courtesy of the Ohio History Connection.



Entrance gate and lodge, 1903. National Archives and Records Administration.

National Cemetery

In 1867, the federal government purchased the 2 acres being used for military burials from Woodland Cemetery. This tract was designated a national cemetery. Remains were brought here from Chariton, Cooper, Knox, Johnson, and Pettis counties.

By 1875, there were 754 interments, including three civilians and three Confederate soldiers. The narrow cemetery was enclosed with a stone wall, a Second Empire-style lodge was built for the superintendent, and a flagstaff installed.

The east wall was replaced with a wrought-iron fence and the stone utility building was completed in 1937. The rostrum was added in 1942.

Centralia Monument

On September 27, 1864, Confederate guerrillas led by "Bloody Bill" Anderson executed twenty-two Union soldiers returning home on furlough at the train station in Centralia, Missouri. Union Maj. A. V. E. Johnston, with detachments of companies A, G, and H, 39th Missouri Infantry, pursued the guerrillas.

The U.S. forces were outnumbered. Johnston and 121 men were killed. Residents buried some of the dead in a trench grave near the railroad station. Others were initially buried in the nearby town of Mexico, but were eventually moved to Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery in St. Louis.

By 1868, the Centralia train station burial plot was enclosed by a board fence. A monument inscribed with the names of 122 officers and enlisted men of the 39th Missouri who died in the battle was installed within the enclosure. These remains and the monument were moved in 1873 to this national cemetery between Sections 7 and 9.

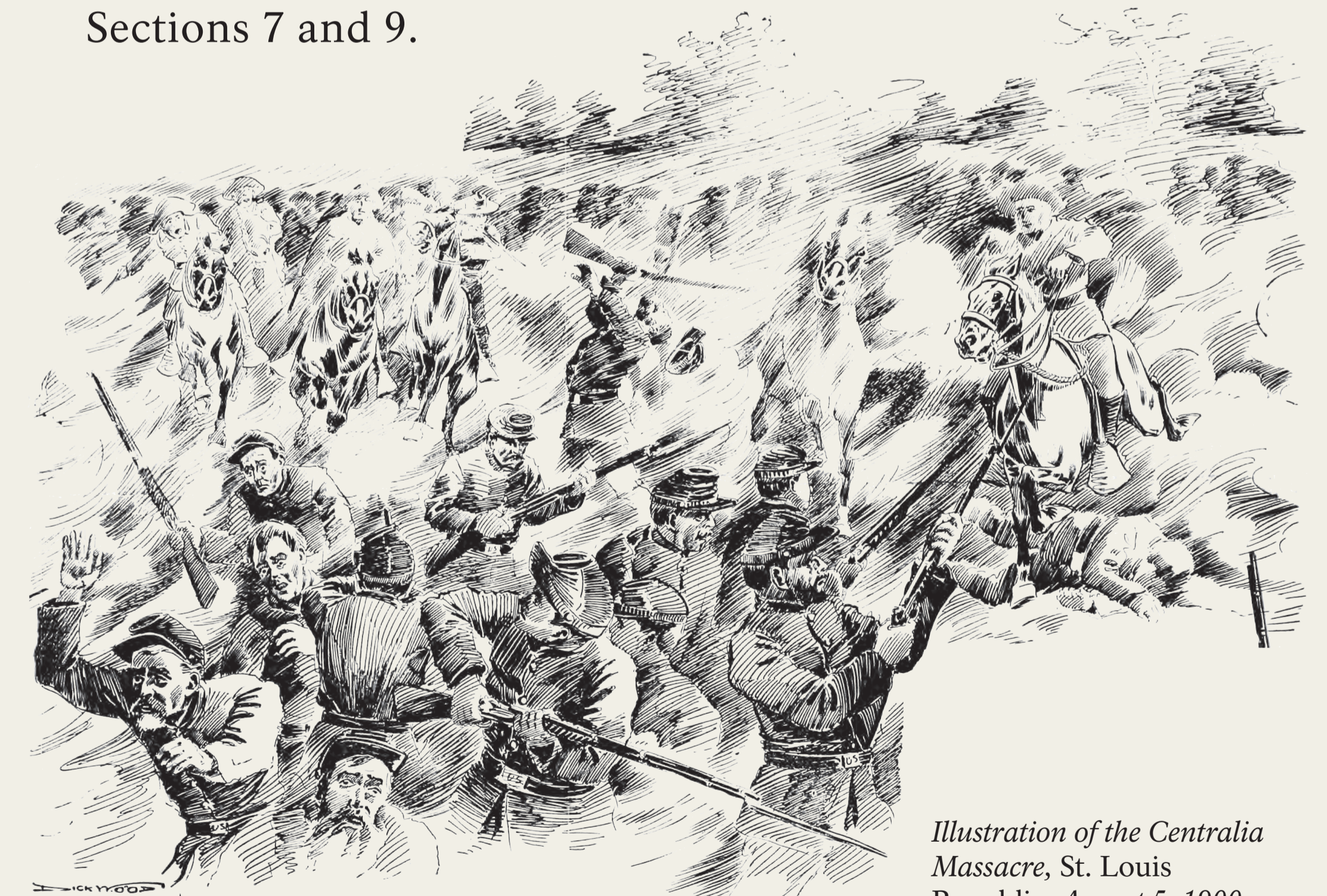


Illustration of the Centralia Massacre, St. Louis Republic, August 5, 1900.