



BUGLE CALL ECHOES



Special Edition, November 1998

San Joaquin Valley Civil War Round Table

Knowing in part may make a fine tale, but wisdom comes from seeing the whole.

In conjunction with the 1998 West Coast Civil War Conference, which this year is sponsored by the San Joaquin Valley Civil War Round Table, a discussion group convened in the spring of 1998 to study the Vicksburg Campaign. The following articles were an outcome of that study group. The round table also sponsored a Vicksburg Tour in May. A synopsis of that trip is also included in this newsletter.

INTRODUCTION TO THE FIRST VICKSBURG CAMPAIGN

by Barbara Moats

Vicksburg stood on a 200 foot bluff on the eastern bank of the Mississippi River, just downstream from where the river made a hairpin curve. In 1860 it was a bustling commercial center of 4,500 with strong economic ties to the North. A majority of the citizens opposed secession. Across the river, on the Louisiana shore, the ground was often inundated, and nearly impassable for an army. From the north, the Yazoo River blocked the landward approach. To the east and south, staunchly Confederate Mississippians inhabited the countryside.

After Admiral Farragut seized New Orleans in April 1862, the Confederates began fortifying Vicksburg, first with batteries below the town to command the river approach from the south. Later, they mounted guns above the town and along the river, making Vicksburg impregnable to an attack from the water and creating a long gauntlet past which boats found it dangerous to run.

By October 1862 the Federals had control of the river from its mouth upstream to Port Hudson, in Louisiana, and from the river's sources down to Vicksburg. Besides New Orleans, New Madrid and Island No. 10 had fallen and the Confederates had abandoned Ft. Pillow and Memphis. In the 1,000 mile stretch from the Gulf to the Ohio, only Vicksburg and Port Hudson were in Confederate hands. This 130-mile stretch enabled the Confederacy to maintain communications with the western third of their nation and draw reinforcements and supplies. It also prevented Federal traffic between the Northwest and New Orleans. Lincoln said, "The war can never be brought to a close until that key is in our pocket."

Grant had been working on plans for the capture of Vicksburg as early as two years before, when he was a newly minted Brigadier General headquartered at Ironton, Missouri, in the

summer of 1861. He himself began the strategic campaign that culminated in the fall of Vicksburg when he captured Forts Henry and Donelson in northwestern Tennessee in February of 1862. These victories pointed the way toward the opening of the Mississippi. Grant took command of the Department of the Tennessee on October 16, 1862. By November 4, he started out from the area of La Grange, in south-central Tennessee, with 40,000 troops with the intent of advancing south along the route of the Mississippi Central RR to the capital at Jackson. He established a base of supplies at Holly Springs and set off for Grenada.

As he moved he got persistent reports of a combined army-navy operation designed to break the river defenses by direct assault. He finally learned that this was to be an attempt by Major General John McClernand, a political general from Illinois in good standing with the administration.

McClernand had gone directly to Lincoln and Stanton in September and argued his case. Because his theories coincided with what they had been hearing about the disenchantment with the war, especially in the Northwest, they gave McClernand top-secret orders to go ahead. There was, however, an escape clause which stated that the operation was to be done in Grant's department and that Grant could at any time assume overall command. This intelligence caused Grant to change plans. He telegraphed Sherman on December 8th to take command of all the troops in Memphis, including those recruited by McClernand, and move them down the river, with the cooperation of the gunboat fleet, to attack a few miles above Vicksburg. Pemberton would be unable to meet both threats at once.

Cavalry raids by Forrest and Van Dorn brought Grant's operations to a standstill and caused him to entirely change his plans. Because Sherman did not receive word of this change in plans in time, his troops attacked at Chickasaw Bluffs on December 29th and were decisively repulsed, losing more than

1700 men. The position proved to be too strong to storm and Pemberton was able to concentrate entirely on Sherman.

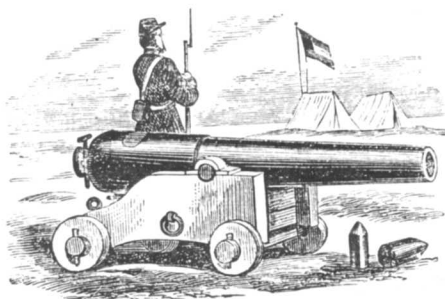
The day Sherman left Memphis--December 20--was the same day Van Dorn captured the Union supply depot at Holly Springs, capturing 1500 Federals and upwards of a million and a half dollars' worth of military supplies. On the 19th Forrest struck the railroad near Jackson, Tennessee, ripping up over sixty miles of track, destroying Federal supplies and pulling down telegraph lines as well. Grant retraced his steps to La Grange, Tennessee, convinced that it was futile trying to maintain supply and communication lines along the railroad or coordinate troop movements with a force on the other side of the river. Sherman withdrew to the Mississippi, where he came under the command of General McClernand. With Porter they proceeded up the Arkansas River on January 4th (an unauthorized expedition) and captured Ft. Hindman, AKA Arkansas Post.

At the end of the month, on 29 January, Grant traveled down river to Young's Point, Louisiana, just below Milliken's Bend, and took command of all the troops, numbering between 40,000 and 50,000. Situated above Vicksburg, Grant and the Army of the Tennessee were in a very difficult position, i.e., militarily--above Vicksburg, Pemberton had manned entrenchments along the Yazoo Bluffs. Beyond that the Yazoo Delta ran for 200 miles, cut by rivers, creeks and bayous, impossible for an army to cross with its guns and supplies. To the south, the Louisiana shore of the Mississippi was low, swampy and intersected by many streams. If they did go that way, they'd need many transports and there didn't seem to be a good way to get them past the Vicksburg batteries.

Politically, going back to Memphis was out of the question. It would be an admission of defeat. Furthermore, Grant never believed in going back. Additionally, another defeat would be one too many for the Northern public to swallow after the bad news from Fredericksburg and Murfreesboro.

Vicksburg I, the Overland Campaign, had ended in failure. At this point, in January 1863, it appeared that Grant was checkmated!

Adapted from: *Struggle for Vicksburg* by Stephen E. Ambrose, 1994 Edition



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THE BAYOU PROJECTS AND PORTER'S BOMBARDMENT OF GRAND GULF

by Ken Moats

December 3, 1862

General Grant asked General Halleck for permission to move south from Memphis, Tennessee, to Helena, Arkansas, in order to get south of the Yazoo River and secure Vicksburg, Mississippi.

