

Jefferson City National Cemetery
1024 East McCarty Street
Jefferson City, Missouri 65101

Description

The Jefferson City National Cemetery, established in 1867, is located in Cole County, about 1/4 mile east of the State Capitol. The grounds are rectangular in shape and are enclosed by an ashlar stone wall with a stone coping constructed circa 1871. The main entrance is on McCarty Street on the north side of the cemetery and is protected by a double iron gate with limestone pillars, constructed in 1937. Along the south wall is an additional entrance. A wrought iron fence, four feet six inches high and containing pickets five inches apart, was installed in 1938 for 214 feet, 3 inches along McCarty Street and for 40 feet along Locust Street, including a drive gate ten feet in width and a pedestrian gate three feet, five inches in width. Along the main avenue, about one-third of the distance of the ground, is a circle for the flagpole, which was erected in 1926. As one enters the cemetery through the main gate on McCarty Street, the lodge and utility building are to the left, and the rostrum is located directly north at the opposite end of the main avenue. Graves are marked with upright marble headstones.



The lodge was constructed in 1870 from a design by Quartermaster General Montgomery C. Meigs, and is Second Empire in style. It is an L-shaped ashlar stone structure with stone quoins and a slate-covered mansard done in varying hues of hexagonal slate with small gabled dormer windows. The first floor contains an entry porch, a living room, dining room, and kitchen, and the upper story contains three bedrooms and a bath. The lodge also contains a full unfinished basement. The kitchen, 11 feet by 14 feet, was added in 1931 on the west side and duplicates the original stone quoining. The

windows on the first story are six-over-six double hung, while the upper story windows are double hung two-over-two with a single vertical muntin. The front porch was enclosed in 1934.

The ashlar limestone two-story utility building, 16 feet by 48 feet 7 inches, was constructed in 1937. The roof is composition tar and gravel. This building contains a tool room, a garage, and public restrooms and replaced a frame cart house and a brick tool house, woodshed and public toilet with a tin roof.

The rostrum, located along the northern stone boundary wall, was constructed in 1942. During the early 1940's, similar rostrums were being built in many national



cemeteries. It is constructed of limestone with an ashlar stone base in a revival design with Doric columns in the front and three classic Roman arches on the back. There is a highly detailed limestone parapet wall at the top.

Noted Burials

Logan Bennett, one of the original founders of Lincoln University in Jefferson City, Missouri, was interred in the national cemetery on October 18, 1933. Private Bennett was a member of Company K, 65th U. S. Missouri Colored Infantry, one of two regiments which after the war, gave generously of their funds which they received for their services, to establish a school for blacks in Missouri. The school was founded in 1868. Through the sacrificing of these soldiers, \$5,510.50 was collected to begin Lincoln University. Bennett died on October 15, 1933, at the age of 91. Bennett Hall, a dormitory on campus, is named in his memory. His wife, Josephine, who died on December 13, 1944, is buried with him in Section 8, Grave 769B.

Significant Monuments/Memorials

39th Regiment Monument - An obelisk memorial constructed of limestone, erected in 1868, located between Sections 7 and 9. The monument commemorates the members of Companies A, G, and H, 39th Regiment, Missouri Volunteer Infantry. On each side of the obelisk of the monument are inscribed the names of these soldiers.



The men were killed on September 27, 1864, in a fight with rebel bushwhackers at Centralia, Missouri. The day of the battle began calmly enough in the north central Missouri town of only 100 residents. At the edge of the Centralia prairie, the notorious guerrilla fighter Bill Anderson was camped with about 350 men. During the forenoon, the guerrillas moved into Centralia, where they plundered the depot and houses. Shortly afterward, they attacked a passenger train, killing 23 discharged and furloughed Union soldiers, and abusing the other 125 passengers. Anderson and his men then mounted their horses and rode back to the camp. At 3 p.m., Major A. V. E. Johnson and his 39th Infantry reached Centralia in pursuit of Anderson. The men were mounted on inferior horses and mules and armed with Enfield muskets and muzzle loading guns which fired an ounce ball and were equipped with bayonets. The only revolvers or sabres among the regiment were carried by the commissioned officers. Johnson was warned of Anderson's cunning by the city of Centralia, but the officer chose to press the attack. Forming with 122 of his men on the open prairie before Anderson's force, he began an advance against an opponent hidden in the woods. The Union soldiers were new recruits and fired wildly and irregularly in the face of the deadly barrage laid down by Anderson's experienced guerrillas. The fight, possibly one of the shortest in the Civil War, lasted only two minutes. Of the 122 volunteers 108, including Johnson, were killed. (Only two of Anderson's men died, with three seriously wounded, and others slightly hurt.) After the battle, the Centralians gathered the dead and brought them to the depot. A number of the bodies were taken to Mexico, Missouri, for burial and the others, 79 in number, were buried in a long trench near the railroad in Boone County, 1/4 mile from the railroad station at Centralia. The ground was donated to the Government by the North Missouri Railroad Company, at whose request the bodies were allowed to remain, they agreeing that the ground

would be forever cared for, free of expense to the United States. The burial site was enclosed by a plank fence, and a 15-foot-high limestone monument was erected nearby. Several years later, the trench was opened and the remains were removed to the national cemetery in 1873. The limestone monument was also moved and marks the gravesite to this day.

