

# Vicksburg

National Military Park

MISSISSIPPI



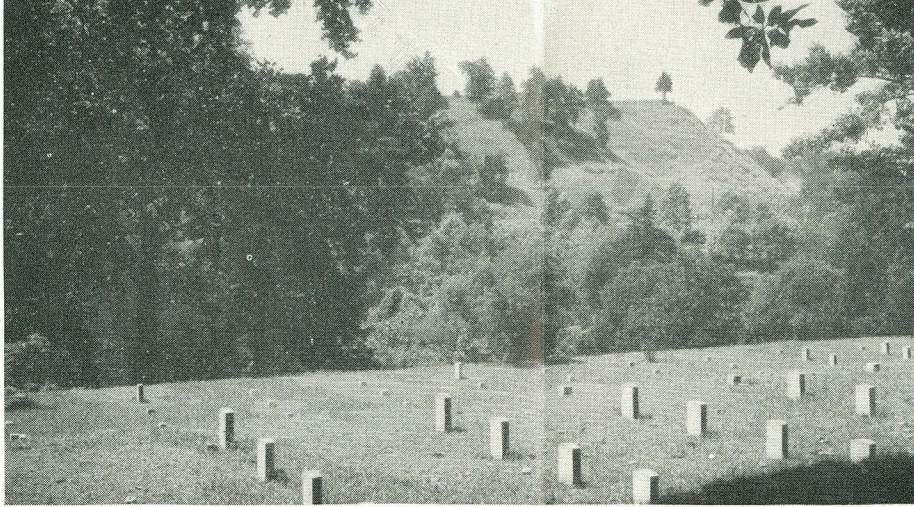
# Vicksburg

## NATIONAL MILITARY PARK

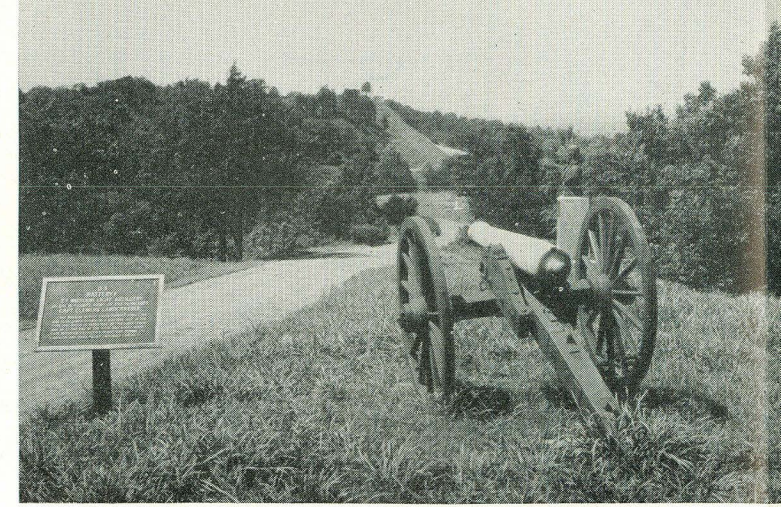
★ *Here brothers fought for their principles. Here heroes died for their country. And a united people will forever cherish the legacy of their noble manhood.*

THIS inscription, on the Pennsylvania monument at Vicksburg National Military Park, aptly expresses the thought that lies behind the establishment of this national memorial, for today a united people find renewed hope here for a firmer and stronger Union.

The Siege of Vicksburg was but one of many incidents in the War between the States, and yet its importance cannot be underestimated. As long as Vicksburg was held by the Confederate States of America, free passage of the Mississippi River was impossible, and supplies, arms, and men could be brought from Louisiana, Arkansas, and Mexico, to be sent by the old Vicksburg and Alabama Railroad to the heart of the Confederacy. Except for the earthworks at Port Hudson, La., Vicksburg was the last stronghold on the Mississippi River in Confederate hands in June 1863. The capture of Vicksburg was vital to the success of the Northern Armies.



Fort Hill and the Vicksburg National Cemetery



Cannon Points From Federal Line Toward the Confederate Position Atop the Interior Ridge Surrounding Vicksburg

The events that transpired in this area in the late spring and early summer of 1863, when coupled with the simultaneous action at Gettysburg on the first 3 days of July, directly influenced the course of the war. The South, thereafter, was on the defensive, waging a gallant losing battle for what its people thought right. The result of the war was virtually inevitable, even though almost 2 years were to pass before Grant and Lee met at Appomattox Court House. Vicksburg was one of the many crucibles of fire through which this Nation passed in order to form a more perfect Union. Now both North and South pay tribute to the men who fought and died here, and the bitterness that once lay in the hearts of many has yielded to a feeling of pride in the past history, chaotic and unfortunate as some of it may have been, of a great and united nation.