December 5, 1862

Halleck ordered Grant to send 25,000 troops down the Mississippi River for the Vicksburg expedition. Grant sent Sherman in order to get him in command. General McClernand was to arrive soon and he outranked Sherman. Meanwhile he (Grant) was advancing south along the Mississippi Central Railroad toward Grenada after having established a base of supplies at Holly Springs. When McClernand did arrive, he was not a little surprised to find his troops had already departed with Sherman.

December 18, 1862

While near Oxford, Mississippi, Grant received orders to reform his forces into four army corps with McClernand in charge of the corps moving down the Mississippi River. This meant that McClernand would be the senior commander of the operation.

December 20, 1862

After the Confederate capture of the supply base at Holly Springs, Grant decided to abandon the overland campaign and place the bulk of his force down the Mississippi. (Intelligence indicated that General Pemberton was falling back toward Vicksburg.) After the fall of Holly Springs, Grant sent out foraging parties and was pleasantly surprised at the amount of food and forage available.

December 27, 1862

Sherman moved up the Yazoo River to Chickasaw Bluffs, northeast of Vicksburg. Much of the area was flooded and the bluffs were well defended by Pemberton's men. With communications cut, Grant was unable to stop the attack at Chickasaw Bluffs and Sherman was soundly repulsed.

January 17, 1863

Grant visited McClernand at Napoleon, Louisiana. Everywhere he went he found evidence of McClernand's lack of fitness for command. So Grant assumed command of the expedition on 29 January.

January 20, 1863

McClelland's corps was ordered south to Young's Point just below Milliken's Bend on the Mississippi, where he established his headquarters.

1862-1863, Wintering Over

The winter was noted for much rain and high water. Levees provided the only dry ground for the troops. This high water would restrict movement until March or April.

January 30, 1863

Grant ordered General McPherson at Lake Providence to cut the levy at that point. If successful in opening a channel for navigation by this route, it would carry the troops to the mouth of the Red River, south of Vicksburg. The route taken would be Bayou Baxter to Bayou Macon to the Tensas River, then to the Washita, and then the Red River--altogether about 472 miles of bayous and small rivers. Colonel Wilson of Grant's staff was sent north to open a route through Moon Lake to the Yazoo Pass.

February 2, 1863

The levy at Moon Lake was cut. This route took them down the Coldwater River to the Tallahatchie, the Yalobusha, the Yazoo and on down to the bluffs northeast of Vicksburg. The expedition got as far as Greenwood, where Ft. Pemberton was located on the Yazoo.

April 1863

Flood waters started to recede. River roads started to emerge above the water. Grant moved troops towards Hard Times, Louisiana.

April 14, 1863

Admiral Porter attempted the Steel's Bayou route. Steel's Bayou connects with Black Bayou, which connects with Deer Creek, Deer Creek with Rolling Fork, Rolling Fork with the Big Sunflower River, and the Big Sunflower with the Yazoo. Porter explored this route to Deer Creek. The next day, accompanied by Sherman, he started with five gunboats and four mortarboats. He got well ahead of his infantry protection and encountered rebel sharpshooters. Sherman paddled back by canoe to bring troops forward to relieve the stranded, embattled admiral.

Grant held little hope for these bayou and river attempts; however, he was ready to capitalize on any one that might get through. He was happy to keep the troops busy.

April 27, 1863

McClelland's entire corps was at Hard Times. Grant made plans to cross the Mississippi at Grand Gulf on 29 April.

April 29, 1863

At 8:00 PM Admiral Porter attacked the batteries at Grand Gulf with little effect. The Confederate artillery was well positioned with excellent fortifications. After five hours of bombardment, the attack was called off. Grant requested that Porter run the batteries with the transports that night so that he would be south of Grand Gulf. That night (29-30 April) Porter slipped his fleet, plus transports, downriver past the guns at Grand Gulf. The transports anchored south of Grand Gulf about five miles from Hard Times. McClelland's corps moved overland from Hard Times to the embarkation point. A Negro from the Mississippi state side was taken for information. He informed Grant that Bruinsburg was a good landing site. When the sun came up, the rebels could see many transports laden with boys in blue heading downstream. The crossing so long worked for was in progress!

April 30, 1863

McClelland's troops were put ashore, unopposed, at Bruinsburg. In one of Grant's famous pronouncements, he said, "I felt a degree of relief scarcely ever equaled since. ... I was on dry ground on the same side of the river with the enemy. All the campaigns, labors, hardships and exposures that had been made and endured were for the accomplishment of this one object."

GRANT'S LANDING AT BRUINSBURG

by Mike Carter

After victories at Forts Henry and Donelson, Federal General Ulysses S. Grant set his sights confidently on the Confederate citadel at Vicksburg. The 1862 campaign for Vicksburg, however, did not go as well as Grant's previous successes. The Union supply base at Holly Springs, Mississippi, was destroyed by Earl Van Dorn's cavalry and Sherman met with a bloody repulse at Chickasaw Bluffs, just north of Vicksburg.

Grant spent the remainder of 1862 and the early winter months of 1863 conducting a number of attempts to assault Vicksburg by water. These attempts have been collectively termed the "bayou experiments." While the experiments might have kept Grant's army busy and its morale up during the dark winter months, they were not successful and were consequently viewed by critical eyes in Washington as abject failures. Grant was paying the price for these failures in a hostile Northern press.

To further complicate matters, civilian morale in the North was reeling under the continuing misfortune of the Union armies in the field. The closest the Union had come to a victory was back in September of 1862 on the bloody fields of Sharpsburg,

Maryland. Since that time, the Federals had suffered a catastrophic defeat at Fredericksburg, Virginia, and sustained severe casualties at Murfreesboro, Tennessee, plus the aforementioned setback at Chickasaw Bluffs.

With the coming of spring 1863, Grant knew he was facing a critical point in his military career. In order to restore confidence in the Northern public, Vicksburg must fall, and in its taking, Grant's career just might be saved.

Grant pondered the situation. His attempts to take Vicksburg from the north had failed miserably, and the futile attempts during the winter to find an attack route by water rendered that idea unworkable. The only option left was to run the guns of Vicksburg, down the Mississippi, and land his forces on the east bank of the river. Grant would then advance on the city fortress from the south. The plan was audacious at best, and if he was going to take the gamble, Grant was going to do it with enough manpower to guarantee his best chances for success. Therefore, Grant opted to make the planned movement with three corps under his direct command.

