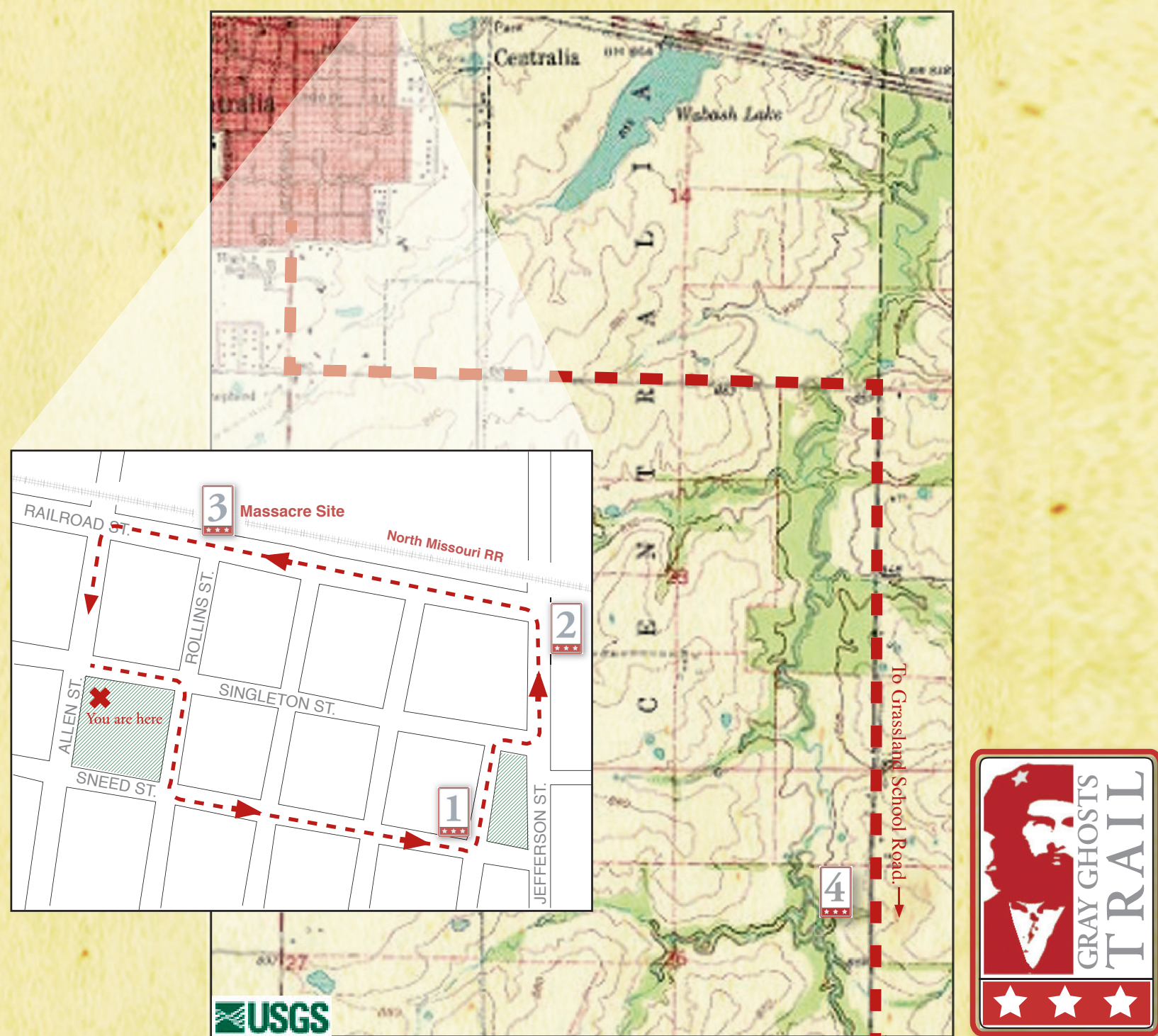


The Civil War in Centralia

A Driving Tour

To learn more about the Civil War events in and near Centralia, take our self-guided tour. Tour Stop 1 is the Centralia Historical Society Museum, which has a Civil War exhibit and more information about the battle and



Centralia history. Tour Stop 2 is the site of the mass burial of Union casualties at the Battle of Centralia, which occurred on the afternoon of September 27, 1864 several miles southeast of the town. Seventy-nine of the men of the 39th Missouri were interred here until 1871, when their remains and the monument that marked the site were removed to the National Cemetery in Jefferson City.