### *The Vicksburg Campaign and Siege*

The complete possession of the Mississippi River was one of the main objec-

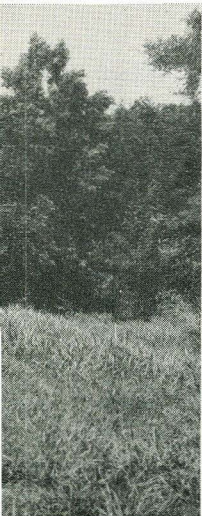
tives of the Federal forces in the War between the States. While battles raged in the eastern theater around Washington and Richmond, and while the Federal blockade slowly throttled the economic life of the South, the armies fought furiously for the trans-Appalachian country from Kentucky to Louisiana. By late spring of 1862 the Confederate forces held only that part of the river from Vicksburg to Port Hudson, and the Confederacy was almost cut in two.

Attention was immediately focused on Vicksburg, which stood on high bluffs overlooking a hairpin bend of the Mississippi and thus controlled all river traffic. Admiral Farragut's naval attacks in May, June, and July 1862, proved the virtual impregnability of the city fortifications from the western or river side. General Grant, commanding the Army of the Tennessee, then planned to move down through central Mississippi in order to attack the city from the rear, at the same time sending General Sherman down the river to attack from the north. Grant was forced to turn back when his base of supplies

was destroyed, but Sherman, late in December 1862, engaged in the Battle of Chickasaw Bayou, along the line of bluffs extending northeast from Vicksburg. Sherman was repulsed and the Federal forces learned that they would have to attack the city from the south or the east in order to take it.

The campaign that ended in the surrender of Vicksburg was the result of close cooperation between the Federal army under Grant and the navy under Admiral Porter. After five attempts to get around the city by means of canals and inland bayous had failed, Grant moved his army through the Louisiana swamps and marshes west of the river to a point 30 miles south of Vicksburg. On April 16 and 22, the Federal fleet ran past the Confederate guns on the bluffs at the hairpin bend of the river, suffering only small losses, and provided the necessary munitions, supplies, and transportation. On April 30, Grant's army at last crossed to the eastern side of the Mississippi, south of Vicksburg.

Operating without a base of supplies, a daring and seldom justified maneuver, Grant faced two Confederate armies at



Confederate  
Vicksburg

*The Confederate Line Overlooking the Yazoo Canal*

two points, General Pemberton's army at Vicksburg and Gen. Joseph E. Johnston's army at Jackson, Miss. If the campaign was to be successful, it was necessary to keep these two armies separated. In the next 17 days, from May 1 to 17, the Federal forces fought five major battles as they went northeastward to Jackson and then turned west toward Vicksburg. They were completely successful in defeating and pushing back the two Confederate armies, and Johnston was forced to retreat into central Mississippi. May 18 found Grant on the outskirts of Vicksburg, where Pemberton and 22,000 Confederates were hemmed in by the Federal fleet.

After two fruitless attempts, on May 19 and 22, to take Vicksburg by storm, the Federal army turned to siege operations. Grant quickly brought his strength up to 75,000 men and surrounded the city in a ring of cannons and bayonets from the river above to the river below. The two armies lay facing each other at a distance of from 50 to 600 yards. They dug trenches, mines, counter-mines, approaches, and counter-approaches, and bombarded each other's

lines for 47 days and nights. With no prospects of reenforcement, with few supplies and little ammunition, the Confederate garrison surrendered the city on July 4, 1863. The Mississippi Valley was once again in the possession of the United States and the Confederacy was split asunder.

### *The Park and Cemetery*

In order to preserve the field of the siege, Vicksburg National Military Park was established in 1899 and placed under the jurisdiction of the War Department. In 1933, it was transferred to the Department of the Interior. Today there are more than 1,300 acres of federally owned land in the park and cemetery, through which run two main roads, Confederate and Union Avenues, the former extending the whole length of the defensive line of fortifications and the latter along the main portion of the line of investment. Extensive remains of trenches, gun emplacements, rifle pits, Confederate forts, and Federal approaches to the Confederate lines are clearly visible, and many monuments, memorials,

and markers commemorate and point out the actions of individuals and troops.

Vicksburg National Cemetery, which is in the northernmost section of the park, was established in 1866 for the burial of more than 16,000 Federal soldiers who died during the war, and has since been used for the burial of other veterans.

### How to Reach the Park

Vicksburg National Military Park forms a semicircle around the city of Vicksburg, Miss., which lies at the intersection of U. S. Highways 80 and 61.