To Grant's relief, the effort to run the defenses of Vicksburg was successful, and he set his sights on Grand Gulf as the potential landing point. Grand Gulf, however, was strongly defended by the Confederates. Grant ordered the Union gunboats to open fire on the river bastion and they were answered in kind by the strong Southern shore batteries. After five hours of trading fire with the Confederates, the Union fleet disengaged.

The Federal commander had not expected a repulse at Grand Gulf and now Grant had to re-think his options. The decision was made to move still further south. Grant ordered John McClelland's XIII corps, which was to spearhead the Union attack, to debark across a point of land to DeShroon's plantation, about 4 miles down stream. The troops would then board transports and attempt the passage of Grand Gulf with the support of the Union gunboats and under the cover of darkness. Grant's plan worked perfectly and in the re-engagement of artillery fire from the Union flotilla and the Confederate batteries, the Federals lost but one man.

Now south of the Grand Gulf fortress, Grant must look for yet another place to land his army. In selecting a landing site, the most important consideration would be the presence of adequate dry land. With the area laced by bayous and side streams, finding the desired location was not an easy task.

Rodney was selected as the most practical site, but Rodney was another twelve miles down stream, further south. By

moving to Rodney, the march back to Vicksburg would only be lengthened and would afford the Confederates additional time to improve their defenses and would increase the possibility of Rebel reinforcements arriving.

Grant faced the necessity of changing his strategy yet again, but recognized that local knowledge was needed to assist him in this confused mire of bayous and swamps. He ordered a detachment east across the river and they soon returned with a slave from the area. The slave had not been a willing cooperator. In fact, he had to be taken by force, but once in the presence of Grant, he offered the small village of Bruinsburg as a place with dry ground enough to accommodate a landing.

Bruinsburg was six miles below DeShroon's, but was only half the distance to Rodney. There was adequate dry land and there was a good road leading to Grand Gulf by way of Port Gibson, which lay ten miles inland. Bruinsburg it would be!

By midmorning, April 30, 1863, all four divisions of John McClelland's XIII corps and one division of James McPherson's corps were ashore at Bruinsburg. The landing had been unopposed and the Union forces were advancing toward Port Gibson.

THE BATTLE OF PORT GIBSON

by Mike Carter

When Union General Ulysses S. Grant laid the plans for his daring scheme to run the guns of Vicksburg and approach the city by ground from the south, he hedged his bet with two diversionary maneuvers designed to distract the Confederate commander, Lieutenant General John C. Pemberton. First, Grant dispatched Colonel Benjamin Grierson on a cavalry raid from LaGrange, Tennessee, south through the heart of Mississippi to Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Next he ordered William T. Sherman to demonstrate against Chickasaw Bluffs north of Vicksburg.

With Sherman's presence in front of the city, Pemberton felt compelled to keep his defenses at full strength. At the same time, Grierson's activities demanded attention. Pemberton decided to address the Federal cavalry raid with forces from Grand Gulf. Pemberton also decided to reinforce the Vicksburg defenses with additional troops from Grand Gulf, further weakening the Confederate position at Grant's proposed landing point. Grant's carefully planned diversions accomplished their desired effects and continued the remarkable string of successes in his grand strategy to capture Vicksburg.

After the unopposed landing at Bruinsburg on April 30, 1863, the Union forces wasted little time advancing up the road to Port Gibson. Port Gibson lay just 10 miles inland and although it was the immediate target of the Yankee army, the Confederate garrison and supply depot under the command of Brigadier General John S. Bowen was the ultimate goal.

General Bowen was a West Point graduate and classmate of opposing Union General James B. McPherson. Bowen was also an intimate of Ulysses Grant, having been his neighbor in St. Louis before the war. After heeding Pemberton's orders to reinforce Vicksburg and to send a portion of his command to keep an eye on Grierson's movements, Bowen moved out of Grand Gulf to oppose his pre-war friends and the Union threat to Port Gibson with 5,500 officers and men. He deployed his small force in the woods west of Port Gibson and waited for the 20,000 oncoming Yankees.

The battle of Port Gibson opened shortly after sunrise on May 1, 1863. At a fork in the road approaching the town, Grant sent the division of General Peter Osterhaus of McClellan's XIII Corps to the left on the Bruinsburg Road as a diversion. The other three divisions moved to the right on the Rodney Road and were to deliver the main attack.

By mid-morning, the battle was fully developed. Both of McClellan's columns were engaged and neither of them were doing well. The Confederates were concealed in the woods and firing from behind breastworks, thus neutralizing to a great extent the Federal's superior numbers. Northern artillery was brought up and began pounding the Southern positions. The 1st Indiana Battery alone counted 1,050 rounds fired.

General Bowen mustered the 6th Mississippi and the 23rd Alabama and led them in a charge, capturing a Federal battery. Finding themselves in an exposed position far in front of their lines, Bowen retired. Union General Alvin Harvey led the 34th Indiana and the 56th Ohio against a Virginia battery. The Confederate battery held until two companies of the 11th Indiana flanked their position capturing them, their guns, the flag of the 15th Arkansas and 220 prisoners. General Bowen again demonstrated great personal courage by leading the 3rd and 5th Missouri in a counterattack against General Harvey's breakthrough. The breach in the Southern lines was repaired and for a short time, Bowen threatened to turn the Union right flank. Heavy Federal reinforcements arrived to secure the position and end the Confederate threat.

Three miles north, along the Bruinsburg Road, the fighting was just as fierce. Osterhaus advanced and found his way blocked

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by an Alabama brigade under the command of General Ed Tracy. Early in the action, Tracy fell, killed by a minie ball through the chest. Command devolved on Colonel Isham Garrot. Garrot held on, giving ground stubbornly. Late in the afternoon, General Martin Greene's brigade moved from the Confederate left, behind the lines, to offer assistance to Garrot's hard pressed men.

About 5:30 p.m. General Bowen assessed his situation. He found himself pressured on both flanks. Ammunition was running low and McPherson's XVII Corps was now on the field, further lengthening the odds against him. Bowen disengaged and withdrew in good order into Port Gibson.

