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JOINT OPERATIONS IN THE CIVIL WAR:  
THE MISSISSIPPI

BY

LIEUTENANT COLONEL EARL B. HAILSTON

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Successful joint operations must become a common and regular reality for the Armed Forces of the United States. This Nation has engaged in joint operations since the Mexican War, but often it appears that we must relearn many of the same lessons that were taught during a previous military operation. This study seeks to examine joint operations during the Civil War along the Mississippi River, during the Vicksburg Campaign and the Red River Campaign. The purpose of this study is to become familiar with the campaigns and to analyze how well the commanders executed joint operations. Based upon the historical outcome of the events, some thoughts will be proposed that will be applicable to the modern battlefield leader for joint operations today.

USAWC MILITARY STUDIES PROGRAM PAPER

JOINT OPERATIONS IN THE CIVIL WAR: THE MISSISSIPPI

AN INDIVIDUAL STUDY PROJECT

by

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15 March 1989

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ABSTRACT

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## Preface

### Background

At 0430 on 12 April 1861 the eastern sky was just beginning to pale. Spring was in full bloom in Charleston, South Carolina. Even at this early hour the battery surrounding the tip of that city, where the Cooper and Ashley rivers merge, was crowded with curious and excited onlookers. At that moment the report of a mortar from Fort Johnson was heard. This signal shot was followed shortly thereafter by a shell burst over Fort Sumter. The war that had been brewing for months erupted into a full boil. From 12 April 1861 until 9 April 1865 the nation would be torn apart by the fury of war. This is a study of one small part of that war.

### Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to study joint Army/Navy military campaigns in the Western Department during late 1862 through May 1864. The nature of the work will be confined to the Vicksburg Campaign and the Red River Campaign along the Mississippi and its tributaries. The paper will include a short biographical sketch of the principal leaders and then cover in detail their joint operations. The material covered will analyze how well the commanders supported each other and how they conducted joint operations.

In the course of the paper the words joint and combined have been used interchangeably particularly when quoting other works. Amphibious operations are included in this terminology.

This is not a definitive account of all the side issues connected to each campaign. I have limited my work to just those actions that involve joint operations between the Army and the Navy. Lone infantry or cavalry actions not involving naval forces are not covered. Nor have I concerned myself with actions other than those along the Mississippi.

The paper is divided into three parts. Chapter one covers the political and governmental background at the time of these operations. It also provides background on the military commanders and their operational goals from 1861 up to the campaigns. Chapter two is devoted entirely to three leaders; General Ulysses S. Grant, General William T. Sherman, and Admiral David D. Porter. Chapter three contains the combined actions of naval and army forces during two operations. They provide examples of successful and unsuccessful joint operations.

Sources used in my work include the Official Records of the War and Navy Department, personal memoirs, biographical documents, and various historical publications devoted to the events as they took place.

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# Joint Operations In The Civil War: The Mississippi

## Chapter I

### Actors and Their Roles

#### Background

At the outbreak of the Civil War a major problem confronting the Federal government was how to use its Navy. The good news was that the South essentially did not have one. Certainly after the battle of the *Merrimac* and the *Monitor* the Confederacy never floated a real naval threat. What was needed was an integrated plan to pull all of the Union's many strengths together in a concerted effort to defeat the rebellion.

The Union was strapped with an awkward command structure. The Army was headed by a major general under appointment by the President. He held no legal status and his power rested solely in his grade. The Navy was even more fragmented. There was no one admiral commanding the Navy, no Chief of Naval Operations, if you will. This made it difficult, if not impossible, to organize a joint effort. The flag officers commanded squadrons of ships and they were an ocean going Navy, not a brown water river operations force.

Sandwiched between the President and his ranking Army and Navy officers were the Secretaries of War and Navy. The Secretary of the Navy was a Chief of Staff, of sorts. He coordinated between the President and the squadron commanders. In practice he set policy and directed internal operations. The powers of the Secretary of War depended upon the political

appointee. They ebbed and flowed between weak and strong. The war began with Simon Cameron, a weak and questionable character in office. In January 1862 he was replaced by Edwin Stanton. Stanton happened to be very strong and sure of himself, never afraid to make a decision even if it was not his to make.

Even though the political climate of the nation had been in extreme turmoil since the Presidential election of 1860, the outbreak of the war caught both sides unprepared. In fact the make up of the entire Confederacy was not determined until long after the fighting at Fort Sumter was over. At the start both the people and the two governments expected a short conflict. The Confederate States of America had to prove it was capable of defending itself as an independent nation. In Contrast, the Federal government only had to put down this small rebellion. Therefore at this point the South settled on a defensive posture while the North adopted an offensive strategy.

### Plans

The first plan put into effect by the North was General Winfield Scott's Anaconda Plan. Like the huge snake of the same name, the Union would use a combined Naval and Ground force to wrap itself around the Confederate States and simply squeeze them into submission through a blockade, an economic siege. Scott rejected invading and conquering the South. An invasion would require 300,000 men, and it would cause a huge national debt and the total devastation of the South. The problem with the Anaconda Plan was it would require a large Navy and time to train

volunteers, build a river fleet, push down the Ohio and Mississippi Valleys, and then strangle the Confederacy. It was at best a fuzzy plan that would require an obscure amount of time to complete.

As we know, Americans are impatient people. We tend to want immediate action and prompt, positive results. We need tangibles to measure our progress. This impatience led to the approval by President Lincoln of General Irvin McDowell's plan to strike south toward Richmond. This ill planned and poorly executed operation resulted in the debacle at Bull Run. Scott and the Federal government now feared for the safety of Washington and drew back into a stagnant three month defensive position around the capital.

Horace Greeley and other Northern newspapermen began calling for immediate action. This "short" war was dragging on without visible gains. Change was called for and the call was answered by General George B. McClellan, who had been complaining from his post in West Virginia of a lack of an overall plan of action. As an independent action, he presented the President with a proposed grand strategy for winning the war and Lincoln was convinced. On 1 November 1861 Lincoln appointed him to succeed Scott as General-in-Chief of the Union Army.

General McClellan brought with him a plan of combined operations to attack and defeat the South. He would continue with Scott's idea of a blockade, but McClellan would pierce the center of the Confederacy also. He proposed using the great water highways of the South. Penetrating deep into the Confederacy along the Mississippi, the Tennessee, and the Cumberland rivers, Federal armies could seize the great East-West rail lines connecting the

Mississippi Valley with the Atlantic and Gulf seaboard, and with Virginia. Pushing into the North Carolina sounds and up the Roanoke and Neuse rivers, they could disrupt Richmond's lines to the Deep South and force the Confederate army in Virginia to disperse for lack of supplies. From their beachhead at Port Royal, South Carolina, Union troops could entrench themselves along the Charleston and Savannah Railroad, threatening both cities and preventing their garrisons from reinforcing one another. Seizure of the rail junction at Mobile would disrupt communications between middle Tennessee and western Mississippi. To free themselves from this death grip, Southern generals would have to hurl their men against strongly fortified positions which could not be invested while protected by Union warships or gunboats.(1)

While McClellan was completing his plan, other political and naval leaders were formulating added campaigns. General Ben Butler had ulterior business motives to get into New Orleans from the Gulf of Mexico. Through his friend, Assistant Secretary of the Navy Gustavus V. Fox, he got the Navy to support his plan to attack the New Orleans posts from below. Admiral David D. Porter came to Washington to convince McClellan, Lincoln, and Congress that he could reduce the forts with a mortar flotilla. Fox was wild about any idea that would add glory to the Navy. He garnered the help of Senator James Grimes of Iowa, whose constituents, along with those of Illinois, Michigan, Indiana, and Ohio, were loudly clamoring for the government to open the Mississippi for an outlet for western produce. Fox and Grimes persuaded the Secretary of the Navy, Gideon Wells, and Lincoln to consider the proposal as an adjunct to

McClellan's plan for an expedition down the river from Cairo, Illinois. (2)

McClellan was skeptical of the plan. It was not at all certain that the New Orleans forts would fall so easily. If they did, he would still have to give up 10,000 men to garrison the city. This did nothing to assist in his plan to drive down the river. (3) However, two issues forced McClellan to give his approval. First, Lincoln favored the plan. Second, McClellan was wise enough to know that his own plan was so heavily dependent upon support from the navy that he could not afford to oppose one of its favorite projects. (4) He sweetened the pot by adding that General Butler was to attack north and take Jackson, Mississippi, after securing New Orleans. Then, in cooperation with the Navy he should move on Mobile, Alabama. This agreed to, the operation was approved and action on the western waters was begun.

As part of these dealings there were several meetings and discussions with the President. The President had deep seated ideas on the objectives and the priorities of the war. In a conversation with Porter, Mr. Lincoln said, "The key to the Mississippi is Vicksburg. I will not rest well until that key is in my pocket." (5) It is interesting to note that Butler left Washington to attack New Orleans with orders from McClellan to follow on with attacks on Jackson and then Mobile. Admiral Farragut received confidential orders to reduce New Orleans, then Baton Rouge, Vicksburg, and Memphis. This would prove to cause great confusion after the removal of McClellan from command. (6)

Players

Admiral Farragut, Captain Porter, and General Butler were successful in taking New Orleans as designed. In June Farragut and Porter steamed to Vicksburg with their large ships and mortar flotilla but without an army. Butler and McClellan were looking toward Mobile while the Navy Department kept reminding Farragut of his original orders. The mortar boats did nothing to reduce the fortifications at Vicksburg, and besides the Navy had no infantry to storm the bluffs and hold the ground. (7) Without help available Farragut returned with his force to New Orleans in early July. The New Orleans expedition to Vicksburg was done for 1862, and Porter was called to Washington.

In the northwest another fighter was emerging. In early February, 1862, Ulysses S. Grant convinced the commander of the Department of the Missouri, Major General Henry W. Halleck, that Grant could capture Fort Henry along the Tennessee River. He routed the place in combination with the Navy gunboats commanded by Flag Officer A.H. Foote. From this victory he steamed on with the Navy the very next day to reduce Fort Donelson, on the Cumberland River. This latter action had not been approved by Halleck and he censured Grant for not keeping his superior informed while the northern press made Grant a hero for his bold action.

In March, after promotion to Major General, Grant was assigned command of the District of West Tennessee. He had five divisions under him commanded by Generals William T. Sherman, John A. McClernand, Stephen A. Hurlburt, Lew Wallace, and Charles F. Smith. Out of these he made a sixth division and gave it to General Benjamin M. Prentiss. General Don Carlos Buell was also

bringing another 35,000 men on a march from Nashville to join Grant. Grant moved this army south to Pittsburg Landing on the Tennessee River. (8) Some of the troops were camped near a small log church called Shiloh. Grant's headquarters were located eight miles north of his forward camp. On Sunday, 6 April 1862, his army was taken by surprise by Generals Albert Sidney Johnston and P.G.T. Beauregard. The famous battle bearing the name of the church had begun with little warning. Grant was at his headquarters when the battle commenced. When he arrived at the front his army was disorganized and in retreat. He spent the day riding up and down his lines plugging men in where the line was broken, directing resupplies, and rallying his men. An enemy ball struck Grant's scabbard, just below the hilt and broke it nearly off; before the battle was over it was broken off completely. (9) As a sign of things to come, Grant received hearty support from the Navy gunboats which provided deadly fire from the river that broke an enemy attack. Even in this land battle the Navy played a significant role. Somehow, Grant held until darkness ended the fighting on the first day. During the evening fresh troops arrived and the lines were strengthened. As evening closed in a newspaper correspondent cornered Grant and asked if the outlook was bleak. "Oh no, said Grant, "they can't break our lines tonight-it is too late. Tomorrow we will attack with fresh troops and drive them, of course." (10) Grant did just that.

From there Corinth, Fort Pillow, Fort Randolph, and lastly Memphis, Tennessee fell. After the fall of Memphis, one stronghold remained in Confederate hands to close the Mississippi to Federal

shipping- Vicksburg. (11) The key was before Grant, all he had to do was recover it. (See Maps 1 and 2)

The actors were now gathered. After Memphis had fallen General Sherman was sent to garrison the place. David Porter had been promoted to rear admiral and ordered west to command the Mississippi Squadron of ironclads, tinclads, and lesser gunboats. Grant replaced Halleck, as the Commanding General of the Department, when Halleck was called to Washington in July to relieve McClellan. The team of Grant, Sherman, and Porter had been formed.

## Notes

### Abbreviations used in the Notes

B & L *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*

O.R.A. *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*

O.R.N. *Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in the War of the Rebellion*

### Chapter I

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## CHAPTER II

### The Leaders

#### Sam Grant

On 15 June, 1861, an Ohioan of Puritan ancestry took command of an Illinois Volunteer Regiment. Two weeks before that he had been doing clerical work as the mustering officer in Springfield. Prior to that he was a dry goods clerk in a leather store in Galena. By the end of July, Ulysses Simpson Grant was a Brigadier General.

Born 27 April, 1822, in Point Pleasant, Ohio, he remained unnamed for over a month. Finally the family of aunts, uncles, parents, and grandparents gathered to draw his name out of a hat full of suggestions. The name Ulysses was drawn, but the grandfather was so disposed that his suggested name was not chosen, they decided to give the baby two names. Accordingly, he was taught, when learning to write, to sign his name Hiram Ulysses Grant. At home he was always called Ulysses. (1)

While growing up education was always stressed by Grant's father. Ulysses was always in school and received a sound background in the three "R's". However the studies were never advanced, especially in arithmetic. When preparing for West Point, Grant decided to broaden his learnings. He wrote, "I bought a book on algebra in Cincinnati; but having no teacher it was Greek to me." (2)

In recalling his youth Grant remembers most working around the farm, especially with horses. His father was a tanner and the smell of animal hides and tanning acids made the boy sick.

Instead, Ulysses hauled wood and plowed and harvested their fifty acres.