The interpretive panel and marker at Tour Stop 3 tells the story of the massacre of Union soldiers near the Centralia depot, which occurred on the morning of the battle.

After visiting the massacre site, return here. To reach the battlefield, return to South Jefferson Street (Route Z) and turn right. Drive .8 miles south on Z, then turn left on Gano Chance Road (Route JJ). This road will bend sharply to the right. Stay on the road for 1.25 miles after the road turns, where you will see the battlefield on your right. Anderson's band joined hundreds of other guerrillas who camped here during the night of September 26.

After leaving the battle site, continue south on the same road to Grassland School Road, and turn right. You will reach Route Z again in about 1.3 miles. Turn right to return to Centralia.

Missouri's CIVIL WAR

A violent encounter between Southern partisan cavalry and Union forces occurred in and near Centralia on September 27, 1864. The Southern forces were irregular Confederate partisan rangers under the overall command of William "Bloody Bill" Anderson, who had gathered a large force that camped at the Singleton farm 3 miles southeast of here. It was on the Singleton farm on the afternoon of September 27, 1864 that the Battle of Centralia occurred.

The events of September 27 bear a direct relationship to the siege and fall of Atlanta, in far-away Georgia. Before that city fell on September 2, 1864, the Confederate army determined to take the conflict north, and in the West Maj. General Sterling Price undertook a large-scale expedition into Missouri. The partisan rangers roving central Missouri were ordered to create diversions in North Missouri, as Price entered the state from Arkansas, and to attack the railroads here. Once Atlanta had been captured by the federals, some of Sherman's troops were furloughed. Twenty-three Union soldiers were among these, and on the morning of September 27, they boarded a train in St. Charles headed west on the North Missouri Railroad. The train would arrive here at 11:00 a.m.; The soldiers were taken from the train at the Centralia depot, and all but one shot to death.

Guerrilla warfare escalated all through the summer of 1864. Anderson led a small band that roamed this area from its base at Rocheport in western Boone County. On September 23, guerrillas struck a Union wagon train at Goslin's Lane, 7 miles northeast of Rocheport. The train

was destroyed, and captured teamsters and soldiers who escorted the train were summarily executed. The guerrillas dispersed, and near Rocheport one band was run down by the 9th Missouri Militia Cavalry, based at Fayette in Howard County. These Southern captives too were executed, and allegedly scalped. Anderson then set out to attack the Fayette garrison. Just before the attack, the infamous William Quantrill arrived on the scene and tried to take control of Anderson's band, but on September 24, 1864, against Quantrill's advice, Anderson attacked Fayette. This proved a disaster for the Southerners, who suffered 13 dead and over 30 wounded, against a handful of Union casualties. Anderson retreated northwest from Fayette, and over the next several days took his band, numbering approximately 100, east along the line of the North Missouri Railroad.

While Anderson moved east, several companies of the 39th Missouri Volunteer Infantry were posted on guard duty at Paris, Missouri, under the command of Major Andrew Vern Emen Johnston. These men of the 39th Missouri Volunteer Infantry had only been sworn into federal service for a few weeks. Although some of the Union troops had served in local home guard units, they were basically green troops. Most were operating as "mounted infantry," riding draft horses, and equipped with outmoded muzzle-loading rifles.

A.V.E. Johnston set out from Paris on September 26, 1864, in search of a guerrilla band rumored to be camped near Centralia. He would find them at the Singleton farm.



Learn more at www.mocivilwar.org



At Centralia, Bill Anderson commanded the largest body of men he ever lead - some 400 horsemen drawn from a number of guerrilla bands. Anderson had been a soldier in the State Guard early in the War, and a minor figure in the guerrilla ranks before 1864. From July to October, 1864, he conducted a reign of terror in central Missouri that made him the most infamous of all Southern partisans. He was killed near Richmond, Missouri less than a month after Centralia. The federal commander, Maj. A.V.E. Johnston, was briefly also a member of the Missouri State Guard, then an officer assigned to Union militia units in his native Northeast Missouri. Little is known of his service before Centralia. He was once accused of disloyalty to the Union cause, but gave his life for the cause in Centralia. He is buried in Monroe City, Missouri.