General Bowen and his stubborn little army had fought magnificently against overwhelming odds. He had inflicted 875 casualties on the Union forces, and though Confederate casualties were about equal (832), proportionately Bowen had lost 1/3 of his command.

In the face of increasing Union numbers, Bowen evacuated Port Gibson that night and moved across Bayou Pierre to await reinforcements from Pemberton. With Port Gibson abandoned, Grand Gulf became untenable and was evacuated on May 7, 1863. Grant's beachhead was now secure and the first obstacle in his overland approach to Vicksburg secured.

THE BATTLES FOR RAYMOND AND JACKSON -- by Mike Carter

In the late spring and early summer of 1863, Lt. General John C. Pemberton, commander of the Confederate forces at Vicksburg, found himself in the most unenviable of positions. Caught smack-dab in the middle of the titanic struggle of egos between Confederate President Jefferson Davis and General Joseph E. Johnston, Pemberton was between the proverbial rock and a hard place.

The feud between Davis and Johnston started early in the war over the question of Johnston's seniority as a general officer. Johnston had obtained the staff rank of brigadier general in the old army and thus felt he should be the highest ranking general officer in the Confederate military. Instead he found himself ranked fourth behind Samuel Cooper, Albert Sidney Johnston, and Robert E. Lee. During the winter of 1861-1862, Johnston and Davis carried on a caustic debate over the matter through correspondence. What started as a personal disagreement was soon politicized, placing the antagonists at opposite ends of the Confederate command spectrum. This feud would escalate from a war of words to a war of wills that lasted far beyond Appomattox. Now in the crucial months of May and

June of 1863, Vicksburg and General Pemberton became the taffy pulled from both sides by the mutual dislike of Davis and Johnston.

President Davis felt that Vicksburg should be held at all costs. General Johnston, overall commander of Confederate forces in Tennessee and Mississippi and Pemberton's immediate military superior, thought saving the army at Vicksburg was paramount. Johnston reasoned that any territory given up could be retaken provided there was sufficient manpower available.

Pemberton was incredulous. Whether he was to meet Grant in the open field or defend Vicksburg from the city's defenses, he needed reinforcements. Repeatedly Pemberton appealed to Johnston, who was headquartered in Tennessee, for additional troops. Johnston committed nothing but urged Pemberton to unite all his available forces to meet Grant. However, in almost blatant disregard for Johnston's authority, Davis promised Pemberton reinforcements from Alabama and South Carolina.

In the face of the Confederate high command's bickering, Grant remained focused. The engagement at Port Gibson on May 1, 1863, though spiritedly led by Confederate General John Bowen, served only to delay the Union advance. On May 7th the Confederate position at Grand Gulf became untenable and was evacuated. Grant now disengaged William Sherman's forces from Haines Bluff north of Vicksburg and united his army south of the river stronghold.

With Sherman's threat from the north gone and President Davis' promise of reinforcements, Pemberton felt a degree of confidence. He reasoned the further north Grant moved from Grand Gulf towards Vicksburg, the more vulnerable the Union army would become. Properly reinforced, Pemberton could strike at the Federal's flank and rear. Further, Pemberton reasoned that Grant would march straight for Vicksburg and was entrenching along the Big Black River to meet the challenge.

From the Union side of the chess board, Grant made a feint toward Vicksburg as if to feed Pemberton's suppositions. Grant's true goal was to prevent a concentration of Confederate forces by interposing his army between the rebels defending Vicksburg and those occupying Jackson.

Pemberton meanwhile ordered Texan John Gregg's 2,500-man brigade up from Port Hudson, Louisiana. Gregg moved through Jackson and 15 miles west to Raymond. If, as Pemberton reasoned, Grant was moving directly on Vicksburg, Gregg would be in a perfect position to strike the Federal right

flank and rear just as planned. John C. Pemberton, however, failed in the most basic of military axioms. He had made no effort to scout Grant's movements and had no idea that the railhead at Jackson was the immediate Federal objective.

Leading Grant's advance on May 12th was James B. McPherson's 10,000-man XVII Corps. Directly in his path was the 2,500-man brigade of John Gregg. General Gregg had orders to pull back to Jackson if he encountered a superior Union force. He had also received erroneous information that McPherson's column was a small force making a feint toward Jackson. Based on this information, Gregg launched an attack on the Federal column about noon, opening the battle of Raymond.

Fourteen Mile Creek flowed roughly east and west, separating the opposing forces. General Gregg sent the 7th Texas and 3rd Tennessee regiments across the creek to pin the Union forces in place. Four additional regiments were ordered to ford the creek to the east and hit McPherson's right flank. Gregg's bold tactics met with success initially. McPherson's lead brigade was halted. As Union troops came up, the Confederates attacked, slamming into the 23rd Indiana. Combat became hand to hand and the Federals soon broke for the rear. Panic spread along the Union line and it looked as if the Federal troops might crumble until Major General John Logan appeared.

John Logan commanded McPherson's 3rd Division and had a reputation as a hard fighter. He wore his black hair shoulder length and his big mustache and swarthy complexion earned him the sobriquet of "Black Jack." Logan launched a counterattack and the superior Union numbers began to tell. The Confederates resisted fiercely but were eventually pushed back across Fourteen Mile Creek. Action was close along the banks of the creek and one report tells of "rifles of the opposing lines crossing while firing." Many of the wounded suffered powder burns from weapons fired at point blank range.

By 2 p.m. Confederate forces were retreating toward Raymond. The Federals suffered 443 casualties; the Confederates 514--345 of them in the 7th Texas and the 3rd Tennessee regiments. Gregg at last was aware of the Union numbers and abandoned Raymond, headed toward Jackson. About 5 miles out of Raymond, Gregg met General W. H. T. Walker at the head of 1,000 reinforcements from South Carolina. Amazingly, Gregg turned about and established a defensive line to meet the Federals. McPherson, however, chose to stop in Raymond and rest his men, ending the action.

Raymond was but a stepping stone on the way to Jackson. Grant's overall strategy to take Vicksburg identified Jackson as

a key position. Not only was Jackson the state capital of Mississippi, it was a vital railroad junction connecting Vicksburg to the Confederate eastern seaboard and the heartland of the Deep South.