Jesse Grant was a very proud father who constantly bragged over his son and allowed him free reign to do as he pleased, never scolding nor objecting to any rational desire. Consequently, Ulysses Grant had this recollection of his early years:

"I did not like to work, but I did as much of it, while young, as grown men can be hired to do in these days, and attended school at the same time. I had as many privileges as any boy in the village, and probably more than most of them. I have no recollection of ever having been punished at home, either by scolding or by the rod." (3)

Grant spent the 1838-1839 school year at a private school in Ripley, Ohio. While he was home on Christmas break, his father received a letter and after reading it announced, "Well it looks like you are going to get the appointment." "What appointment?" "To West Point." "I won't go." To the last response his father replied, "I think you will!" Young Grant remembers, "*I thought so too: if he did.*" (4)

With the matter settled, he headed east to West Point in May, 1839. The first issue to contend with was his name. As a departing gift his relatives gave him a trunk with his initials, H.U.G., tacked on the front. Having no desire for any new nicknames he rearranged the letters to U.H.G. (5) Upon reporting to the adjutant at West Point, he was told that there was no appointment for any Hiram U. Grant, but instead they had listed a Ulysses Simpson Grant. He accepted that, and at the age of seventeen, we finally identify the nation's future war hero and President. Officially he was posted as U.S. Grant. Fellow cadets

referred to him as United States Grant, then Uncle Sam Grant, and the latter was eventually shortened to Sam Grant. (6)

His first summer camp was dull, dreary and not at all to his liking. It seemed to last forever. By the end of summer it was certain that a military life held no charms for him and he had not the faintest idea of staying in the Army even if he should graduate, which he did not expect. (7)

At the time there was a bill before Congress to abolish the Military Academy. He saw this as an honorable way to escape from this life. Grant followed the debates reported in the newspaper closely and was greatly disappointed when it was not passed.

Two other events that happened while Grant was at West Point, and remained in his memory until his death, are interesting. Both have to do with distinguished visitors. During Grant's first year at West Point, General Winfield Scott reviewed the cadets. Scott was all decked out in his military finest. Grant was so impressed that he felt moved to want, some day, to stand before a review in the position Scott held. The next year they were honored by President Martin Van Buren. Upon assessing the President, Grant noted that he felt no desire to ever follow in his footsteps. (8)

His four years at the Academy were not remarkable. He started in the middle and stayed in the middle, graduating 21 out of 39 in his class. He wanted the cavalry and got the infantry. His first set of orders sent him to Jefferson Barracks, St. Louis.

In 1844 Grant moved out with his unit to Mexico. Among officers that he met and served with were, General Scott, Robert E. Lee, John Magruder, Pete Longstreet, and a lesser known lieutenant

named Theodoric Porter; brother to David Dixon Porter, U.S. Navy.

Although Grant saw the war as unjust he served with distinction. He acted as regimental quartermaster, yet moved forward and fought with the infantry at Monterrey. He remembered this at Fort Henry and Shiloh. At Vera Cruz he saw Scott cut loose from his supplies and thrust inland. This lesson resurfaced at Vicksburg. He took the initiative at Mexico City and placed a field piece in a church belfry in order to shell the enemy and drive them from their posts. (9) He was then mentioned in dispatches. This entire expedition was a remarkable training evolution for so many officers who took up arms fifteen years later during the Civil War. Grant openly discussed his findings for several years following the war.

Immediately following the peace treaty ending the war, Grant raced back to St. Louis and married Julia Dent, the sister of his fourth year roommate at West Point. They were together at Sackets Harbour and Detroit until 1852. In that time one child had been born, and Julia was expecting again. In the spring of that year he left with his regiment for California. The time spent there was lonely and Grant missed his family. His duties were dull and not at all demanding. Captain Grant turned to drink and problems of sobriety were reported. He makes no note of them himself in his memoirs though. Instead he describes the beauty of the territory and his desire to one day return. (10) Regardless, in April, 1854 he resigned and joined his family that summer on a farm near St. Louis. There civilian farmer Grant cut cordwood and tried to farm. He came down with a fever and was sick for over a year.

(11) The farm was sold in 1858 and he entered the real estate business unsuccessfully, then onto a clerkship in his father's store in Galena, Illinois. There Ulysses S. Grant remained, working for his younger brother, until May, 1861, when he volunteered his services to the Union for duty in the new war.

### "Uncle Billy"

On the western frontier lived Charles and Mary Sherman. Charles was a descendant of Puritan ancestors who had come from Dedham, England in 1634. He was a lawyer and had moved from Norwalk, Connecticut to New Lancaster, Ohio, with his bride in 1810. (12) Charles' ancestors included Robert Sherman, a signer of the Declaration of Independence. Shortly after arriving in Ohio, Charles had been called to the Ohio militia to participate in the War of 1812. Apparently he caught a fancy for the Shawnee leader Tecumseh. After naming his first two sons after his wife's brothers, he fulfilled his long-standing desire and the third son, born on February 8, 1820, was named Tecumseh.

Tecumseh's father was appointed a Judge of the Supreme Court of Ohio in 1821. While on the circuit in 1829 he became ill and died. The family then numbered ten children. Mary was ill-prepared to feed, clothe and tend to so many children and so they were split up. Tecumseh was taken into the family of a U.S. Senator named Thomas Ewing. There he found a fine home and was "ever after treated as their own son" (13). In 1830 a visiting priest was told that Sherman had never been baptized and set out to correct that. During the rites he asked the boy's name. "Tecumseh." Thinking it strange to be named after a red pagan, the priest researched his books and upon discovering that it was St. William's Day, took it upon himself to rename the boy William. Sherman seemed to accept the matter without question because before the incident he signed his name "Tecumseh Sherman" and thereafter he signed himself "William Tecumseh" or "W.T." (14)

Like Grant, he was never asked if he wanted to go to West Point, he was told. Accordingly, in May, 1836, he boarded an eastbound stagecoach headed for Washington and New York. At the time he was described as a "tall, slim, loose-jointed lad, with red hair, fair, burned skin, and piercing black eyes." (15) On his way he visited uncles in New York City. His cousins there found him amusing and looked upon "(him) as an untamed animal just caught in the far West—"fit food for gunpowder, and good for nothing else." (16) When writing of his four years at West Point, Sherman briefly comments:

"At the Academy I was not considered a good soldier, for at no time was I selected for any office, but remained a private throughout the whole four years. Then, as now, neatness in dress and form, with a strict conformity to rules, were the qualifications required for office, and I suppose I was not found to excel in any of these. In studies I always held a respectable reputation with the professors, and generally ranked among the best, especially in drawing, chemistry, mathematics, and natural philosophy. My average demerits, per annum, were about one hundred and fifty, which reduced my final class standing from number four to six." (17)

Still he had endured to the end, which speaks well, since his class numbered one hundred when it entered and graduated forty-three.

While at West Point several people crossed his path. Mahan was a professor, Winfield Scott taught him tactics, and U.S. Grant was a plebe during his last year. There were also Henry Halleck, Jubal Early, Pierre G. T. Beauregard, Joseph Hooker, Braxton Bragg, and George Thomas, all future Civil War generals.

Sherman's high class standing entitled him to his choice of corps. He was commissioned in the artillery and in October of 1841

sailed from New York enroute to his first duty station in Florida. He was there to fight the Seminoles which he did in fine order and was promoted to first lieutenant after only seventeen months of service. The promotion also brought him an independent command at Picolata where he remained until June, 1842. At that time he was ordered to regimental headquarters at Fort Moultrie, South Carolina for garrison duty under Captain Robert Anderson of Fort Sumter fame 19 years later.

In 1843 he took a short leave to Ohio. He returned to South Carolina the long way around. He traveled down the Mississippi River to New Orleans, from there to Mobile, up the Alabama River and through Georgia to Savannah and on to Charleston. Soon after Sherman's return to the post he was assigned to a military counsel that traveled for three months throughout Georgia and Alabama. The knowledge he gained by riding over the very land he would later lead armies across was invaluable and aided him greatly. (18)

In 1845 Sherman began to entertain ideas of leaving the Army. In preparation he began to study law as something to do in civilian life but his studies were interrupted by the Mexican War. At first he was ordered to a short period of recruiting in Cincinnati followed by orders to California to fight the Mexicans. He sailed from New York City in July, 1846, and seven months later arrived at Monterey, California. Sherman made use of the time under sail to enhance his education by reading every book aboard ship. (19) He also deepened his friendship with Halleck and Ord who sailed with him.

Upon reaching California, Sherman was assigned as quartermaster

and commissary of the force. This training in logistics at the far end of cut lines of communications taught him well for duties that loomed ahead.

Although his duties did not involve fighting in the Mexican War, much to his dismay, Sherman was still in California in 1848 when gold was discovered. The gold-fever that followed raised havoc with soldiers and supplies alike. The soldiers deserted to dig for gold and inflation depleted his commissary and quartermaster funds. Sherman had sailed from New York with \$28,000 to keep the army supplied through local purchases. With the discovery of gold and the rush of people prices rocketed 215 times above normal. He struggled to keep order about him but soon was discouraged and again considered resigning. He was motivated to resign mostly because he had missed the opportunity to fight in the recent war.

Upon submission, his resignation was refused because the new commander, General P.F. Smith, needed an adjutant-general who was familiar with the western country and its conditions so Sherman stayed on. Prices were so high and military pay was so low that the General encouraged his men to enter into any business that would help them make money. Sherman entered into a store and the survey business, making a profit. (20) This lasted until being sent east carrying dispatches to General Scott in January, 1850. He remained in Washington for several months awaiting an assignment and courting Miss Ellen Ewing, the daughter of Senator Ewing. They were married in May, 1850, and the ceremony was attended by "a distinguished crowd to include President Taylor and all his cabinet." (21)

In September of that year he was posted in St. Louis and later to New Orleans where he was time and again offered civilian employment. To this end, on 6 September, 1853, he ended his first career with the army. He was thirty-three years old.

Sherman's first job was as a banker in San Francisco. He stayed there for four years, doing quite well in an up and down economy. He tired of banking and sold out just before the market crashed in 1858. He returned to St. Louis where he became the senior partner in a law firm. Just as when he first studied law in the swamps of Florida and didn't enjoy it, he never enjoyed the practice of it either. Therefore, he jumped at the chance to go to Louisiana in 1859 to open a new college. For \$3500 a year he was to serve as superintendent and professor. Upon the recommendations of Braxton Bragg and P.G.T. Beauregard he was hired and started what is today Louisiana State University. Sherman left his wife and family in Ohio when he headed south to build the school and a new family house. This new endeavor was his "bachelor" home and total devotion until the political scene found the nation divided and preparing for war. Because a part of his job included being a colonel in the Louisiana State Militia and Superintendent of the State Arsenal he was compelled to resign his post and stay with the Union when Louisiana broke away.

Sherman rejoined his family in St. Louis and took charge of that city's tramway system. He hardly had time to find quarters and unpack when the war erupted on 12 April. By May Sherman was a colonel in the Regular Army and was assigned to command a new Regular infantry regiment. (22)

He was called to Washington to meet with Lincoln and Scott. While there, McDowell was rushing to form his army; and Sherman was immediately reassigned to command the Third Brigade of Tyler's First Division.

In less than two weeks Sherman's brigade was leaving Washington, marching toward Manassas Junction. On 21 July his brigade was bloodied at the First Battle of Bull Run. They did no better nor worse than any other unit in McDowell's Army. Sherman was slightly wounded on the knee and shoulder and his horse was shot. Somehow he was spared being killed and had to suffer the shame of retreat, rout, and confusion. (23)

Sherman's brigade and the remaining army were gathered again along the Potomac. As he was starting to reorganize the brigade, he was surprised by a promotion to brigadier general and orders to the Department of the Cumberland to serve as the assistant to Robert Anderson, the defender of Fort Sumter.

Things were forming rapidly in the West and the work was politically torturous and demanding. The effort of trying to build an army was more than General Anderson could stand. On 5 October he summoned General Sherman and announced that he must quit or the job would kill him. Sherman was now left in command by default. (24)

Soon thereafter Secretary of War Cameron visited Sherman's Department in response to calls for more troops. When asked how many men he estimated he would need, Sherman answered, "60,000 now and 200,000 before the war is over. (25) In his report, Cameron termed the estimate an insane request. This remark made its way to the front page of the New York Tribune newspaper. Several other

newspapers printed the story that Sherman was insane. By mid-November the situation was out of hand, and Sherman was relieved of command and replaced by Don Carlos Buell.

Sherman reported to St. Louis where the reports continued to fester in the newspapers until he requested three weeks leave from Halleck to allow the controversy to pass. (26) He returned to duty after Christmas and assumed command of the Cairo District. He built a Division at Paducah, Kentucky, and on 10 March, 1862, he marched off toward Shiloh and personal fame.

## The Second Admiral

The future of David Dixon Porter was sealed the day he was born, June 8, 1813. He was the second son of Commodore David Porter of the War of 1812 fame. In 1815 the elder became the uniformed head of the Navy and he was determined that any son of his would follow him to the sea. To help seal this fate, the spirits had also placed a foster child in the household. David Farragut had been taken in by Commodore Porter and had gone to sea with him in *Essex* during the war. Farragut now spent long visits at the Porter home, and thus began the close association with young David. This association followed them throughout their careers.

Young David grew up roaming about the Washington Navy Yard. Through his father he had free access to everything. The youngster "stood" sentry duty, watched ships being built, explored all vessels at dockside, and fell in love with the sea before he ever put out in anything larger than a rowboat.

David Dixon Porter first put to sea at the age of ten when his father went to the Caribbean to rid those waters of pirates attacking American merchant ships. The young boy was treated like a midshipman and soon learned a sailor's routine. (27)

He returned to Washington and attended Columbia College to study math, science, and language. He worked diligently in his studies which were essential to becoming a naval officer. (28)

In 1826 the commodore resigned from the U.S. Navy after a scandal and accepted an appointment as commander-in-chief of the Mexican Navy. When he put to sea he took with him his sons David and Thomas. The boys were enrolled as midshipmen in the Mexican

Navy. (29) At sea the boys were taught strict lessons of the sea by their demanding, but loving father.

Soon David Dixon Porter put to sea in a combatant, sailing to engage Spanish ships in Cuba. Near Havana harbor they found several Spanish ships. His ship sank several and was carrying the day until a sixty-four gun ship-of-the-line bore down on them and captured the smaller Mexican vessel. Although the Spanish offered him special treatment because of his father, young Porter declined and spent the next six months as a prisoner of war with the rest of the crew, in the hold of a Spanish ship in Havana Harbor. (30) When he was exchanged in August of 1828, he was sent home to take care of his mother who had lost the house in Washington and had returned to the family home in Chester, Pennsylvania.