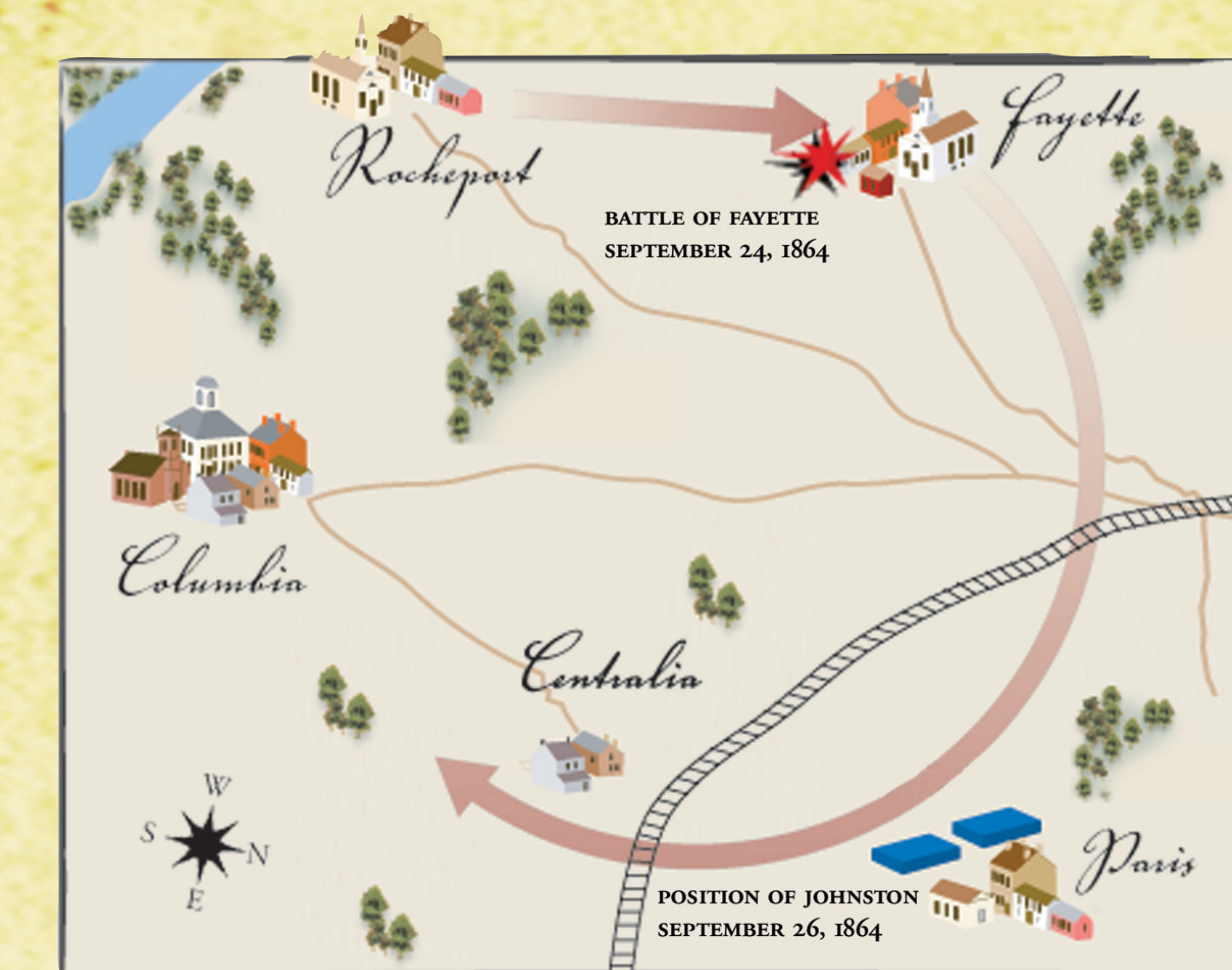
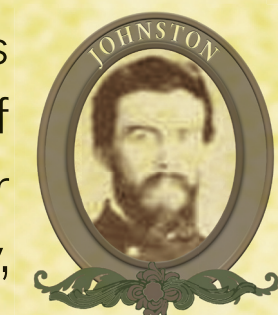


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Sources: Castel & Goodrich, Bloody Bill Anderson: The Short Savage Life of a Civil War Guerrilla (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 1988) T.J. Stiles, Jesse James: Last Rebel of the Civil War (New York: Knopf, 2002)