The day after the action at Raymond, May 13, 1863, General Joseph Johnston arrived in Jackson to take overall command of the situation in and around Vicksburg. For weeks President Davis had urged Johnston to move his headquarters to Mississippi so he could be nearer the action. Johnston complained of illness due to his wound received at Seven Pines nearly a year earlier as an impediment to Davis' suggestion. Finally, in the face of an ultimatum from the President, Johnston went to Mississippi. He arrived in time to find Gregg's battered brigade retreating from Raymond. A quick assessment of the situation found Pemberton at Edward's Station, west of Jackson, with 20,000 men and Grant's forces between him and the state capital. Though reinforcements were arriving by the hour from Port Hudson, Tennessee, and South Carolina that would soon give Johnston an army 12,000 strong, the Southern commander, as if to thumb his nose at President Davis, wired Richmond that he arrived too late to assist in any way; and on the morning of May 14th began withdrawing north, away from Jackson.

Johnston left behind two brigades and a regiment of dismounted cavalry under the command of the beleaguered General John Gregg to cover his withdrawal. Gregg placed W. H. T. Walker and Colonel Peyton Colquitt astride the Clinton Road, which entered Jackson from the northwest. To the 3rd Kentucky Mounted Infantry and a handful of sharpshooters fell the responsibility to defend the southwest approaches to the city.

May 14th brought with it a heavy rain. McPherson slogged his way along the Clinton Road, already under a foot of water. About noon the Union forces encountered the brigades of Walker and Colquitt and came under heavy Confederate artillery fire. The well directed fire from the Southern batteries made it difficult for McPherson to deploy his men for an attack. With preparations finally made, the already heavy rain increased in its ferocity, further delaying any action on McPherson's part.

The Confederates used the delay to throw up entrenchments of a sort on the outskirts of town and hunkered down behind them to await the Federal attack. When McPherson was able to move forward, he found the Southerners determined to hold their positions. Union division commander Marcellus Crocker called for reinforcements and ordered a bayonet charge. The action became desperate as the 24th South Carolina and the

10th Missouri (Federal) engaged in hand-to-hand fighting. As with the actions at Port Gibson and Raymond, the Confederates fought stubbornly, but the superior numbers of Northern troops finally forced the rebels to give way.

At the southwest approach to Jackson, General Sherman had little trouble brushing away the 3rd Kentucky. Jackson was now in Grant's hands and Vicksburg lay only 30 miles to the west.

The battle for Jackson was little more than a rear guard action since Johnston was withdrawing from the city, but the fighting, though short in duration, was intense. The Federals suffered 300 casualties and the Confederates, depending on which report one reads, lost between 200 and just less than 400 men.

GRIERSON'S RAID

by Bill Head

In the fall of 1862, General U. S. Grant led his army south toward Vicksburg along the Mississippi Central Railroad. He established a major supply depot at Holly Springs. Early on December 20, Confederate General Earl Van Dorn swept into Holly Springs, surprised the Federals, and destroyed their supply base.

Grant realized he could not protect his lines of communication and supply over such a vast area of enemy territory. Therefore, he moved his command to the Mississippi River to gain the security of the US Navy gunboats. But he discovered after Van Dorn's raid at Holly Station that he could temporarily "live off the land"--knowledge that would change the direction of his strategy.

After several attempts to take Vicksburg from the river, Grant bypassed the city and crossed the river at Bruinsburg on April 30, 1863.

Prior to the river crossing, Grant realized that he must attempt to lure Nathan Bedford Forrest's cavalry away from the landing site. He ordered Colonel Abel Streight to bring his mounted brigade into eastern Alabama. From Corinth he sent 5,000 infantrymen along the Tennessee River toward Tuscumbia. From La Grange, Union General William Sooy Smith was moving 1,500 infantrymen by rail to Coldwater, with orders to engage Chalmers' flank along the Tallahatchie River.

But of immediate importance was the cavalry command of Confederate Colonel Wirt Adams, stationed at Port Gibson. Adams was attached to Bowen's command and he would pose a direct threat to any Union landing.

Therefore, early in the morning of April 17, 1863, General Grant ordered Colonel Benjamin H. Grierson to take his volunteer brigade of Union cavalrymen south from their encampment at La Grange, Tennessee, just above the Mississippi border. Sixteen days, 600 miles, and a number of skirmishes later, the Sixth and Seventh Illinois Cavalry regiments entered Baton Rouge in triumph, having covered the entire length of the state of Mississippi.

Such a bold cavalry thrust deep into Confederate territory had never been attempted before. Colonel Grierson was on his own: he was simply told to harass the Confederates--thus diverting their attention from Grant, who was poised for an attack on Vicksburg--and to sever the Vicksburg railroad.

How he accomplished these objectives is remarkable: the long and grueling marches; the consternation of the Confederate commanders, whose intelligence reports were thrown off time and again by Grierson's bluffs and tricks of his advance scouts, the "Butternut Guerrillas;" the daring attack of the Vicksburg railroad; the parade into Baton Rouge, with 300 fleeing slaves bringing up the rear.

Unlike so many of the dashing cavalry adventures of the war, this expedition really meant something. Grierson's raid was a real contribution to the Civil War.



THE BATTLE OF CHAMPION HILL

by Ron Vaughan

I have been interested in the Vicksburg campaign since my college days, when I poured through the "Official Records" instead of studying for exams! The battle of Champion Hill was the pivotal battle of the Vicksburg campaign, and it brings into sharp focus the differences between the opposing commanders--Grant and Pemberton. I used to have sympathy for Pemberton because of his dilemma with the conflicting orders of President Davis to hold Vicksburg at all costs; and General Johnston's desire to concentrate forces. However, a reading of Ed Bearss' book on the campaign opened my eyes. His three volumes have more information and detail than any other source.

On May 13, 1863, Pemberton had left 10,000 men to defend Vicksburg and concentrated 23,000 on the Big Black River. He planned to defend the Big Black, but considered attacking the Yanks in the rear if Grant advanced on Jackson. Some historians say that Pemberton had no cavalry, but actually he had two regiments. Pemberton received information confirming that Grant was moving on Jackson, but he did nothing.