Porter traveled home via New Orleans, and up the Mississippi River through Vicksburg. Being a sailor and having a love for all water he spent as much time as possible with the river pilot on the Mississippi and learned much about river navigation that would become invaluable thirty five years later. The main lesson he learned was never to sail the great river without a current river pilot. In 1862 he always had at least two civilian pilots guiding his flotillas.

David Porter remained home for only six months. In January, 1829 he was received as a midshipman in the U.S. Navy at the age of 16. Upon entering he immediately sailed to the Mediterranean and was gone two years. Upon returning to the United States he devoted a year to higher studies at Chester Academy.

Returning to sea duty, Porter was assigned to the frigate

*United States*. She was the newest and largest ship in the U.S. fleet. His tour aboard this vessel is remarkable on two counts. First, he performed magnificently and received a special commendation from the commodore. He perfected his naval skills and learned all about gunnery, from being a cannoneer to being a battery commander. He excelled throughout. Second, he fell in love with George Ann Patterson, the commodore's daughter, and was betrothed to the young lady. In October, 1834 he passed his examinations for a commission in the Navy. His first assignment as an officer was at the Brooklyn Navy Yard. There he performed menial administrative tasks clarifying ships' records. He soon became bored with his meaningless work. The Navy was getting smaller, their budget was decreasing and the future looked dim for putting to sea.

Then in 1838 he was selected to do survey work for the Coast Survey team under the Department of the Treasury. The team was to chart the eastern seaboard and channels into southern ports. Porter learned many new skills such as piloting ships as well as scientific charting. The pay was double his usual salary so that in eighteen months he had saved \$2000.00 and used the money to marry Georgy in March, 1839 and set up house.

Porter and his bride spent several weeks together before he returned to duty on the Coast Survey ship *Washington*. By 1841 he returned to Washington, D.C. for an assignment to the Coast Survey headquarters as a lieutenant. The Mexican war was brewing and Porter longed for a tour at sea. However, because of his scientific background, he was ordered to the Naval Hydrographics

Office. There he lingered until March, 1846, when he was secretly summoned to meet with the Secretary of State James Buchanan.

Porter was assigned the secret mission to go to Santo Domingo to chart their harbors and map the interior. He personally sailed the harbors and trudged through the jungles collecting reams of details that garnered glowing commendations from Buchanan upon his return. (31)

After a short stay with the Naval Observatory studying aids to navigation, he got his wish to go to war. In January, 1847, Lieutenant Porter went to New Orleans and recruited 300 sailors. He then chartered a steamer bound for Vera Cruz. There he was assigned as first lieutenant aboard *Spitfire*, a side-wheel steamer. Command of the Home Squadron went to Commodore Matthew C. Perry, who served in direct support of Winfield Scott during the Mexican War.

The ships were having difficulty getting through uncharted water so that they could bombard the coastal defenses. Porter drew upon his years of survey experience and at night went out in a gig and charted a course for the vessels to get close ashore and hit the Mexican fortress. The next morning they sailed deep into the harbor and young Porter directed the gunnery on target. Scott applauded his daring and Perry assigned him Captain of *Spitfire*. At 34 years of age, David Porter had his first ship.

Following the Mexican War, David Porter went back to the Coastal Survey. Now he was Captain of *Petrel* and was busy charting New York harbor. While he was there he made friends with several civilian shipping firms. Things in the Navy were quite slow again

so he took an extended leave of absence and sailed the first steamship from New York to California. One of his passengers was Captain Joe Hooker, who became a Union general during the Civil War. During this cruise they became close friends. The steam ship cut off thirty days of sailing time. This was followed by taking a paddle wheel ship from New York to England and then on to Australia. This experience was beneficial to the Navy when it converted from sail to steam power. After each cruise, Porter submitted a full report to the Navy Department.

In 1855 Lieutenant Porter returned to active duty and took command of the storeship, *Supply*. His strange assignment was to sail to Turkey and buy camels for the Army. (32) During the next two years Porter made two trips to the eastern Mediterranean for the experimental animals. While there Porter was able to observe an armored floating mortar in the Crimea. He used this idea to build his mortar flotilla five years later for use during the Civil War.

In 1857 he transferred to Portsmouth, New Hampshire and lingered for two years. There was no modernization taking place and new ideas for a steam powered Navy fell on deaf ears in Washington. By 1859 he was very discouraged. He was 46 years old and had been a lieutenant for eighteen years with no promotion in sight. (33) A passenger ship company offered him a job as captain of a passenger steamship that was about to be built. When he received orders back to Washington for another staff job in 1860 he was tempted to resign, however the election of 1860 sent ripples through the land. Many officers that he knew turned their loyalty to the

south, including his older brother, William. (34) David Porter remained with the Union and stayed in the Navy to lead them to great glories. At the outbreak of hostilities he was immediately ordered to the Gulf coast and his relentless service and heroic actions to defeat the rebellion began. Almost twenty years later he would succeed his foster brother and become the second Admiral in the history of the United States Navy.

### Commonalities

These three men appear to be quite different from each other. Grant was a Westerner with a country, farming background. Sherman was raised in the West, however by a lawyer/United States Senator family in a more refined background than farming and hide tanning. Porter was born in Washington, moved about with his father in sophisticated circles, and then went to sea as a young boy.

In reality they all have some remarkable things in common. Each of them was out of the mainstream of their service for several years. Grant resigned and returned to farming and storekeeping for seven years. Sherman left the Army and went into the business world for over seven years also. Porter left the mainstream Navy twice for duty with the Coastal Survey under the Treasury Department and took leaves of absence to sail civilian ships around the world.

Another similarity was impatience. While Grant can be described as generally a stoical person, when he was ready for action he wanted everyone moving. In order to assist in this he often wrote detailed, lucid, specific orders so that everyone knew exactly what to do. Sherman's red hair underscores the fire and impatience within him to be doing something. In Florida he pushed to fight the Indians, in California he was anxious to become involved with the Mexican War and tried to resign because he missed the war, and in Louisiana he wanted his university built without the slightest delay. Porter was creative and full of intuitive ideas. He had little patience for the leadership in Washington, that did not seem to want to modernize the Navy. Likewise, he had

little patience for quiet studies, much preferring a demanding job with fast action.

Another trait that these men had in common was their ability to communicate. Grant was famous for his ability to write clear, detailed orders in the midst of battle. Sherman's letters and memoirs show a strong ability to grasp the heart of a subject and explain it clearly on paper. Porter's ability to write is best demonstrated by his detailed report on Santo Domingo that he did for Secretary of State Buchanan. Later in life he personally wrote The Naval History of the Civil War while serving as the Chief of Naval Operations.

The three leaders also had in common a degree of honesty toward mankind and loyalty to their country that is rare to find. Although each of them took the level of war to its most terrible ends, they were always fair and just to their opponents and the Southern families upon whose land they fought. Each of them severely punished plundering and looting except where goods were confiscated for the Federal Government. They combined this honesty with total loyalty to the United States. At the start of hostilities Grant and Sherman were civilians and Porter had decided to resign and take a civilian sailing job. When war came they all stepped forward to serve. Throughout the war they were always critical of actions that did not put the needs of the Nation above any other motive.

These are a few of the traits shared by Grant, Sherman, and Porter. There are likely many more that I did not mention, as well as several pronounced differences. However, I believe that these

four similarities are the foundation for their strong and  
successful relationship.

NOTES

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4. Ibid., 32.
5. Gene Smith, Lee and Grant., 15.
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7. U.S. Grant, Personal Memoirs of U. S. Grant, Vol. 1., 38.
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10. Ibid., 210.
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14. Lloyd Lewis, Sherman: Fighting Prophet., 34.
15. B.H. Liddell Hart, Sherman: Soldier, Realist, American., 4.
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25. Ibid., 231.
26. Ibid., 243.
27. Richard S. West, The Second Admiral: A Life of David Dixon  
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## CHAPTER III

### Combined Operations Part 1: Vicksburg

#### Chickasaw Bayou

During the summer of 1862 the Confederates tried to take the offensive. In late August General Bragg pushed his Confederate Army of Tennessee north into Central Tennessee. At the same time General Lee out maneuvered General Pope at the Battle of Second Manassas. September 17th found Lee and McClellan slugging it out at Antietam Creek in the bloodiest day of the war. (1) However, by mid-October the Confederate offensive was spent. It was time for Federal initiatives to carry the war back into the South. While George McClellan dallied and "rested his horses' mouths", Grant moved. (2)

Initially his thoughts were simple. He envisioned a land campaign along the lines of his earlier successes up the Tennessee River. This was the direct approach and would allow him to come to grips with the enemy the quickest.

In spite of rumored political maneuvering by General John McClelland for a separate independent command to run down the Mississippi, Grant pushed ahead with his plan to drive south from Corinth on converging land lines and cut off Vicksburg from the east. By 4 November he occupied LaGrange and Grand Junction, Tennessee, important rail and road avenues into northern Mississippi. Questions soon arose over the cost of holding this vast area of land and its associated railroad system. Sherman

broached the idea of a converging land and water attack on Vicksburg in October. In a letter to Grant he wrote:

I am daily more and more convinced that we should hold the river absolutely and leave the interior alone. Detachments inland can always be overcome or are at great hazard, and they do not convert the people. They cannot be made to love us, but may be made to fear us, and dread the passage of troops through their country. With the Mississippi safe we could land troops at any point and by a quick march break the railroad, where we could make ourselves so busy that our descent would be dreaded the whole length of the river, and by the loss of Negroes and other property they would in time discover that war is not the remedy for the political evils of which they complained....We cannot change the hearts of those people of the south, but we can make war so terrible that they will realize the fact that however brave and gallant and devoted to their country, still they are mortal and should exhaust all peaceful remedies before they fly to war. (3)

However, to Grant at the time, the surest route to Vicksburg still seemed to be the same route he had used before to move south through Tennessee into northern Mississippi. He wanted to move overland along solid ground and maintain good lines of communications back to his supply bases.

His plan called for two movements, one led by him from Corinth, the other an easterly sweep by Sherman from Memphis. He intended to cut off Pemberton's army north of the Yalobusha. Unfortunately, he was not quick enough and the Confederates escaped south of the river. Heavy rains and muddy roads slowed Grant's army and its supplies. The conditions presented a new vulnerability and indicated a new approach was needed. Instead of a direct head to

head confrontation Grant decided to try an indirect one. He ordered Sherman to return to Memphis and organize an amphibious expedition on Vicksburg while he engaged the enemy from a land campaign.

On 8 December 1862, the push for Vicksburg began. As early as 10 November Halleck had wired Grant that Memphis was to be developed as "the depot of a joint military and naval expedition on Vicksburg." (4) Meeting with Sherman in Oxford, Mississippi, Grant informed his General that: (a) reinforcements, if not already at Memphis, would soon reach there; (b) Halleck had assured him that Admiral Porter would support the operation; (c) a division of troops from Helena would be available; and (d) he believed that if Sherman moved promptly he could seize a beachhead on the Yazoo River. After Sherman's men were ashore, they would cut the Mississippi Central Railroad and Southern Railroad of Mississippi, attack Vicksburg and occupy it. While Sherman carried out this mission, Grant would keep the Confederate Army occupied in north Mississippi, thus preventing Pemberton from reinforcing the relatively small Vicksburg garrison. Sherman believed that if Pemberton's army moved away from the Yalobusha River line, towards Vicksburg, Grant would follow it closely. Grant also informed him that Major General Nathaniel Banks was supposedly moving north towards Vicksburg from his base in New Orleans. (5)

After appropriate orders were issued by Grant, and Halleck had been informed of the plans, Sherman struck out for Memphis with one division and arrived there on 12 December. He had already written

Porter outlining Grant's master plan. In his correspondence he expressed his faith in the Navy's full cooperation. Sherman proposed that he would strike inland and wreck the Confederate's communications and then the Navy and Army would attack Vicksburg in a joint operation. Sherman would defer the naval planning to Porter. He wanted to get started as soon as possible, before winter weather made the inland roads impassible by Grant's army. He did not want to delay the operations if the ironclads were not available; they would come later. (6)

When Sherman arrived in Memphis he was elated to find two divisions under Brigadier Generals George W. Morgan and Andrew J. Smith awaiting him. Since he already had M.L. Smith's division and General Curtis' 12,000 men from the Department of the Missouri his expeditionary force now numbered 30,000 strong with 40 guns organized into 8 batteries. (7)

The day after his arrival in Memphis, Sherman organized his 13th Army Corps into three divisions, the First, Second, and Third. They were commanded by A.J. Smith, M.L. Smith, and G.W. Morgan, respectively. The division commanders were ordered to have their men ready to embark by 18 December. (8)

The gathering of transports and supplies delayed departure until 22 December. When Sherman's force shoved off Admiral Porter took the lead in his flagship *Black Hawk*. The flotilla was composed of 55 transports, 5 supply boats and 7 gunboats. As the ships steamed along they were often fired upon by rebel patrols. Whenever this occurred the ships would pull to the shore and troops would be

landed to punish the enemy. Usually they would not be able to overtake the fleeing Rebels, and as a reprisal the Yankee troops would burn all of the buildings in the vicinity. As they pulled ashore for the night near Gaines' Landing the Federal's encountered enemy fire. As soon as they had chased the Rebels off they burned the village. With this as the pattern, most of the plantations from Helena on south were burned.

