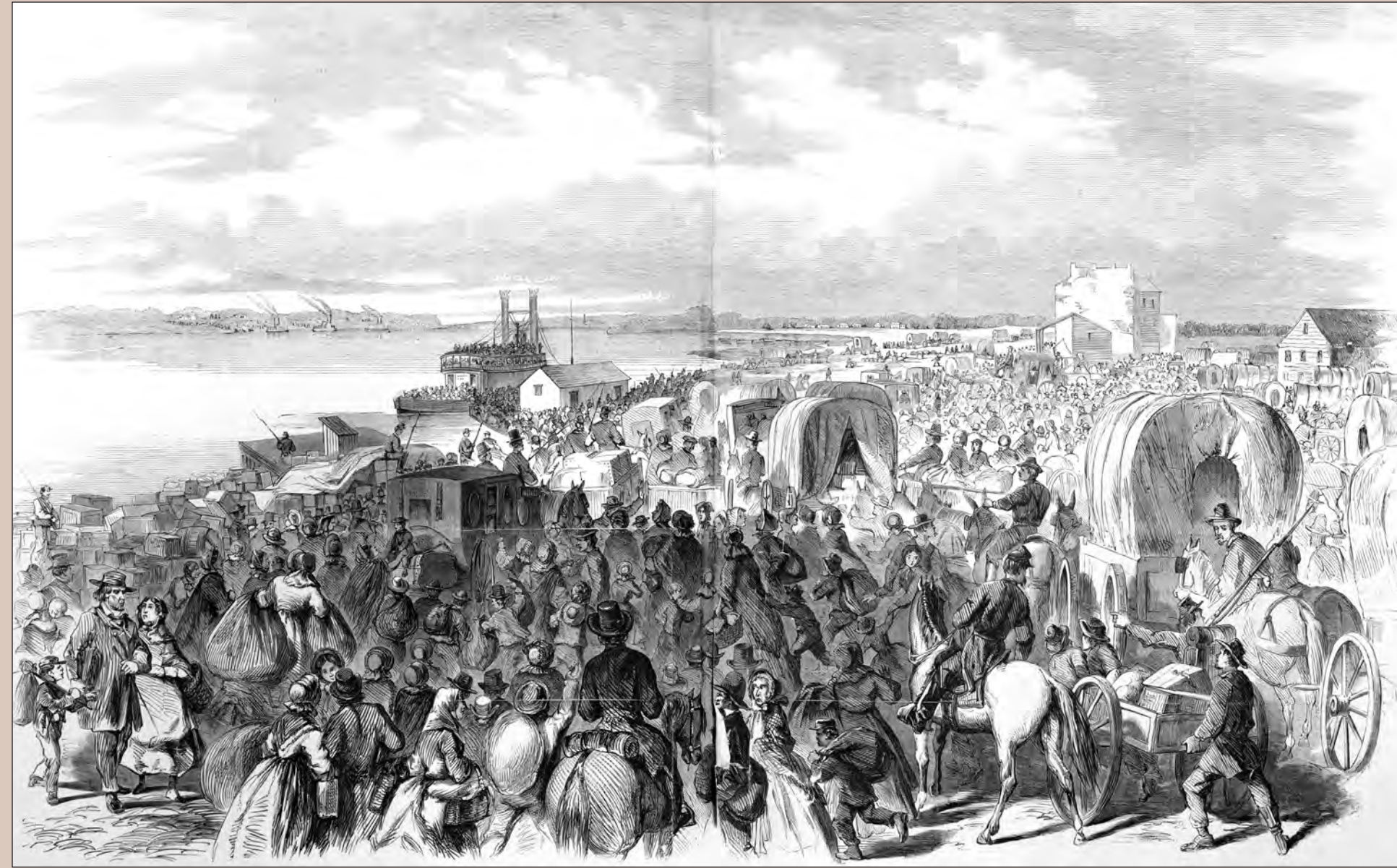


CAVE HILL NATIONAL CEMETERY



In September 1862, Union Maj. Gen. William "Bull" Nelson ordered women and children out of Louisville. Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper (October 18, 1862).

Civil War Louisville

When the Civil War began, Louisville was the largest city in Kentucky and the twelfth largest in the nation. Because its commercial and industrial economy was not dependent on slave labor, less than 10 percent of the city's population was enslaved. A major transportation hub, Louisville railroads connected it to other Kentucky cities, as well as Cincinnati, Ohio, to the east and Nashville, Tennessee, to the south. The Ohio River provided another transportation route. More than 100,000 Union soldiers passed through the city either by railroad or river.