On May 14, Pemberton received a message from Johnston ordering an attack on Grant's four (actually two) divisions at Clinton. But Pemberton became pessimistic, thinking that there were 20,000 Union troops at Clinton. He called a council of war. The majority of officers favored Johnston's plan. But General Loring proposed cutting Grant's line of communications (which did not exist) at Dillon, destroy Smith's division, and thereby diverting attention from Jackson. Since Pemberton thought the Clinton attack would be "suicide," he decided to adopt Loring's plan to appease the fire-eating officers that were eager for an advance. This decision is amazing since HE DISAPPROVED of it, only a MINORITY SUPPORTED it, and it was CONTRARY TO ORDERS of his SUPERIOR OFFICER! At 8:30 that night, Johnston received a dispatch from Pemberton which outlined his plan. Johnston saw "red!" He immediately dispatched a message reiterating his order for a concentration at Clinton.

Meanwhile, a spy brought Grant a copy of Johnston's May 13 orders. Grant reacted immediately. Early on the 15th (4 a.m.), Grant had his troops moving on the Jackson, Middle and Raymond roads, converging on Edwards. By nightfall he had seven divisions along a line from Bolton to Raymond.

On the 15th Pemberton also ordered an "early" 8 a.m. march, but due to blundering, there were insufficient rations and ammunition. This is an inconceivable oversight, since

Pemberton had been planning operations in the area since the 7th. Railroad trains brought up the necessary supplies, and finally at 1 p.m. the march began. Adams' cavalry was in the van, followed by the divisions of Loring, Bowen and Stevenson, with the large wagon train bringing up the rear. The advance progressed on the Raymond Road for two miles to Baker's Creek, where they found the creek too swollen to ford. Nobody had thought to go ahead and check the route! Finally, at 4 p.m. Loring suggested the army detour north to the Jackson Road Bridge, go east to Champion Hill, then south on Ratliff Road to get back on the Raymond Road. By dusk Loring had reached the Raymond Road but Stevenson's troops did not arrive at Champion Hill until ten hours later and the wagons did not arrive until dawn.

So we see that Grant's men were not fatigued because they had started early and stopped early, while most of the Confederates would go into battle with little rest. Another problem was that Pemberton had little idea of the whereabouts of the 29 to 35,000 Union troops, but Grant had received a report from some railroad men that there were 25,000 (actually 23,000) Confederates at Champion Hill.

On the 15th, Grant ordered his corps commanders to "advance cautiously" along the three roads, with cavalry in the van and skirmishers on the flanks, to prevent an ambush. Meanwhile, Pemberton had received Johnston's second order to concentrate north of the RR. He had rejected his orders, wasted time, marched in the opposite direction, but now he decides to obey! He orders a reverse march to Edwards and the Brownsville Road. The problem with this was that there are 400 wagons with tired (and no doubt cross) teamsters at the head of the column. By the time the wagons got clear of the road, the Union army appeared, and it was too late to march as planned. McClelland's troops made contact first on the Raymond and Middle Roads but McClelland takes to heart Grant's orders for caution and does not press an attack. However, his troops do serve to pin down the Confederates and divert attention.

Stevenson had not put out pickets on the Jackson Road so when the Yanks appear he has to deploy quickly on Champion Hill. Hovey's Division arrived at the Champion house at 9:45 a.m. and the "Fighting Hoosier" wanted to attack immediately but Grant ordered him to wait for McPherson's men. By 10:30 Logan's Division had arrived and deployed. An Ohio boy asked Logan, "Shall we not unsling our knapsacks?" Logan replied, "No--damn them, you can whip them with your knapsacks on!" Logan and Hovey attacked with 10,000 men vs. Stevenson's 6 or 7,000 men spread in a thin line with no reserves. At first the Union attack stalled due to the rough

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terrain more than enemy fire. But Logan sent in his reserve brigade to outflank Stevenson, which forced him to stretch his line further. Finally by 1:30 the thin Confederate line was punctured and routed, with 16 cannon captured on the hill.

Meanwhile, Pemberton had ordered Loring and Bowen to attack to the east, but they were so contemptuous of Pemberton that they postponed the attack. This was a wise decision. Pemberton procrastinated until 1 o'clock, when he decided to reinforce Stevenson. He ordered Bowen and Stevenson to march north, but they refused due to the enemy to their front. Finally, he sent a "mandatory" order and Bowen's men marched north to Champion Hill. Ladies at the Robert's house sang Dixie and cheered the men as they marched past.

Bowen's Missouri and Arkansas men were the best fighters in the army. At 2:30 they attacked with a wild rebel yell! Some of Stevenson's broken troops rallied, "as if by magic," and joined the advance. Bowen's men smashed through the Union line, recaptured the lost artillery and threatened to capture the Union supply train. A massed battery of 16 guns and Cocker's Division finally stopped the Confederate onslaught. Bowen's men were slowly pushed back.

To the south, McClelland's troops were still advancing cautiously, so Pemberton once again ordered Loring to move north, but Loring ridiculed the officer from Pemberton's staff, and declined to obey. Finally, a second aid explained to Loring the urgency of the situation, and Loring obeyed--but it was too late. All Loring could do was to cover the retreat. The Union had cut the Jackson Road so Pemberton had to retreat by the Raymond Road (the ford was now passable). Soon, Yankees advancing on the west side of Baker's Creek cut off Loring, forcing him to retreat away from Vicksburg.

The Confederate records are incomplete, but Pemberton reported the loss of 381 killed, 1,018 wounded, 2,441 missing, 27 cannon lost, plus the separation of Loring's Division. Grant lost 410 killed, 1,844 wounded, and 187 missing. Instead of holding the line of the Big Black, Pemberton's demoralized army retreated to Vicksburg and were shut up there. General JFC Fuller stated that Champion Hill should be considered one of the decisive battles of the war, because it made the fall of Vicksburg inevitable and doomed Richmond. While the latter seems an extreme statement, we must reflect that if Grant's Vicksburg campaign had failed, he certainly would never have been promoted to command the armies that eventually captured the Confederate capital.



THE SIEGE OF VICKSBURG

by Carol Berry

"The Yankees are coming!" was a cry heard in Vicksburg, Mississippi, in mid-May 1863. Confederate forces had retreated to the outskirts of the city and were preparing to meet the enemy. Writing in her diary on the 18th of that month, Emma Balfour penned, "From 12 o'clock until late in the night the streets and roads were jammed with wagons, cannons, horses, men, mules, stock, sheep, everything you can imagine that appertains to an army--being brought hurriedly within the entrenchment. Nothing like order prevailed..."