During his approach toward Vicksburg, Sherman prepared his final instructions for his division commanders. He outlined the objective of the campaign and described its importance. He wrote that the Rebels controlled 244 miles of the Mississippi from Vicksburg to Port Hudson. If they could be driven out it would prove most important toward ending the war. He explained that Grant's army was pushing for the Yalobusha River and Banks was driving north to Port Hudson. Sherman's army was to reduce Vicksburg, clear the fortifications along the Yazoo River, and then act in concert with Grant against Pemberton's army at Jackson, Mississippi. It is interesting that he also wrote, "The gunboats under Admiral Porter will do their share, and I feel assured that the Army will not fall short in its work." (9)

While Sherman was thus involved on the Mississippi, the Rebels were raising havoc to the east. General Earl Van Dorn and his cavalry force pounced on Grant's supply depot at Holly Springs capturing 1500 Federals and destroying \$1,500,000 worth of his supplies. Grant decided that he could not continue his push southward. He withdrew north of the Tallahatchie River to shorten

and maintain his supply line. Grant sent a letter off to Sherman telling him this and saying that he somehow hoped to keep Pemberton occupied by a movement toward Grenada or Meridian. This message did not reach Sherman until late on 2 January, 1863. (10)

In preparation for the operation Porter had ordered the powerful ironclad *Benton* and a task force to proceed ahead to the Yazoo River. The force was to enter the river, sweep the waterway for torpedoes, and seize a beachhead for the Army. He had recently lost an ironclad to a torpedo and gave explicit instructions concerning removing them from the river. (11) The flotilla arrived on 23 December and began dragging the stream. The gunboats were fired on by sharpshooters hidden in the brush along side where the ironclad had been sunk. In reprisal, *Benton* sprayed the woods with grapeshot. After flushing the enemy, Commander Gwin lowered his cutter and sent a crew to drag for torpedoes. To protect the small boat were three gunboats closely following. For two days, the crews worked to clear the channel of mines, which they called torpedoes or *infernal machines*. They were repulsed several times by ambushes and sharpshooters hidden in the trees. By dusk on Christmas Day the four gunboats had cleared the channel and were anchored one-half mile below the Chickasaw Bayou. Gwin posted his dinghy several hundred yards upstream as a lookout and retired for the night. (12)

General Sherman spent Christmas afternoon aboard *Black Hawk* in counsel with Admiral Porter. During the meeting they finished the plan for the landing. Porter received the word that his gunboats

had reconnoitered the Yazoo daily and now had it clear of torpedoes. All reports received indicated to Sherman that they should land at Johnson's plantation and form their beachhead.

They shoved off on the 26th and moved as planned while facing light opposition all day and debarked the troops at Johnson's plantation. On the 27th they would attack. (See Map 3 and 5)

During the night Sherman modified his plan and decided to move two brigades, further than planned, up the Yazoo by boat. These brigades were to clear the enemy that were detonating the torpedoes. Also he asked for support from the Navy in the form of a bombardment on Snyder's Bluff to create a diversion for the Army. This also required moving further up the river. Porter agreed to the support and quickly sent his sailors back to clearing more of the river of torpedoes. The gunboats, with cutters away, set out and by noon had cleared the river to a point several hundred yards above where Thompson's Lake empties into the Yazoo. (13) The Admiral had decided to see how the removal of the torpedoes was progressing, and was distressed to discover that the tars engaged in this activity were under a galling fire from Confederate sharpshooters, hidden in the dense undergrowth that came down to the water's edge on the far side of the river. Hailing the brigade commander, Brigadier General Alvin P. Hovey, Porter suggested that a few infantrymen on the west side of the river would solve this problem. Hovey relayed Porter's request to his Division Commander General Frederick Steele. In response to the naval officer's plea, infantrymen of the 17th Missouri quickly

embarked on two transports and were ferried across the river where they soon routed the snipers. Freed from the harassing fire of greyclads, the sailors' efforts to clear the channel of torpedoes were expedited. (14)

Ashore the fighting progressed with each flank of Sherman's Army feeling out the enemy. As his brigades moved toward the bluffs they encountered Confederates deployed in the woods and hidden in the thick underbrush. They advanced slowly taking artillery and heavy musket fire. The Yankees were blunted but never completely stopped until they reached the foot of the bluffs at dusk. Exhausted, but only slightly shaken, they halted and dug in for the night.

During the afternoon of the 27th the Confederates were heavily reinforced. Three new brigades arrived that had been freed up when Grant was forced to end his strike to the east. Pemberton arrived and quickly reorganized his defenses and plugged in the fresh troops to face the Union advance.

The Navy continued to clear the channel of torpedoes so they could push upstream. By 1530 they had reached Redwood plantation where again they came under cannon fire. Commander Gwin was now far enough upstream to fire upon Snyder's Bluff, as suggested by Sherman. While his guns pounded the forts the ironclad was subjected to heavy counterfire. During the engagement Gwin left the armored pilothouse to supervise actions aboard his boat and immediately received a mortal wound to the chest from a rifled projectile. Benton remained on station for another 90 minutes

before Admiral Porter ordered the boat to pull back. The sturdy ironclad had been struck by 24 rounds. Those rounds that hit the pilothouse or casement did little damage, but because of the elevation of the Confederate guns on the ridge, when they hit the deck they passed through, wrecking the guns below.

The gunboats withdrew downstream for the night. In the fight between the Union fleet and the Confederate cannoners, the Rebels were victorious. The Union lost Gwin and three other sailors, two guns, and sustained other minor damage. The Confederates suffered no damage to their guns and lost but one man. (15)

On the 28th and 29th the fight raged ashore. Sherman would strike and advance while Pemberton blunted each assault. The nature of the land forced Sherman into narrow fronts because of swamps and creeks. Pemberton was constantly receiving reinforcements from General Joe Johnson. They were plugged into the line or used to strengthen his flanks. There was also constant naval action in support of the battle. The gunboats sprayed the banks and lobbed shells toward Vicksburg. (16)

On the afternoon of the 29th Porter received an urgent request from Sherman for an ammunition resupply run to Memphis. The Army had sailed without 6,000,000 small arms rounds that had not yet arrived upon their departure from that city. Sherman requested that Porter send his fastest boat to Memphis for the ammunition and return it to Vicksburg. This request was made because Porter's light draft steamboats were much faster than Sherman's supply boats. (17)

When darkness settled on the 29th Sherman was forced to report:

(At day's end) we stood our original ground and had suffered a repulse. The effort was necessary to a successful accomplishment of my orders, and the combinations were the best possible under the circumstances. I assume all the responsibility and attach fault to no one, and am generally satisfied with the high spirit manifested by all. (18)

It was raining again and during the night the Federal troops and commanders could hear the rattles and whistles of trains arriving in Vicksburg. Without a doubt they brought reinforcements.

On the 30th the weather improved and the sun broke through. Before making another move though, Sherman informed Porter that he would make a thorough reconnaissance of the Confederate lines. He ordered his lines to hold and await his word. An examination of the Confederate lines satisfied Sherman that a resumption of efforts to force a crossing of Chickasaw Bayou would "be fatal to a large proportion of...[his] command." He concluded that, although Vicksburg was the major objective, the capture of the defenses of the Yazoo River was "equally important," because possession of these forts would enable his army to open communications with Grant as directed. (19) Therefore he looked to turn the Rebel's right flank by further going up the Yazoo under cover of darkness and take Drumgould's Bluff. Sherman asked Porter's opinion and support. He got both. So while there was little action along the front lines on the 30th, Sherman and Porter were busy planning the next move. They decided to move after the moon set on New Year's Eve.

After darkness the soldiers assembled and moved aboard the

transports. They were told that they would land under cover of darkness and storm the fort with bayonets, never firing a shot. Sherman remained aboard Porter's flagship until midnight, when he returned to his headquarters. Riding back to Mrs. Lake's, he felt confident that, with the troops aboard the transports and the gunboats in position, fate appeared to favor his attack on Snyder's Bluff. Sherman, reaching Mrs. Lake's, made a brief inspection. After seeing that his officers were at their posts, ready to act on the first sounds of cannonading from the direction of Drumgould's Bluff, he retired. (20)

However, luck was not with them. Shortly after midnight the area was blanketed with fog. Visibility was less than 30 feet and the boats could not move until 0400. The attack was called off. Total darkness would not come until 0525 the next evening because of a late full moon. Porter recommended cancelling the entire plan. Sherman was forced to agree. He was bogged down in lowlands that might flood at any time. Trains could be heard arriving at regular intervals. Lastly, Grant's message of the 23rd, telling of his withdrawal, had just arrived. The combination of these details prompted Sherman's decision to withdraw.

The next day the Union Army was on its way back to Milliken's Bend. Sherman had stayed a week and suffered 1776 casualties in comparison to the Confederates who lost 187. (21)

#### Arkansas Post

On 2 January 1863, Sherman returned to the mouth of the Yazoo and found Major General John McClernand awaiting him. McClernand

was first and foremost a politician. He was ambitious, energetic, and unforgivably overbearing. He had in his possession orders from Lincoln placing him in charge of the Mississippi river expedition. He intended to use this chance to earn new fame and possibly win his way into the White House. Sherman, ever the loyal and dutiful soldier, relinquished his responsibility and endeavored to become a helpful and obedient subordinate.

Porter had cordially met McClernand earlier that summer in Washington so he was predisposed to favor and support McClernand. This attitude was totally destroyed and washed away during their first meeting out west. Porter had grown to respect and like Grant and moreover had developed a close and abiding friendship with Sherman that only grew stronger over the remaining years of their lives. Almost as soon as Sherman and McClernand gathered aboard Porter's flagship, the politician rudely attacked Sherman's actions at Chickasaw Bayou, his attitude toward the press (always infamously poor, actually), how much he had lowered the Army's morale, and then boasted how grand and gloriously he would lead the army. He carried on about a plan to push into Arkansas via the Arkansas River to rid the area of Confederates. When Sherman said that he would gladly undertake the mission, McClernand haughtily reminded him that he was only a Corps Commander. Porter immediately judged him a pompous fool and declared,

"I'll tell you what, General McClernand, if General Sherman commands the army I will, myself, lead a proper naval force along and make a sure thing of it. Otherwise I will have nothing to do with the affair!" When reproached by Sherman for such a remark Porter replied, "I don't care, he shall not treat you so rudely in my cabin, and I am glad of the opportunity of letting him know my sentiments." (22)

Although they settled the problems and worked out the details of the expedition, Porter's feelings toward McClernand never improved.

The move up the Arkansas River was caused by the fact that Rebels had boldly moved back into the area and were raiding Union camps and capturing Federal ships along the Mississippi. Gaining force they had recently occupied Fort Hindman or Arkansas Post and greatly troubled the movement of supplies down the Mississippi.

(See Map 4)

Therefore with McClernand at the lead, the expedition set out on 4 January with 30,000 troops, 50 transports, and 3 ironclads and 10 light draft tinclad gunboats. They arrived at the fort, 50 miles upriver from the Mississippi, late on 9 January. Plans were finalized for an attack on the 10th. Fighting was delayed until 1730 on the 10th when the troops were finally in position. Three ironclads lead the attack. They closed to within 400 yards of the fort and commenced shelling. Two light drafts pulled up and lobbed in shrapnel and shells. The Union fire was exceptionally effective and the opposing fire slackened. Porter seized the opportunity to try to run a tinclad past the fort to deliver enfilade fire. The tinclads only carried thin armor protection against musket fire,

and could not withstand fire from cannons or rifled artillery.

The boat could not get past the obstacles that had been placed in the river and after being struck several times she retreated downstream. By now the naval shelling had quieted all fires from the fort, however no ground assault took place. It was now dark so the entire fleet dropped back and anchored for the night. (23)

During the night and again the next morning McClernand adjusted his lines. By 1300 everyone was in place and the navy commenced shelling the fort again. Union artillery had also been brought forward, and they shelled the rebel entrenchments. Three boats managed to get upstream past the fort and fired on the place from behind. By 1630 all of the forts weapons had been silenced and white flags appeared on the parapets. Porter scrambled ashore and accepted the surrender of the fort and its 36 men. Soon the outworks also surrendered. The naval guns had done their job. Every gun in the fort had been knocked off its mounts or destroyed. Several men and all of the artillery horses had been killed. In all, the Confederates suffered 28 killed, 81 wounded, and had close to 4800 men captured. The cost to the Federals was 134 killed, 898 wounded, and 29 missing. (24)

At first McClernand considered pressing further into Arkansas. However Porter advised against it because the river was falling. Additionally, on the 14th he received orders from Grant to return to the Mississippi and join him in his press on Vicksburg.

Grant was furious. Just when Banks might be closing on Vicksburg from the south, McClernand was dragging the war off into

Arkansas. He had diverted resources and manpower to an objective that in no way supported a strategic necessity. Grant sent orders to McClernand explaining, "Unless absolutely necessary for ensuring the capture of Vicksburg you will abstain from all moves not connected with it." (25) At the same time he complained to General Halleck who gave him permission to relieve McClernand and to take command of the Vicksburg expedition himself. (26)

On 30 January 1863, Grant drafted and issued General Orders No. 13, announcing that effective immediately he would assume command of the expedition against Vicksburg, and department headquarters would thereafter be with the expedition. Corps commanders were to resume command of their respective corps and report to and receive orders from Grant's headquarters. McClernand was thus bluntly notified that hereinafter his authority had been circumscribed, and he was now one of four corps commanders reporting to Grant. (27)

#### Finding A Trail

Actually by January 10, 1863, Grant had made up his mind to command the expedition down the Mississippi. The vastness of his department made it impossible to coordinate the effort from West Tennessee. Reorganizing his forces, he left General Charles S. Hamilton in charge of the new District of West Tennessee. That work completed Grant headed to Memphis with 16,000 men to oversee the reduction of Vicksburg.

On the afternoon of 17 January he went downriver from Memphis to make a personal evaluation of the situation. At the mouth of the

Arkansas River he found McClernand, Sherman and Porter. He held a series of meetings, war councils, to develop a plan. A series of experiments were tried to overcome the Vicksburg batteries.

The first move would be to cut a canal across DeSoto Point in order to reach the Mississippi River below the Confederate guns surrounding Vicksburg. This canal had been started by Union forces from New Orleans during June of 1862 but had been abandoned when the river level dropped. Grant turned his entire Army to the project. One-half of every unit was assigned to dig the trench. They struggled along from mid-January to the end of March but the project was doomed to failure from the start. The river rose to flood level and broke through dams holding the water back. Ground seepage filled the bottom faster than steam pumps could keep it empty. Finally the Confederates, spying the work from the bluffs surrounding Vicksburg, moved artillery and cannons south six miles below Vicksburg. They now commanded the area where the men dug and their fire compelled the Union diggers to withdraw. Grant was never serious about the success of this attempt and now abandoned the plan. (28) (See Map 5)

The second plan called for opening the bayous which run from Milliken's Bend west through Roundabout Bayou to the Tensas River. This route would drop them back out onto the Mississippi near New Carthage, on the west bank, south of Vicksburg. Dredge boats cleared a narrow path and some small boats made it through. However by April the waters had begun to fall and the roads again became impassable so this attempt was dropped. (See Map 6)

A third project was the Lake Providence route. It promised to allow larger boats and transports to get through. Lake Providence is 75 miles north of Vicksburg in Louisiana. It lies one mile west of the Mississippi. If a canal was knocked through the levee to the lake then boats could get through. They would travel down the lake to Bayou Boele, to Bayou Macone, to the Tensas River, the Wachita River, the Red River, and back out onto the Mississippi. This route covered 200 miles from the Red back up the Mississippi to Vicksburg. This idea was also soon scrapped.