Civil War Activity in Area

Unlike the rest of the country, the Civil War in Missouri did not begin in 1861, but the skirmishes were a continuation of and a blend with border warfare beginning in the mid-1850's centering upon control of the Kansas Territory.

Subsequent to the election of Abraham Lincoln in 1860 (Lincoln was a distant fourth out of four candidates among Missouri voters), efforts to take Missouri out of the Union had met much of the same results as those in Virginia, North Carolina, and Tennessee; that is, "secession" conventions had determined that sufficient cause did not then exist for separation of the respective states of the upper south from the Union, but it was also clearly a mandated directive that these states (including Missouri) were not to participate in efforts to coerce seceding states back into the Union.

The flash-point for new hostilities in Missouri came on May 10, 1861, when 700 members of the state militia encamped on the present day site of the campus of St. Louis University, were surrounded and compelled to surrender at gun point by 7,000 Federal troops. As the prisoners were marched through the streets of St. Louis, their relatives and friends turned out to protest these actions and were fired upon by the Federal troops. In this event, which became known as the "Camp Jackson Massacre," 23 civilians were killed, including women and children, and 73 civilians were wounded. The indiscriminate fire of the Federal troops may best be illustrated by the fact that one bystander, fearing for his life, dove into a ditch to cover the body of his young son with his cloak, was future Union General William T. Sherman.



As a result of the Camp Jackson Massacre, the Missouri General Assembly met in overnight session and effected legislation establishing the Missouri State Guard, and gave other broad powers to Governor Claiborne Fox Jackson. A great many enlistments in the Missouri State Guard date from May 10 or 11, 1861, when word of the slaughter of civilians in St. Louis passed by telegraph to county courthouses all across the state of Missouri.

It is worthy to note that on May 6, 1861, only days before the Camp Jackson Massacre, citizens of Jefferson City gathered for a political rally at the main commercial intersection of High and Madison Streets in the capital city. So many citizens attended that the crowd completely filled the intersection, finally forced by its very numbers to move north along Madison Street to the bluff which is the present location of the Missouri Executive Mansion. Reaching the bluff, the citizens erected a "liberty pole" upon which they unfurled a flag which resembled the first national flag of the Confederacy. It had seven stars present in a configuration which clearly contemplated the addition of stars representing states yet to secede. Hearing of the rally, the Missouri General Assembly adjourned its session and joined citizens on Madison Street. Ladies of Jefferson City

families paraded on the balcony of the Bayse family mansion at the corner of Madison and Water Streets.

It was becoming clear that sufficient forces of the new Missouri State Guard could not be gathered quickly enough to defend Jefferson City from large numbers of Federal troops approaching from St. Louis. Consequently, the legislature and state officials, together with some 500 members of the Governor's Guard (Cole County units of the Missouri State Guard) removed all the persons and paraphernalia of state government from Jefferson City in the early weeks of June 1861.

On June 15, Federal troops arrived at Jefferson City in gun boats, led by the steamer *Iatan*. The "Secession Rag" (the old Missouri state flag) was taken from atop the Missouri State Capitol building and replaced with the Stars and Stripes. All the Federal troops were members of the Home Guard from St. Louis who had recently been federalized under order from General Nathaniel Lyon. All their orders were given in German.

From June 15, 1861, until well after the termination of hostilities in 1865, Jefferson City was under martial law. Three churches in the city were closed and their ministers deported because of assertions of disloyalty against those congregations by the occupation authorities.

Jefferson City was the home of three generals: Major General John Walker, Confederate States Army, who was son of the first state treasurer of Missouri; Major General Mosby Monroe Parsons, Confederate States Army, who was a Jefferson City lawyer and state senator, and whose father had been private secretary to Thomas Jefferson; and Brigadier General Thomas L. Price, United States Army, who was a conservative Unionist and who had been the first mayor of Jefferson City.

The most significant military activity around Jefferson City during the Civil War occurred in the first days of October 1864, when the Army of Missouri approached the city under the command of General Sterling Price. Many of the men in Price's army were from Cole County, and it was expected that a battle would take place for possession of the capital city. For unknown reasons, Price's army did not seek a general engagement, and instead moved west and north-west, eventually engaging in the battles of Westport and Mine Creek. This was the last significant effort by Confederate troops to wrench control of Missouri from Federal occupation.

Jefferson City was also the scene of several major veterans reunions following the war, most notably including a state-wide meeting of the United Confederate Veterans in 1882, the central event of which was a parade down High Street led by a seven-foot, four-inch tall Confederate veteran carrying the Stars and Stripes.