The Union army, after two attempts to take the town by assault, settled in for siege and shelling. Daily the shells rained on the town and its inhabitants. It was an almost constant bombardment, stopping only three times a day--when the troops had their meals. "There is one missile," wrote one of the women in the town, "were I a soldier, that would totally put me to rout--and that is a shrapnel shell...how fearful the noise they make--a wild scream." Colonel Ephraim Anderson of the 1st Missouri described the shelling at night as a "grand and beautiful display of fireworks."

Grand or not, the inhabitants of Vicksburg began digging caves in the hillsides in an effort to protect themselves from the missiles. One cave had "...four entrances, dug in the form of arched hallways, coming to a common center, at which point was dug a room which was curtained off." It was in this cave that close to 200 people lived, mostly women and children. Another Vicksburger recalled that the events which led people to live in caves abolished the unwritten law of class. "...families of planters, overseers, slave-dealers, trades-people and professional men dwelt side by side." Many of the caves had carpeted or newspapered walls, planked floors, and complete kitchen areas. A new industry sprang up in the town: cave digging, done for a cost of between \$35 to \$50. When a family abandoned their cave dwelling, they would often sell it to someone else.

Food supplies soon became an issue since the city was closed to all manner of outside traffic, which meant no shipments were coming into the city. As the siege continued, the cost of staples skyrocketed. Flour sold at \$1,000 per barrel, meal at \$140 a bushel, molasses at \$10 a gallon, beef \$2.50 a pound. Mule meat and rats began appearing for sale in the markets when beef was no longer available. Despite the dearth of provisions, however, "the prices charged for what was there were such as to make a man wonder whether the sellers had the slightest touch of pity in them. Shut up as they were in our lines, with a knowledge that at any moment one of the hundreds of shells

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falling around them might end their existence, their thirst for money remained unabated," noted Alexander Abrams, a reporter for the Vicksburg Whig.

"The women...did not all leave the city before the bombardment began," commented Sgt. Osborn Oldroyd of the 20th Ohio Infantry, "and I suppose they have determined to brave it out. Their sacrifices and privations are worthy of a better cause, and were they but on our side, how we would worship them."

William Minard, a Federal naval officer on the *Black Hawk*, complained, "The damn Rebs are in it and may hold it for six weeks to come. It can't be taken by storm. The only way is to just set right down and starve them out. I saw in the papers that they get their supplies by means of an immense fleet of dugouts. Now that is all damn humbug! because I know better."

As the days continued and the food supplies dwindled and the bombs fell, the city became one vast hospital. Hopelessness began to set in. The Confederates continued to look for relief from Joseph Johnston, which never came. Said Chaplain Foster of the 35th Mississippi Infantry, "Our men begin to show signs of discouragement. They have waited for Johnston so long that hope deferred, makes the heart sick." Lidia Lord was to remember, "Joseph E. Johnston was our angel of deliverance in those days of siege, but alas! we were never even to touch the hem of his robe." Although Henry Ginder felt that the existence of the entire Confederacy was dependent upon holding the town, "...it looks as if the importance of Vicksburg were not understood."

Despite the valiant Confederate efforts, the city fell on July 4, 1863, 47 days after the siege began. Wrote Lidia Lord: "...We met group after group of soldiers and stopped to shake hands with all of them..." "Ladies, we would have fought for you forever. Nothing but starvation whipped us..." The citizens of Vicksburg would not celebrate a Fourth of July until 1945, two months after VE Day.

Source: Vicksburg: 47 Days of Siege by A. A. Hoehling



Confederate Private

THE SJVCWRT VICKSBURG TOUR

by Carol Berry

Saturday morning, May 16, finds us at the Fresno airport for an 8:30 departure. The tour group totals nineteen, most of whom will be on the flight: The Perrys, Pat and Frank from Twain Harte, are there, as are Gail and Jerry Monson from Fresno. San Joaquin Valley Civil War Round Table members on the tour include Tim Johnson, our Intrepid Facilitator; Bill and Bette Head (Bill's job being that of looking after the Intrepid Facilitator); Kenneth and Barbara Moats; Linda, Brian and Courtney Clague; Chuck and Mary Baley; and me. Our connecting flight is in Dallas, where Gretchen and Bill Callahan, who live in Sunnyvale, join us. When we arrive in Memphis, David and Buena Taylor of San Diego complete the roster. They have flown in from New Orleans.

Our bus, which is driven by Louie Crawford, is at the airport when we land. The bus accommodates 47 passengers and has a lounge area and restroom facilities in the back. Tim has stocked two large coolers with soft drinks and bottled water for us for use during the entire trip. The vehicle is equipped with video and audio equipment, and we hear a Bobby Horton tape as we wend our way via Highway 72 to Corinth, Mississippi. The trip takes about an hour and a half.

We stay at the Executive Inn in Corinth. Checking into our rooms, we find two Civil War books on the beds for our reading pleasure. The books, about Shiloh and Corinth and their corresponding battles, are authored by the owner of the Executive Inn, Stockton Truitt. For dinner, we gather at Truitt's, the motel's restaurant. Stacy Allen, Shiloh park historian, and his wife join us. Stacy speaks to the group, setting up the battle of Shiloh. He's very enthusiastic about his subject and is an interesting speaker.

Sunday, May 17. For breakfast, most of us walk across the road from the motel to the House of Omelettes. Soon after, we are on the bus and on our way to Shiloh. We spend the entire day touring the battlefield with Stacy Allen. He starts us out at Pittsburg Landing and develops the battle from there. At the Old Corinth Road, Stacy tells us how the Federals were facing south and the Confederates east when the first stirrings of battle occurred. Next stop is Fraley's Field, where Stacy describes how U. S. Grant, having breakfast at the Cherry Mansion in Savannah, Tennessee, hears the battle, boards a steamer and reaches Pittsburg Landing around 9 a.m. We spend time at Spain's and Bell's fields, Shiloh Church, at Albert Sidney Johnston's death site, at Bloody Pond, and near the Hornet's Nest. Stacy tells us that his great-great grandfather,

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Solomon Osborne, who served with Company B of the 40th Illinois Infantry, fought at Vicksburg.

Marjel's, a very colorful restaurant in Corinth, complete with a decorated and lit Christmas tree, is where we have dinner. Marjel opens the place just for us and visits with each table during dinner. I sit with the Clagues. My meal is shrimp gumbo, and for dessert, the four of us share a piece of chocolate pecan pie.