Plan number four was the Yazoo Pass attempt. Five miles south of Helena, Arkansas, a manmade levee blocked the Mississippi from Lake Moon. From Lake Moon water flowed east to Coldwater River, then into the Tallahatchie, finally south emptying into the Yazoo River northeast of Vicksburg behind the Haynes' Bluff batteries. This levee was blasted open and an expedition launched at the end of February. Porter's gunboats and Army transports chopped and cleared their way to the Tallahatchie River. Just short of the Yazoo the Confederates, suspecting such a move, constructed Fort Pemberton. The Federals arrived here on 11 March and tried for ten days to reduce the fort. The lowlands were flooded so the fort could not be reached by foot. On 21 March, somewhat bloodied and short of supplies the expedition turned around and retraced their path.

The fifth plan was devised wholly by Porter. This task force would include Porter commanding the gunboat flotilla and Sherman commanding his Corps. It serves as another fine example of

supporting joint operations. (See Map 7)

Porter had been studying his maps and interrogating local people. He determined that by steaming up Steele's Bayou, crossing Black Bayou to Deer Creek, pushing upstream on Deer Creek to Rolling Fork he could reach Big Sunflower River. Sailing downstream 41 miles on the Sunflower he would reach the Yazoo River well north of Haynes' Bluff. At that point he could turn north toward Fort Pemberton or south and come in behind Vicksburg.

Grant was satisfied by the feasibility of the operation after he personally made a reconnaissance of the route as far as the entrance to Black Bayou with Porter. He ordered Sherman to provide the infantry and artillery force to support the Navy along with working parties to help clear the channel. (29)

Sherman joined his friend Porter at Hill's Plantation on 16 March. Together they inspected the passage to Deer Creek and then traveled upstream about three miles. Sherman was not impressed by what he saw. The creek was narrow and twisting and the land was flooded. Porter, however, was optimistic that he could reach the Yazoo with his gunboats.

By night fall on the 17th Porter had reached the L.C. Watson plantation. Here he learned that Confederate keelboats regularly came to the area for fresh supplies to feed the Vicksburg garrison.

The next day Porter was disappointed to find the channel getting much narrower and it was now choked with willows. His progress was slowed to less than one mile per hour. Adding to his

discomfort were fresh signs of heavy Confederate presence. They had been destroying all the cotton as they drew back. Realizing that he had been discovered, Porter tried to drive his force even harder toward Rolling Fork. In spite of his efforts to hurry by day's end he had been slowed to making one-half mile per hour. They tied up seven miles short of Rolling Fork.

On the 19th Porter found that the Confederates were now felling trees across the narrow channel to block his boats. He ordered one of his boat captains ashore with 300 volunteers to race ahead and hold the confluence of Rolling Fork. At the same time he sent word back to Sherman that he was now within a mile and a half of Rolling Fork and needed 10,000 men to hold it. (30)

Porter's sailors continued to clear the fallen timber and by the next day the lead gunboat was within half a mile of Rolling Rock. Just before dark the Confederates attacked. They managed to drive his shore party back from Rolling Fork. They also managed to sneak into his rear and fell more trees behind him blocking his retreat. About this time word from Sherman arrived saying he was having difficulty moving troops forward because of the narrow creek and flooded lowlands. Fearful that he would be totally cut off he decided to retreat.

Porter ordered "General Quarters" and took precautions to prevent boarding. He began floating freely downstream bouncing from bank to bank. After retreating only two miles he found his rear barred by freshly fallen trees. Trapped, he battened the hatches and prepared for repelling boarders.

As soon as Sherman received Porter's message for help he replied, "I will do all that mortal can to push troops (forward)." (31) He responded with vigor to help. Sending Colonel Giles Smith and 800 men forward in a flying column, he changed his mind about going himself so as to organize new arrivals into a relief team at Hill's Plantation. After Smith departed, Sherman commandeered a canoe and paddled back down to Black Bayou to where the troops had advanced. He organized more working parties to clear the way for the troop transports. After dark he lead the men on foot to Hill's Plantation where they remained for the rest of the night. Early in the morning he lead them off again to rescue his friend.

Back at the gunboats the sailors cheered the arrival of Colonel Giles Smith and his relief troops on the afternoon of the 21st. Smith reported to Porter for orders. The later quickly put him to work clearing the Rebel sharpshooters and patrolling the banks for other attempted attacks. The working parties once again returned to clearing the obstacles from the creek. By morning of the 22nd the boats were free again and moving downstream.

At noon Sherman appeared galloping up bareback on a horse that had been taken from a local plantation. Sailors cheered as the General was hailed by Porter from one of the ironclads. Porter reported,

"I do not know when I felt more pleased to see that gallant officer, for without the assistance of the troops we could not, without great loss, have performed the arduous work of clearing out the obstructions." (32)

At the same time reports reached Porter from Grant that listed

the massive force he had organized and was sending to aid in his rescue. McPherson was readying his Corps to move forward. Grant offered his full support for the expedition for as long as Porter believed it was worthwhile. In spite of their expended efforts, Porter had seen enough. He was done and another attempt to get to Vicksburg ended.

Although disappointed by these ill-fated attempts General Grant was not to quit. He announced his latest plan for taking Vicksburg. He briefed Sherman, McClernand, and Porter that he intended to bypass Vicksburg from the north and reduce her from the south. The water was starting to lower and the land was beginning to dry so that an army could move over it. He would move down the west bank of the Mississippi and ferry across at Grand Gulf and strike inland. Every commander was against it. Sherman presented a paper showing how impossible such a move would be. Grant listened to it all, then said, "I am sorry to differ with you all, but my mind is made up; the army will move tomorrow at ten o'clock." (33)

At 2200 on 16 April, Porter led the stealthy procession out of Milliken's Bend and past the batteries at Vicksburg. They safely floated by the upper guns but those at Warrenton caught them. The Confederates lighted bonfires and tar barrels to illuminate the river. The guns on the bluffs roared and for 90 minutes the 12 boats were under fire. Many rounds found their mark and fires broke out causing Porter to claim that, "Hell seemed loose". Then just as suddenly silence came. The fleet had passed Vicksburg. Of

the twelve boats that left eleven made the voyage, losing only the supply ship, *Henry Clay*. (34)

South of Vicksburg the forces were joined and Grant made his famous bolt cross country. The remaining campaign for Vicksburg was essentially a land campaign. On 4 July, 1863, a flag of surrender was hoisted over the city. The Mississippi again flowed unvexed to the sea.

River-power, commanded by Porter, had proved as important as sea-power. It now completed the cordon around the Confederacy. The North had won its victory primarily by the superior organization of the combined naval and military forces which Admiral Porter, General Sherman, and General Grant led. (35)

## Part II

### The Red River Campaign

In March of 1864, General Nathaniel P. Banks was directed to lead a joint Navy and Army force up the Red River with the aim of capturing Shreveport, Louisiana. The naval force was commanded by Admiral Porter. This campaign was a total disaster caused by nature and poor leadership.

Porter, with his fleet of ironclads and light draft tinclads, escorted the transports carrying Brigadier General A.J. Smith's 10,000 men from Sherman's Army. They were to meet General Banks at Alexandria on 15 March. Porter's fleet entered the mouth of the Red River on 12 March. (See Map 8)

The waterborne force moved up river to Simsport where Smith's force debarked and marched on Fort de Russy. He promptly carried the works by assault, with a loss of 34 killed and wounded, capturing 200 prisoners, eight heavy guns, and two field-pieces. (36)

They quickly embarked their transports and the entire force was in Alexandria on the 15th, the appointed rendezvous date. Banks arrived 10 days late, on March 25th, and the operation began to crumble.

Banks dallied about Alexandria for another five days before heading up river. There was an imperative to hurry because Banks knew that Sherman's division, under General A. J. Smith, could only remain with him for a month. They were then to return to Vicksburg to commence the campaign against Atlanta. On 31 March Porter

started up the winding Red River which was six feet lower than normal and falling. Banks struck out overland with his army. By 10 April Porter's flotilla had reached Springfield Landing, forty land miles below Shreveport, where he expected to receive a message from Banks. Finding no courier he pushed 10 miles further upstream. (37) Here he came upon a new obstruction in the form of a steamer broached sideways across the river. While Porter was planning a way around the obstruction the delayed courier caught up to him with a message that Banks had been routed by the enemy at Sabine Cross Roads, and he was in full retreat back toward Alexandria. Porter was now without any land cover. At the same time the river began to fall rapidly. (38)

With Banks' defeat and related retreat all hope of taking or even reaching Shreveport was lost. Porter quickly reversed his course and headed for the safety of the army who would protect his flanks. The gunboats were distributed through the transports with *Osage* bringing up the rear.

The Confederates, being relieved by the falling back of the army, were free to attack the confined boats at any point in the river. There were but a half-a-dozen gunboats to protect the long line of transports. (39)

At Blair's Plantation on the 12th, General Tom Green and his Confederates attacked. The gunboats did yeoman's work driving off the Confederates and killed their leader, General Green. The Rebels suffered over 400 killed and wounded. While the gunboats were raked by small arms fire, their only casualties were seven

wounded. (40)

Porter reached Grand Ecore on 15 April and found Banks. Even though A.J. Smith had stopped the Rebels a few days earlier, Banks was interested only in retreating back downstream as fast as possible. The going in the shallow riverbed was tortuously slow at times and Porter had to beg Banks not to draw back to Alexandria. Porter also headed downstream. The ironclad *Eastport* struck a mine eight miles south of Grand Ecore and sank, blocking the river. After getting two steampump boats and investing a strenuous effort directed by the Admiral, the ship was floated and again headed toward Alexandria. On the 21st however she ran aground again on a pile of snags. The crews worked round the clock for four days to save her. The retreat of the army had left the banks unprotected. This forced Admiral Porter to reluctantly blow up his largest ironclad on the 26th. (41)

Again Porter rushed his remaining boats southeast toward Alexandria. At this time he had the two steampumps and three gunboats (*Cricket*, *Fort Hindman*, and *Juliet*) with him as the remaining ships of the squadron had gone ahead. They had made about twenty miles when they were attacked by artillery. Porter in *Cricket* had seen the ambush and ordered fire from the forward howitzer. At almost the same instant nineteen shells came crashing down on *Cricket* and *Juliet*. Porter ran to the pilothouse just as one pilot was wounded. The initial attack upon *Cricket* made her lose her engines and her guns were knocked silent. Porter ran back to the gundeck to find that all guns but one had been disabled. In

the engine room he found all the firemen dead or wounded and that the engineer had been killed with the throttle in his hand, turning it off. Porter quickly reorganized new gun crews and firemen. He rushed back topside to arrive in the pilothouse just as the second pilot was torn in half by a shell. Taking the controls, he spun the tinclad around the bend of the river and broadside to the ambush. The gunners put heavy enfilade fire onto the Confederates and broke the attack. In the five minute firefight *Cricket* had taken 38 hits and lost 31 of her crew of 50. *Juliet* had 15 casualties and escaped upstream with *Fort Hindman*. One pump boat, unarmed and unprotected, was sunk. *Cricket* escaped downstream and sent *Osage* up to rescue *Fort Hindman*, *Juliet*, and the remaining pumpboat. The gunboats made it through the gauntlet the next morning but the pumpboat was sunk and her black crew was killed by the Rebels. (42)

On April 27, the fleet was together again in Alexandria. Of the operation to date, Captain Thomas O. Selfridge, skipper of *Osage*, was compelled to write:

"During all this hazardous and harassing return from Springfield Landing there had been no instance in which the Navy had withheld support from the Army when called upon; of which there is no better proof than that every Army transport returned safely, though by delaying the return to the last possible moment the safety of the fleet was jeopardized, and the *Eastport* and the two pumpboats were lost." (43)

The obstacles that faced the Union fleet now included the Confederates, a retreating guard, and two waterfalls on the river south of Alexandria. In the month since going up river the water

had dropped six feet instead of its usual spring rise. There was now a mile and a quarter of river with bare rocks showing. The ironclads drew seven feet of water.

Lieutenant Colonel Joseph Bailey of the 4th Wisconsin Cavalry, serving as General Franklin's chief engineer, suggested damming the river and flooding the falls. Three thousand men were put to work cutting trees, gathering stones, and building the upper dam. The work began on 30 April and by 8 May the upper falls were dammed. All of the ships were carried to safety. The lower dam was easier to construct and was completed by 11 May. With 3,000 men pulling on ropes and cheering their progress, the ships were hauled to deeper water. This was completed just in time because Banks began his retreat again, even before the last ships were brought below the falls. The back waters from the spring floods on the Mississippi kept the lower end of the Red River high and the fleet sailed to safety.

As a side light, while the dams were being built, Banks allowed 6000 rebels with 25 pieces of artillery to slip around his forces and get below Alexandria. On 5 May this force attacked the gunboats *Signal* and *Covington* which were escorting the quartermaster boat *Warner*. *Signal* and *Covington* came about immediately and returned heavy fire. Against 25 field pieces the tinclads were no match. Very shortly their thin armor, rade for musket fire, was pierced and the steampipes and boilers were full of holes. Although disabled they continued the fight for five hours. Finally *Covington* ran ashore, emptied 31 of its crew of 76.

and was set afire. *Signal* had too many wounded to do the same, and was forced to surrender. The crew was made prisoner, the boat's guns were captured, and then *Signal* was sunk as an obstruction in the river.

Partly as history and partly as an attack on Banks, Admiral Porter later wrote:

"The brave men in their light vessels, only musketproof, defended them for four hours, and many of the actions heralded to the world in the late war were much less worthy of notice than this contest between two little gunboats and twenty pieces of artillery, most of which had been captured from the army at Pleasant Hills (meaning Banks' debacle at Sabine Cross Roads) " (44)

On 21 May the last of the fleet reached the Mississippi. Thus ended the Red River campaign. It was one of the most humiliating and disastrous operations recorded during the war. Nothing was gained. The Union Army suffered 165 killed, 650 wounded, and 450 captured or missing. The Navy lost three gunboats, two pumpboats, 320 killed, wounded, or missing. After this campaign no further large scale operations were undertaken by either side in Louisiana.