### Services to the Public

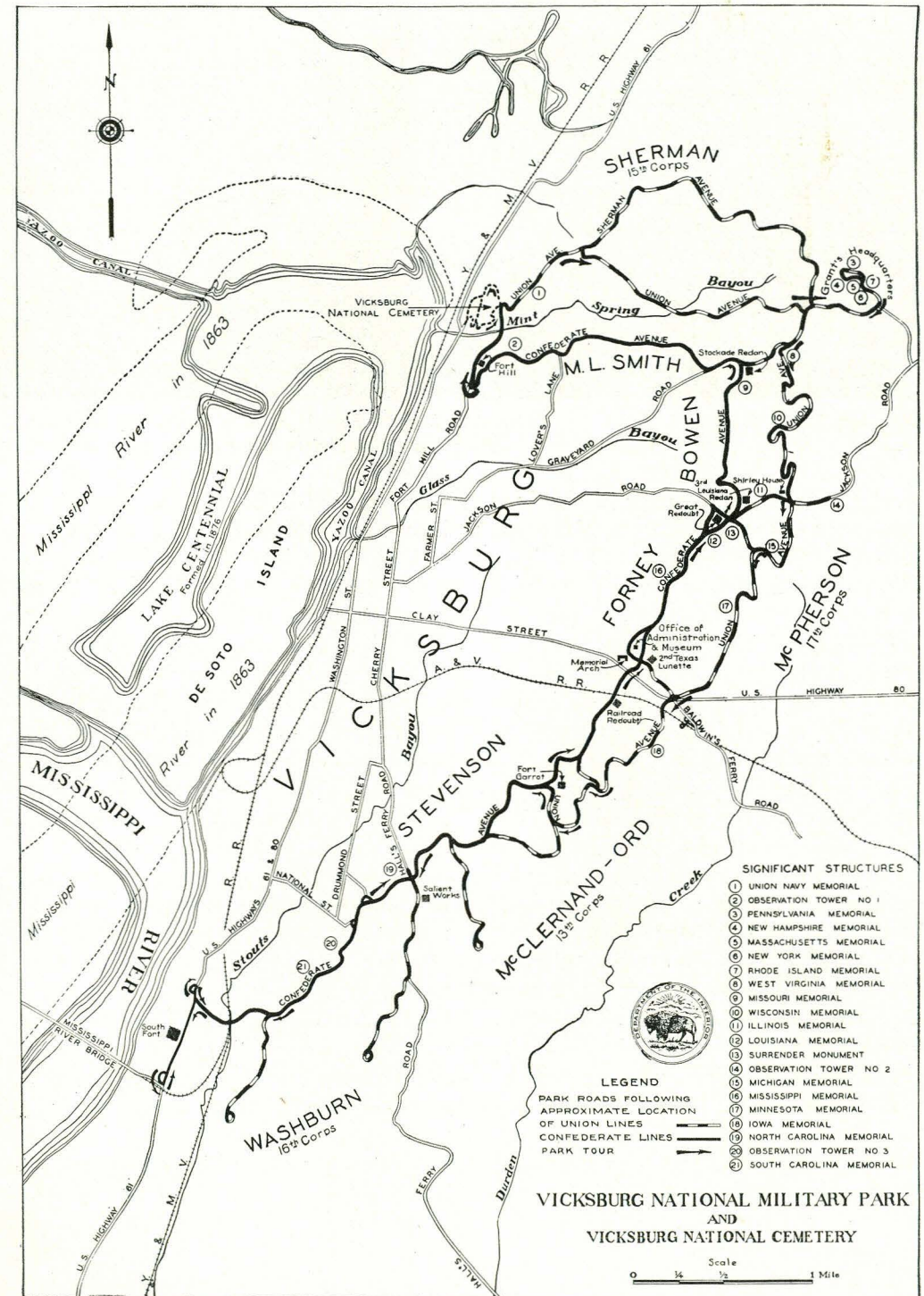
The park museum and administration building is situated on Confederate Avenue, adjacent to U. S. Highway 80, in the central section of the park. The museum, to which there is an admission charge of 10 cents for all over 16 years

of age (or over 18 years for school groups), is the focal point for visitors. By starting at the museum, the visitor is able to view and understand more clearly the remains throughout the park, for the museum has been designed to provide a historical background of the campaign and siege. The educational and historical activities are in charge of trained historians, who conduct large groups or school classes around the park. Organizations and groups will be given special service if arrangements are made in advance with the superintendent. A picnic area is open to the public at all times.

### Administration

Vicksburg National Military Park is administered by the National Park Service, United States Department of the Interior. All communications should be addressed to the Superintendent, Vicksburg National Military Park, Vicksburg, Miss.

Confederate Gun Emplacements Overlooking Mint Springs Bayou



Revised 1947

Cover Photograph—Missouri State Memorial to Union and Confederate Soldiers