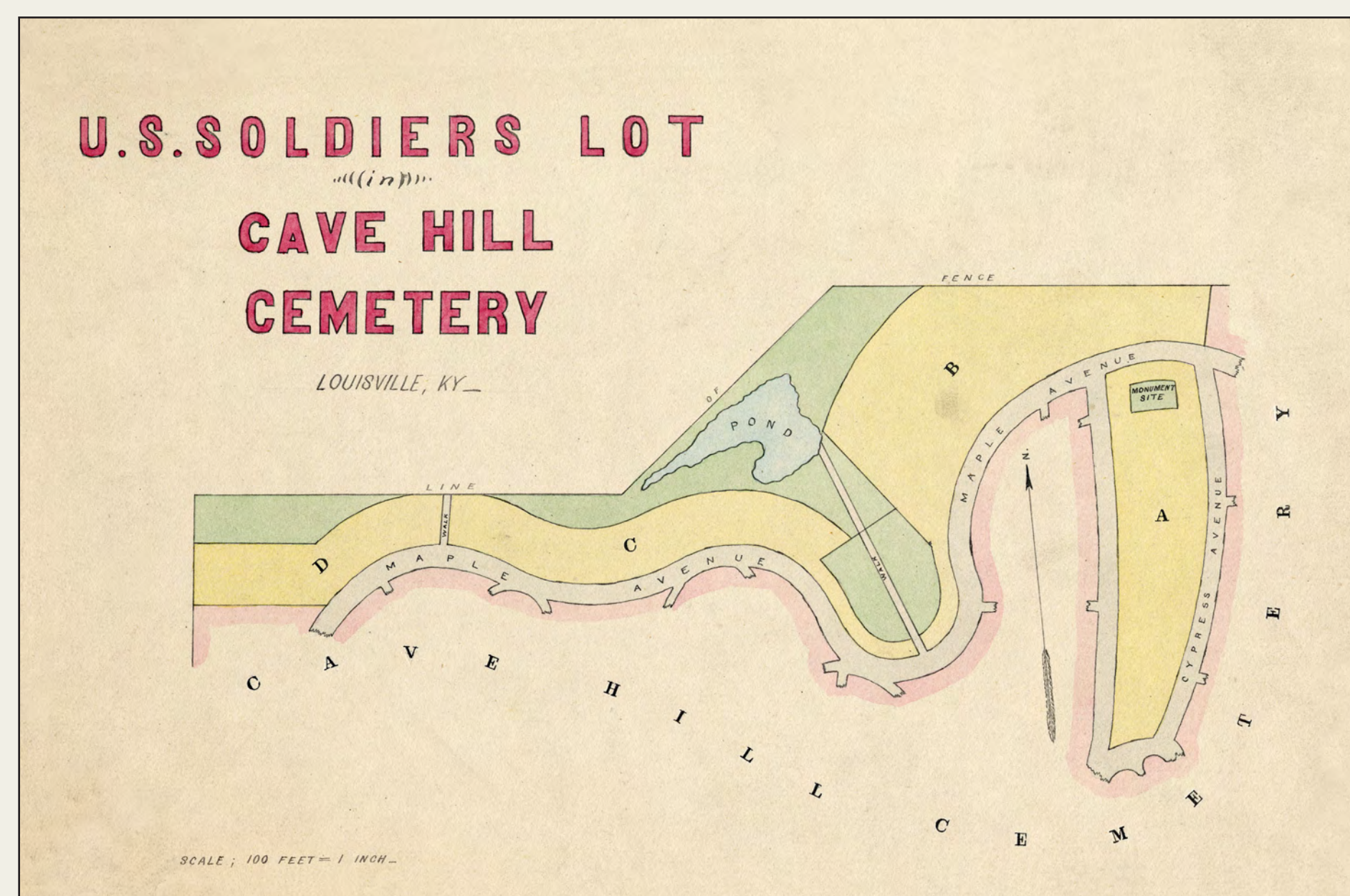
By 1862, Louisville was vital to the Union war effort. The Louisville & Nashville (L&N) Railroad carried supplies from northern states to Union troops in Tennessee and beyond. After the October 1862 Battle of Perryville, several hundred Confederate prisoners were confined in the city. Wounded Union soldiers were treated in Louisville's nineteen military hospitals. Many soldiers who died of wounds or sickness were buried here.

"Harvest of Death"

Early in 1866, Capt. E. B. Whitman began gathering information in preparation for the reinterment of Union soldiers buried in the Military Division of Tennessee. This huge district included Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, and Tennessee.

Captain Whitman, later lieutenant colonel, placed newspaper notices seeking locations of Union graves. Citizens, chaplains, soldiers, and officers replied. Whitman made three major expeditions across the region, stopping at hundreds of battlefields and engagement sites. Because of his work, thousands of Union dead were moved to twelve new national cemeteries.

In May 1869, Whitman submitted a detailed summary of this difficult project to the quartermaster general. The report contained sketches and site plans of each cemetery, and data on interments and service affiliations.



Drawing of Soldiers' Lot, later designated a national cemetery, at Cave Hill Cemetery, c. 1866. National Archives and Records Administration.



Superintendent's lodge, 1882. The Second Empire-style building, constructed in 1877 outside the cemetery wall, was sold in 1938. National Archives and Records Administration.

National Cemetery

Prior to 1869, ten federally established or public cemeteries in Kentucky contained the remains of Union soldiers. The work of reintering the dead was almost complete when the army changed its plan and reduced the number of cemeteries in the state to six.

The private Cave Hill Cemetery, established 1848, had donated a half acre to the government for the burial of Union dead in 1861. Federal acquisitions between 1863 and 1868 brought the size of the lot to 2.9 acres. By 1869, the national cemetery contained 3,910 interments. Only 563 were unknown. The remains came from several Kentucky locales including Henderson, Owensboro, and battlefields and sites along the L&N Railroad between here and Woodsonville, Hart County.

One of the nation's oldest Civil War monuments, honoring soldiers of the 32nd Indiana Infantry, was moved here in 1867. The Union Soldiers and Sailors Monument Association dedicated a memorial to the unknown dead buried in the national cemetery on July 25, 1914.