There was a lasting hatred between Banks and Porter that each took to his grave. The War Department and the Navy Department argued over the causes. These arguments received heavy press coverage that embarrassed and belittled Admiral Porter. Generals Grant and Sherman wrote supportive and apologetic letters to him. It is significant testimony to the friendship and loyalty the latter three had developed.

### PART III

#### Thoughts

Jointness, as we describe it today, did not exist in the Armed Forces during the Civil War. There were several reasons that made joint operations difficult. These difficulties were evidenced in the early and late campaigns along the eastern seaboard, and they were manifested in the Red River campaign of 1864. In spite of these inherent roadblocks Grant, Sherman, and Porter made their arrangement work to total success.

A review of the obvious problems will be helpful to realize what this team was able to overcome. First, there was not an agreed upon National Strategy for using the different armies toward winning the war. Each separate Army had its own objectives and aims until General Grant took over as General-in-Chief in 1864. For three years the North never settled upon a single center of gravity for the South, they changed from commander to commander. Many plans were submitted and as many plans were chosen, all different and all at once. The Navy was committed to blockading the South, certain Armies were committed to seizing cities and population centers, while other commanders pursued Confederate armies.

Next, there was no joint staff to combine the strengths of the Army and Navy forces. While each branch of service did have a staff in Washington, there was not a single focal point below the President to coordinate the actions of the Army and Navy. The Secretary of War and the Secretary of the Navy seldom worked in

concert. Each had their own agenda, and it was often a political agenda. For example, General Butler was ordered to campaign from New Orleans toward Mobile, while the Gulf Navy, under Admiral Farragut, had orders from the Navy Department to proceed from New Orleans to Vicksburg. A Secretary of Defense was needed to pull the efforts of the two services together.

Lastly, even within the separate theaters of operations there was no overall theater commander. General Grant commented on this in his memoirs, "I had no more authority to command Porter than he had to command me." (45) Even within the Army the command structure was not always clear. For example, General Grant was directed to prepare his army and move against Vicksburg. Concurrently his subordinate, General McClernand, was authorized to raise an independent army and work within Grant's department toward the same objective, supposedly using the same naval support, transports, and logistical support.

McClellan, Butler, and Banks were never able to achieve fully integrated operations with the Navy. Banks and Butler ran separate campaigns with Porter that failed to attain their objectives because in these instances the Army and Navy never fully complemented each other on the battlefield. This was not the case with Grant, Sherman, and Porter. It is a testimony to the men involved that they cooperated so well. When Sherman left the Mississippi Valley and took his army east toward Georgia he wrote,

"God grant that the harmony and mutual respect that exists between our respective commanders, and shared by all true men of the joint services, may continue forever...I shall never look upon the river, nor see a gunboat without thinking of Admiral Porter and the many elegant and accomplished gentlemen it has been my good fortune to meet." (46)

When Grant wrote his memoirs in 1885 he compliments Porter at Vicksburg by writing,

"The Navy under Porter was all it could be, during the entire campaign. Without its assistance the campaign could not have been successfully made with twice the number of men engaged....The most perfect harmony reigned between the two arms of the service. There was never a request made, that I am aware of, either of the flag officer or any of his subordinates, that was not promptly complied with." (47)

Grant, Sherman, and Porter made joint operation a reality. I believe they accomplished it through dedication, loyalty, and a singleness of purpose. A review of some of the official correspondence from that period will help to understand how they succeeded and see the relationship that they developed.

When Halleck ordered Grant to start the amphibious operation against Vicksburg he simply wrote, "Ask Admiral Porter to cooperate." (48) Grant had to ask Porter to support his campaign and to work with Sherman down the Mississippi. Grant received Porter's assurance of help, and then told Sherman to work out the details with Porter.

Sherman and Porter wrote two interesting letters apiece to each other before they were able to meet in person. In the first letter Sherman immediately offered to do anything he could for Porter and

the Navy. (49) In Porter's reply he wrote, "I wish to cooperate with the Army in every way I can be of service." (50) They were off to a positive start. Sherman's second letter discussed the command relationships along the river, since there were three separate organizations; Grant on the east bank, Porter on the river, and General Samuel R. Curtis on the west bank. (51) In his reply, Porter is even more revealing of his support and situational awareness. He wrote,

"I am ready to cooperate with anybody and everybody, and all I ask on the part of the military commanders is their full confidence and a pull together.... I agree with you that a perfect concert of action should exist between all the United States forces in the West; it is the only way in which anything can be accomplished.... We only need to figure out who is in command. We need a single commander, not several generals. I am ready to cooperate with the Army, even to giving up any plans of my own." (52)

During Sherman's attempt to take Vicksburg in December 1862, Porter and Sherman bonded their friendship and Sherman earned Porter's full respect. In late December Porter received word from the Navy Department that McClelland was coming to take command. In reporting to the Secretary of the Navy, Gideon Welles, Porter wrote,

"There has been perfect accord between the movements of the Army and Navy. The military movements here have been masterly, and I regret to hear that a change of leaders is about to take place." (53)

On the same subject, Porter wrote Rear Admiral Andrew H. Foote, Grant's supporter at Shiloh, saying,

"I do not know what the Army will do now. McClernand has just arrived and will take command. Sherman, though, will have all the brains." (54)

Sherman is equally high in his praise of Porter and joint operations. He wrote Grant and reported, "(Porter's) promised support is all we could ask." (55) In January he added, "The Post of Arkansas could only have been taken by a strong force, both by land and water, as we took it,..." (56)

Late in January 1863 Sherman had more problems with the press when his leadership was blamed for the failure to achieve victory at Chickasaw Bayou. Sherman's sanity was questioned again. He wrote to Porter seeking support and asking, "Am I insane?" (57) Porter promptly gave his support saying,

"From the day I became acquainted with you, at Memphis, until our embarkation at Yazoo River for Arkansas Post, I have to remark that I never saw anything more promptly or better conducted, and I do not believe that any expedition, of such magnitude, was ever conducted with more order or system." (58)

When Porter reported to Gideon Welles on his problems during the attempt to reach Vicksburg via Steele Creek, Black Bayou, Deer Creek, and Rolling Fork he wrote,

"I do not know when I felt more pleased to see that gallant officer, Sherman, for without the assistance of the troops we could not have cleared the obstructions. I never knew before how much the comfort and safety of ironclads depended on the soldiers. ...there was never any two men who would labor harder than Generals Grant and Sherman to forward an expedition...No other general could have done better or as well as Sherman." (59)

This friendship lasted well beyond the campaign for Vicksburg.

When Vicksburg fell on 4 July 1863 Sherman was in Jackson, Mississippi pursuing General Joseph Johnston. He wrote to Porter to say that he was sorry that they could not celebrate the Vicksburg victory together but that all of his generals had sung "Army and Navy, forever" many times at dinner the evening before. (60)

This close relationship is especially evident in a letter from Sherman to Porter dated 14 October 1863. Sherman tells Porter that,

"I have just lost my little boy from sickness incurred during his visit to my camp. He was my pride and hope of life, and his loss takes from me the great incentive to excel....To you I can always unfold my thoughts as one worthy and capable of appreciating the feelings of a soldier and a gentleman." (61)

As Sherman pushed his army eastward from the Mississippi, Porter pledged his continued support by writing,

"I intend to line the Tennessee River with gunboats, and promise you that your communications shall never be interrupted if there is water in the river." (62)

Moreover, on 26 December 1863 Porter included in a letter to Grant,

"I was glad to hear that I was soon to see my old friend Sherman, whom I esteem as you do. Indeed, we have been so much together and in so many hard places that we look upon him as the property of the Navy." (63)

Porter respected and appreciated Grant on a professional level equally as much as he did Sherman, although Grant and Porter did not demonstrate as close a personal relationship as Porter and

Sherman. For example, when Porter was working with McClernand to take Grand Gulf he wrote to Grant and carefully described how a joint attack would succeed beautifully, but that he could not get things moving. Porter told Grant that 20 times a day he wished that Grant or Sherman was there to do it right. (64)

Another example of Porter's support for Grant's campaign was when Porter stripped six 8-inch guns from his boats and sent them ashore at Vicksburg to help in the siege. And then he sent off to Cairo, Illinois for more and larger naval guns for the Army. (65)

When Grant was promoted to General-in-Chief and called back to Washington, Porter's telegram read, "Congratulations, you have no greater well-wisher than myself." (66)

Porter was just as quick and eloquent to show his disdain. I include the next three quotes to provide the reader an example of his relationship with and opinion of Banks. All three were written while the Red River campaign was taking place. In a letter to Gideon Welles he wrote,

"I do not see why a fleet should not have the protection of an army as well as an army have the protection of a fleet....There is a faint attempt here (by Banks) to make a victory out of this, but two or three such victories would cost us our existence." (67)

On the same day he wrote Sherman.

"I can not express to you my entire disappointment with this department. You know my opinion of political generals. It is a crying sin to put the lives of thousands in the hands of such men....I only wish, dear General, that you had taken charge of the Red River business. I am sure it would have had a different termination." (68)

To help seal the fate of Banks, Porter wrote once again to the Secretary of the Navy saying,

"There is no foreseeing what other calamities may arise from the errors of one man, who, absorbed in his own interests, and diseased with political aspirations, cares little or nothing for the lives of those he has sacrificed, or thinks of anything but the effect this may have upon his future career. (69)

Grant, Sherman, and Porter had no personal aspirations beyond doing their best and achieving victory for the Union. Each of them subjugated their personal interests to the needs of the country. Service parochialism was set aside and joint operations were emphasized in order to exploit the full power of the Union forces employed against Vicksburg.

The three leaders had a clear understanding of each other and knew what to expect from one another. They all respected each other's opinions and listened carefully to any advice offered, whether it was Porter suggesting the employment of troops, or Grant or Sherman recommending the use of gunboats.

Through focusing their collective efforts upon the same objective, with a determination to work in harmony with each other, Grant, Sherman, and Porter made joint operations a reality during the Civil War. The same principles are valid today in order for us to enjoy success with the four major services. The framework for jointness is better today than it was 125 years ago. We just need to apply the effort.

NOTES

Chapter III

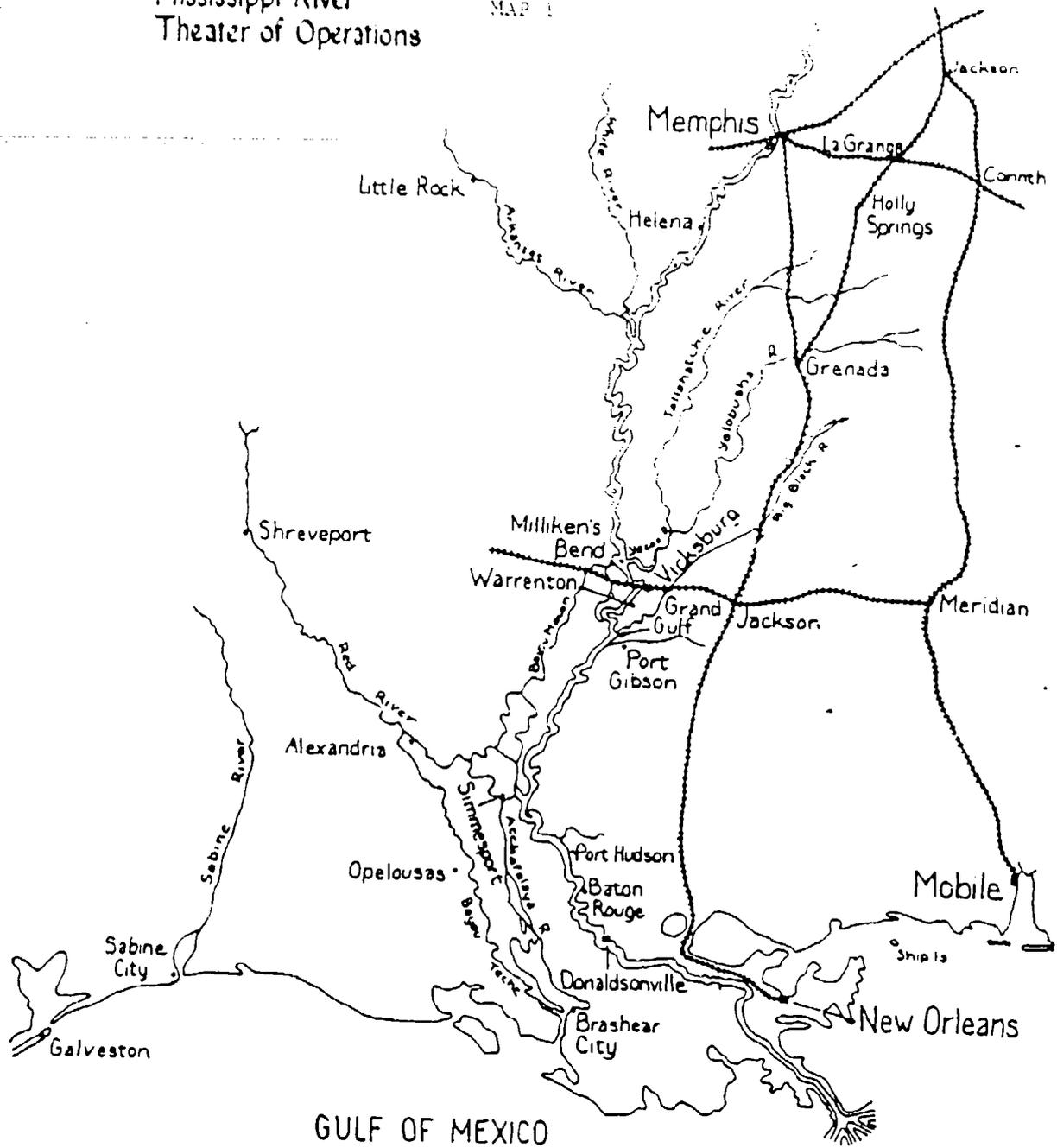
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26. Ibid., 563.
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28. U.S. Grant, Personal Memoirs of U. S. Grant, Vol. 1., 446.
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31. O.R.N., Ser. 1, Vol 24, 487.
32. O.R.A., Ser. 1, Vol 24, Pt. 1, 466-67.
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34. Allan Nevins, The War For the Union: The Organized War 1863-1864, Vol III., 51.
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49. Ibid., 473.
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51. Ibid., 488.
52. Ibid., 500-02.
53. Ibid., 580.
54. Ibid., 602.
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56. Ibid., 570.
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61. O.R.N., Ser. I, Vol 25, 468-69.
62. Ibid., 476.
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64. O.R.N., Ser. I, Vol 24, 600-01.
65. O.R.A., Ser. I, Vol 24, Pt. III, 361.
66. O.R.N., Ser. I, Vol 25, 636.
67. O.R.N., Ser. I, Vol 26, 45-8.
68. Ibid., 56.
69. Ibid., 95.