Monday, May 18. Breakfast at the omelet place before starting out on a tour with Stacy Allen to see Civil War sites in Corinth and Brice's Crossroads. Stacy hikes us out into a wooded area near Corinth to view an extant trenchline, which he describes as one of the first examples of an offensive entrenchment. We stop at Battery F and Battery Robinette and near the rail station, where a pitched battle occurred during the fight for the town. We meet Stacy at Brice's Crossroads and learn the details of that action involving Forrest and Grierson. Before saying goodbye, Stacy points out a monument that has been stained with olive oil. The defacement is the work of three men who have been traveling to Civil War battlefields, blowing a ram's horn, and "anointing" monuments with the oil in an effort to "bring the country together."

The trip to Vicksburg takes about 4 hours via the Natchez Trace, putting us in Vicksburg around 7:10 p.m. My room at the Cedar Grove Mansion is on the 3rd floor and the nameplate on the door identifies the suite as *Scarlett's Penthouse*; Rhett's room is next door. A four poster bed is part of the decor in my room. All the suites in the mansion are named for Civil War-connected personages, including Grant, Sherman, Pemberton, Jefferson Davis, and Bonnie Blue. Dinner that night is at the mansion's restaurant, *Andre's*. I sit with Warren and Jean Grabau, a delightful couple. Warren, retired from the Army Corps of Engineers, will be our guide on the Vicksburg Campaign. When Jean hears me comment on the excellent salad dressing, she asks the waitress if it is possible to obtain the recipe. The waitress tells us to ask at the front desk. Here is the recipe for Chef Andre's Creole Salad Dressing:

4 gallons Zatarains Mustard Creole
1 gallon olive oil
1 gallon apple cider vinegar
4 boxes brown sugar
4 jars honey
12 bunches of green onion (chop up and stir)

Tuesday, May 19. On the road with Warren Grabau. He starts the tour in Louisiana where Grant brought his troops south. We stop at Grand Gulf on the way to Port Gibson. Warren tells

the story of the siege gun which is on display at Grand Gulf Military Park:

There was a fleet of 12 mortar schooners at Vicksburg all through the siege throwing 13 inch shells into the city. After the siege was over and the river was open, those ships were moved from Vicksburg and taken to the east coast for the attack on Fort Fisher. The records very clearly state that all 12 of them left Vicksburg but only 11 of them arrived on the east coast. We never thought very much about it. We just figured they lost it at sea or something. Things like that do happen and sometimes escape the record books, so we didn't think anything about it. One day down here, I was working on the beginnings of this park, talking to the local people, and one old guy said he'd been over on Davis Island, which is across the river, and there was an old gun over there. I said, What kind of an old gun? He said, I don't know, just an old gun. And I said, Civil War gun? I don't know, just a big old gun. Where was it? Well, he told me where it was. He said, You go to the eastern end of the island, which is where it was cut off by the river, and there is a little private levee along there, about three feet high, and you go over that levee on the other side and off there in the woods is this gun. I thought, what the hell, it's worth it.

Several months later I got a chance to get over there and I climbed up on that little levee and I looked out over it and it is thigh-deep in poison ivy and honeysuckle and cat's claw and stuff like that and the soil is two feet below the leafy mat on the surface. I looked at that and said, I'm not even going to try, this is an absolute lost cause. I don't know what's out there, it doesn't matter, I'm quitting. And I turned away, and all of a sudden, right at my feet, at the bottom of this levee on the river side was this great big circle with another circle inside it. I was looking directly at the face of that mortar. That is the 12th of the Vicksburg mortars.

We get back to Cedar Grove around 5 p.m. Before dinner, there is a tour of the mansion. We learn that Mrs. Klein, whose husband owned the mansion at the time of the Civil War, was related to William Tecumseh Sherman. A son born to the Kleins in 1863 was named William Sherman Klein.

Wednesday, May 20. On the road again with Warren, this time to study the battles of Raymond, Champion Hill and the Big Black. On the way back to Vicksburg, we detour slightly to drive by the bluffs at Vicksburg and see Chickasaw Bayou from a distance. After dinner, Terry Winschel, National Park historian at Vicksburg, performs a living history presentation of a Confederate soldier. His performance, drawn from the letters, diaries and accounts of people who lived through the siege of Vicksburg, is very moving.

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Thursday, May 21. Warren takes us to Vicksburg National Military Park to learn about some of the battles fought in and around the town. Lunch at Duff's Tavern, then a visit to the USS Cairo (which Warren was instrumental in finding in the 1960s). I hear Warren tell a woman behind the counter at the Cairo museum's bookstore he is amazed that a group of Californians are interested in coming to Mississippi to study the Civil War. Leaving the park, we tour the Duff Green Mansion (a hospital during the Civil War) and finish the day's outing at the Old Courthouse Museum. The group purchases a book on Civil War art, everyone signs it, and we give it to Tim Johnson at dinner to say thanks for a job well done. After dinner, a group of us sit outside. It is delightful to see fireflies flitting about the lawn--a reminder of my growing up days in Indiana. Before retreating indoors because of bombarding mosquitoes, I fleetingly wonder how the soldiers garrisoned here stood it without *Off* at their disposal.

Friday, May 22. Last day! Breakfast at the mansion, time for check out, then on the bus to Memphis. Heard Cedar Grove's manager (what was I doing the entire trip? Lurking?!) tell Tim Johnson that we are the best group they have had stay with them, that we made the staff's jobs easy.

We stop around 11 a.m. for lunch in Grenada, Mississippi. Arriving in Memphis early, Louie takes us on a quick tour of the city: Graceland, Nathan Bedford Forrest's statue, close to Shelby Foote's home, Beale Street, the riverfront, the zoo. Arrive at the airport at 3:30 p.m. where we say our good-byes to the Callahans, Monsons, Perrys and Taylors, who have more places to visit before returning to California.

Our plane is late leaving Memphis, requiring us to move at the doublequick to catch our flight in Dallas for Fresno. Well, some of us move at the double quick. The rest of us ride a motorized cart. Most surprising of all is that our luggage arrives in Fresno when we do. I am in Merced by 10 p.m., tired but exhilarated by such a great week.



Gen. William T. Sherman