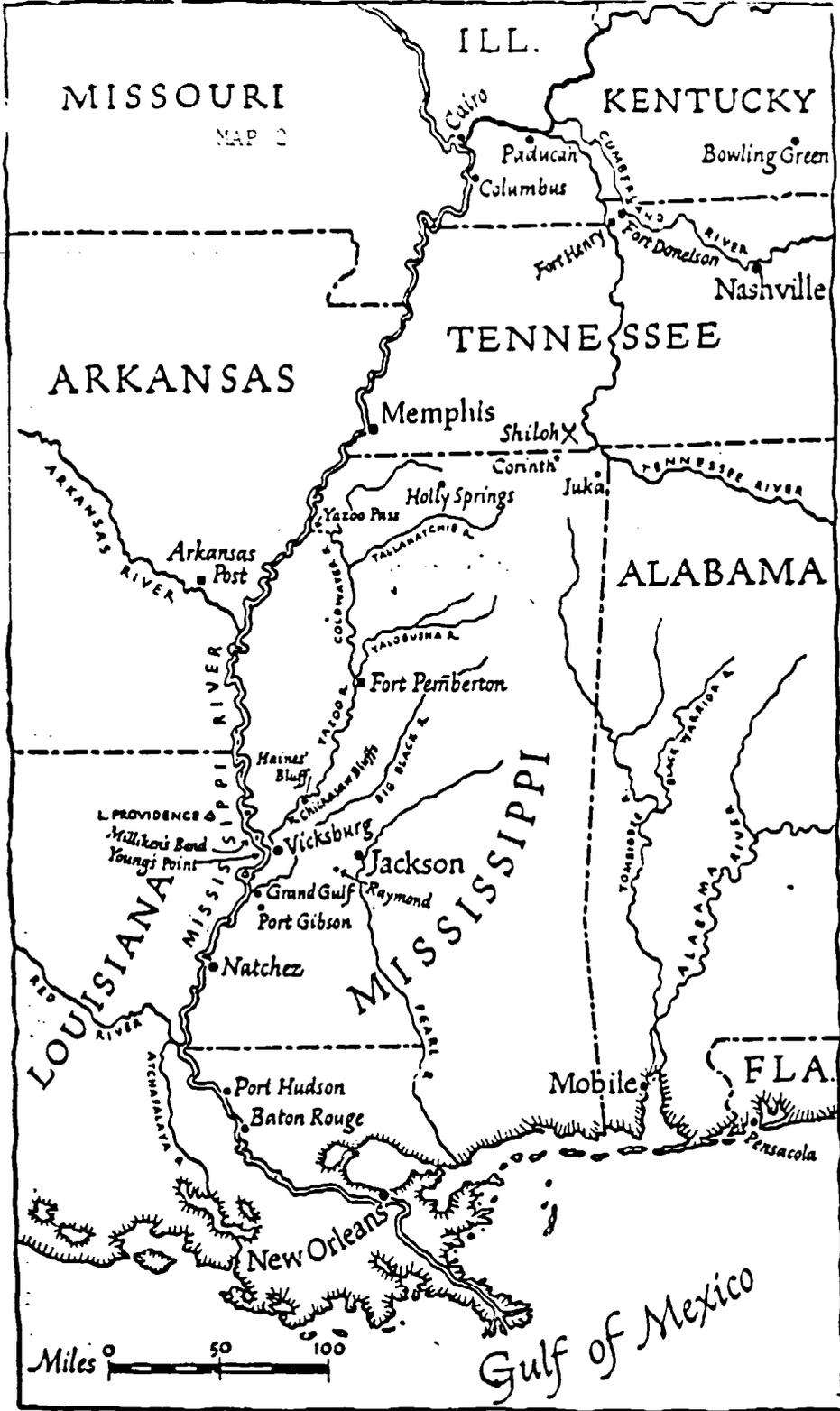
# Mississippi River Theater of Operations

MAP 1



1 inch = 85 miles

Cited from; Reed, Rowena. Combined Operations in the Civil War. Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1978.

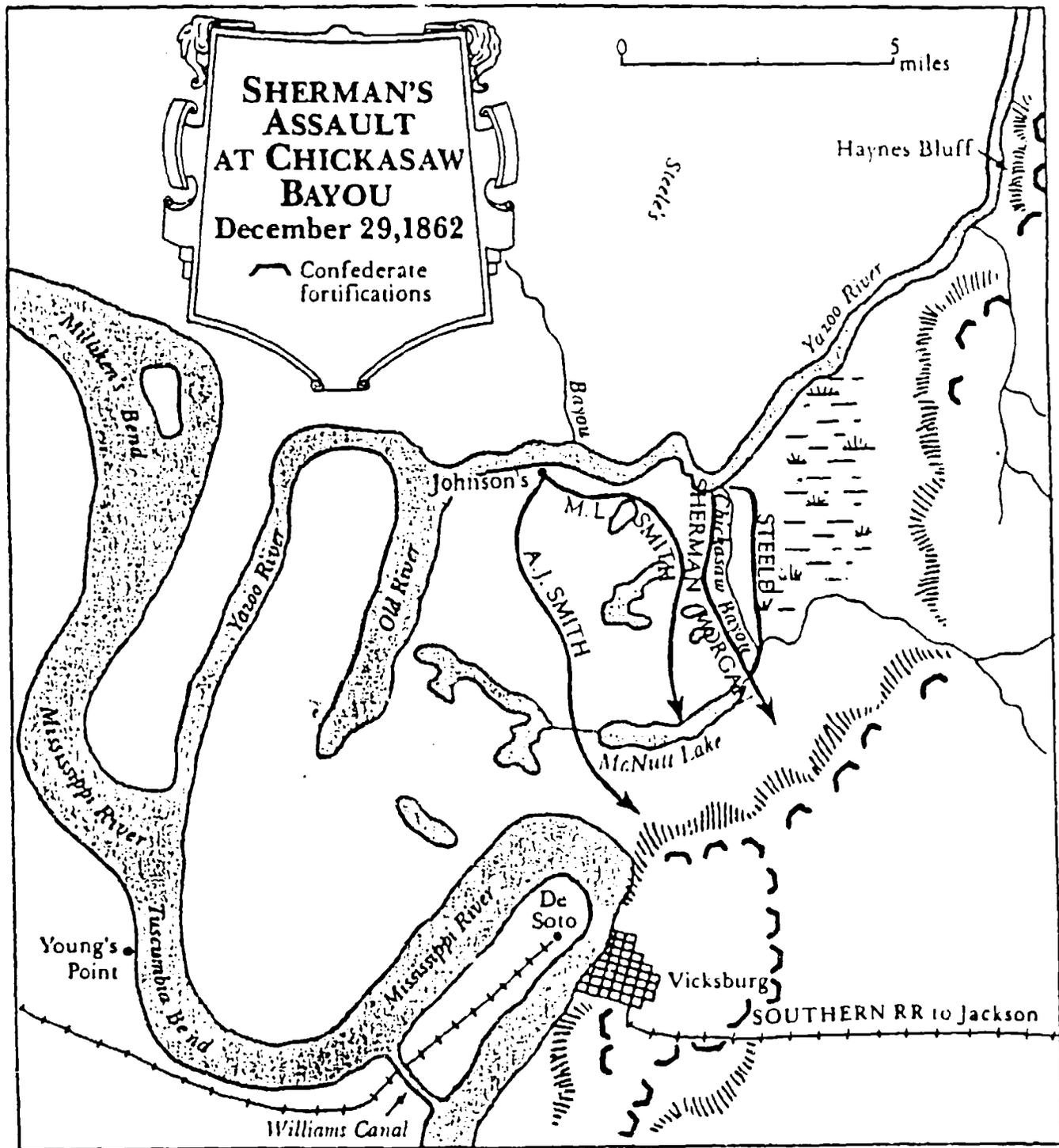


THE MISSISSIPPI THEATER

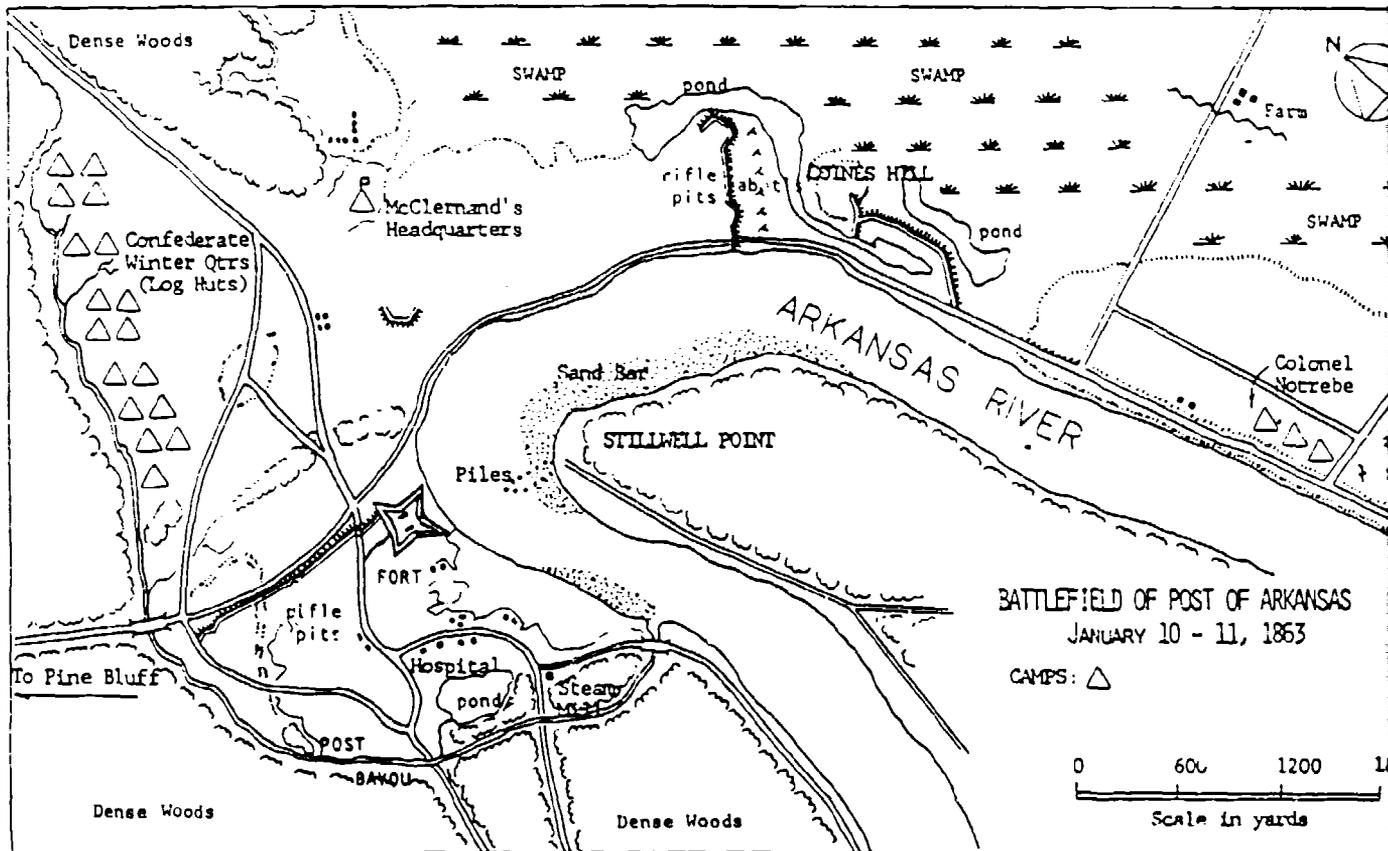
Cited from; Miers, Earl Schenck. The Web of Victory: Grant at Vicksburg. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1955.

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Fortress: The Campaign for Vicksburg 1862-1863.  
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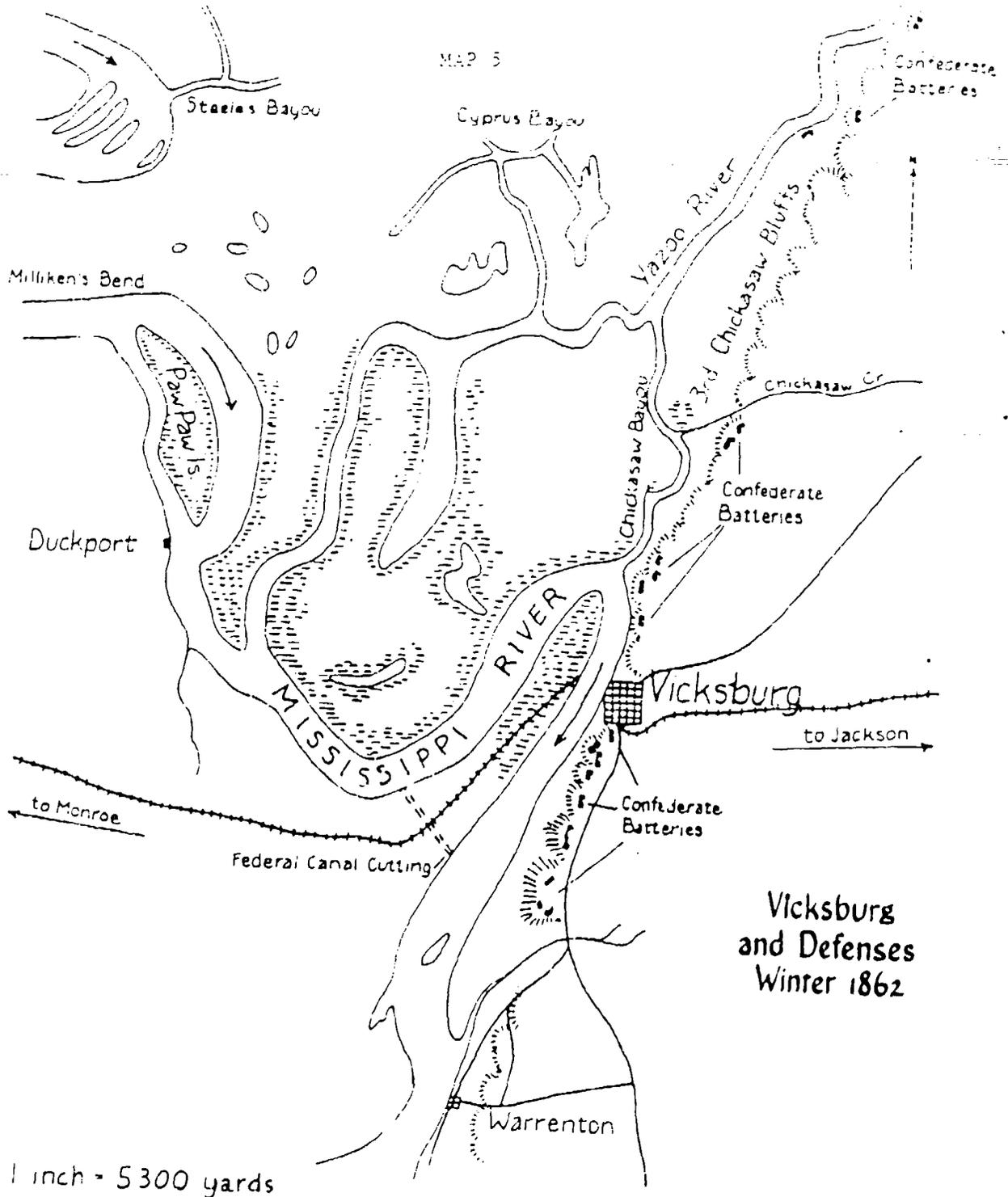
MAP 3



Clarice Borio



Cited from: Bearss, Edwin C. The Campaign for Vicksburg: Vicksburg is the Key. Dayton, Ohio: Morningside, 1985.

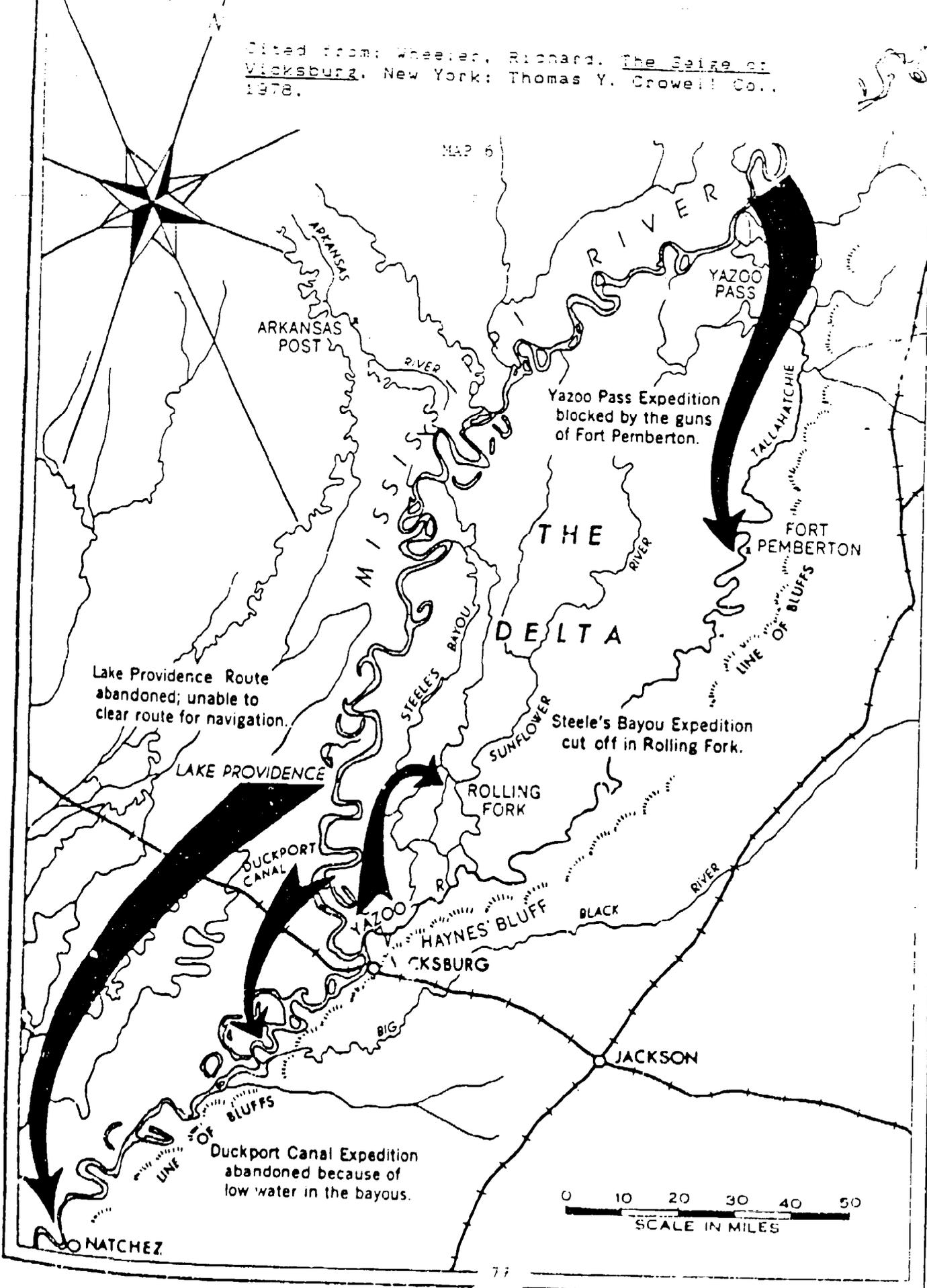


1 inch = 5300 yards

Cited from; Reed, Rowena. Combined Operations in the Civil War. Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 1978.

Cited from: Wheeler, Richard. The Siege of Vicksburg. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1978.

MAP 6



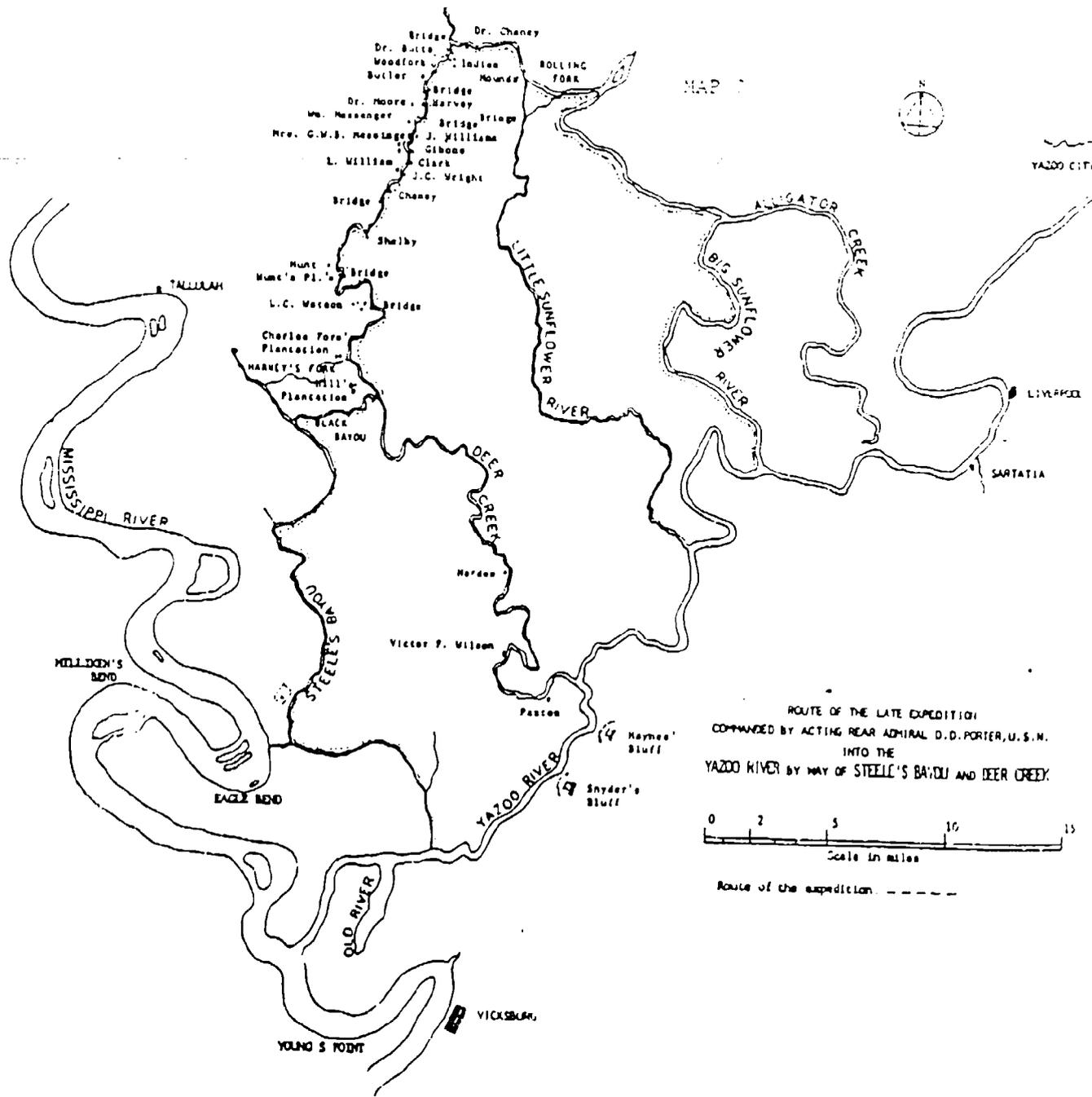
Lake Providence Route abandoned; unable to clear route for navigation.

Yazoo Pass Expedition blocked by the guns of Fort Pemberton.

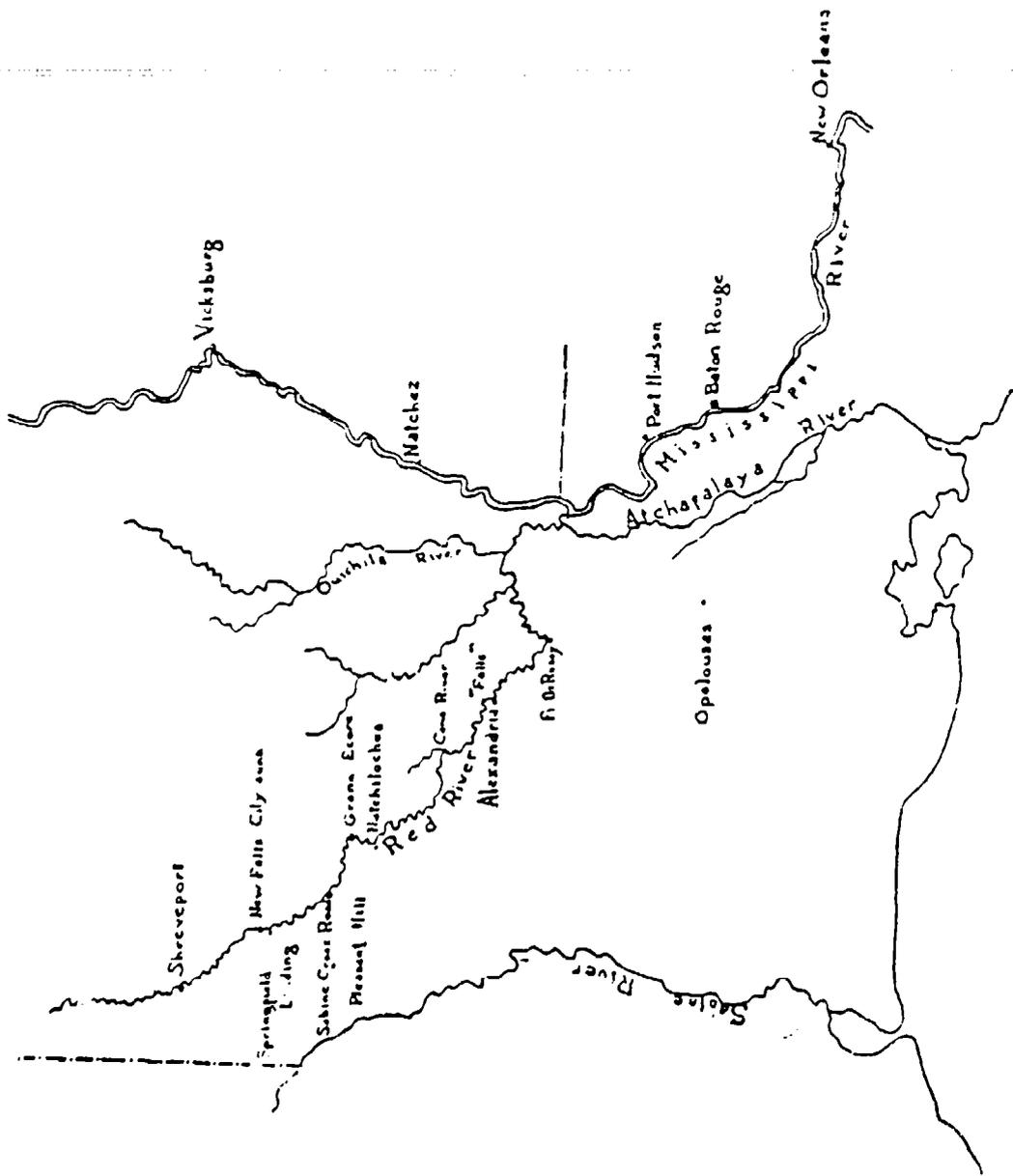
Steele's Bayou Expedition cut off in Rolling Fork.

Duckport Canal Expedition abandoned because of low water in the bayous.

0 10 20 30 40 50  
SCALE IN MILES



Cited from; Bearss, Edwin C. The Campaign for Vicksburg: Vicksburg is the Key. Dayton, Ohio: Morningside, 1985.



THE RED RIVER, SHOWING POINTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE CAMPAIGN WAGED BY BANKS AND PORTER.

Cited from: West, Richard S. The Second Admiral: A Life of David Dixon Porter 1813-1891, New York: Coward-McCann, Inc., 1937.

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