



Vicksburg – The ‘Fortress City’

Vicksburg was considered a purely defensive position on the Mississippi River, and Confederate strategic doctrine was tied tightly to this mindset. With the a narrow defeat at Shiloh in April 1862, and destruction of its naval fleet by Union ironclads at Memphis in June the same year, the Confederacy came to realize that for its survival, it was essential that control of the river be held at Vicksburg. The Federal blockade was increasingly effective, and needed war materiel from Europe and western Confederate states was becoming increasingly dependent on the supply line running from Matamoros, Mexico, to the railroad at De Soto, Louisiana, directly across the river from Vicksburg. Ferries would transport this materiel across the river, reloading it on the Southern Railroad of Mississippi to be shipped to points east.

Brigadier General Martin Luther Smith took command of the Vicksburg garrison in May 1862, and immediately began fortifying the city. In June, Major Samuel H. Lockett became chief engineer in charge of developing the defensive perimeter around Vicksburg. First repairing and strengthening the river batteries damaged by U.S. Flag Officer David Farragut’s naval squadron, he then turned his attention to laying out a line to guard the land approaches to the city. Spending a month



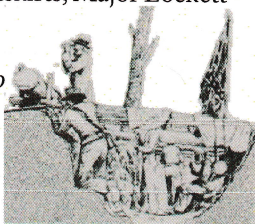
General Martin
Luther Smith

reconnoitering, surveying, and studying *“the complicated and irregular site to be fortified,”* he boasted that no greater topographical puzzle was ever presented to a military engineer.



Major Samuel H
Lockett

Finally pinpointing the commanding, irregular ridgeline forming a crescent a mile or more beyond the city’s outskirts, Major Lockett laid out a *“system of redoubts, redans, lunettes and field-works, connecting them by rifle-pits so as to give a continuous line of defense.”* Employing a large force of blacks hired, or impressed, from nearby plantations, work began in early September 1862.



The left defensive flank was anchored on the Mississippi River, 1-½ miles north of the city, near where the river road to Yazoo City entered Vicksburg. **Fort Hill**, served as an observation post for the Water Battery, located below and closer to the river. Where Graveyard Road passed through the perimeter, stood the **Stockade Redan** complex, given its name from the palisade of poplar logs constructed on the site. The 27th Louisiana Lunette lay north of the road, the **Stockade**

Fort Hill

Redan to the south, and a smaller redan, later called **Green's Redan**, sited 75 yards still farther south. A mile south of **Stockade Redan**, the Jackson Road entered the Confederate lines, and here two strongholds were positioned – the 3^d Louisiana **Redan** to the north and **Great Redoubt** to the south. Located on the highest point in the area, **Great Redoubt** was deemed the Confederates' most formidable work.

A mile farther south, guarding Baldwin's Ferry Road, was the 2^d Texas **Lunette**, an irregular work with no connecting rifle pits on its left. Several hundred yards south, and parallel to Baldwin's Ferry Road, was the Southern Railroad of Mississippi, running through a deep cut into the city. On the south side of this cut was **Railroad Redoubt**, a fortification divided into three sections by two parallel traverses. One-half mile south, on the ridge intersecting the defensive perimeter, was **Square Fort**, later renamed **Fort Garrott** in honor of Brigadier General Isham Garrott, killed by a sniper on the redoubt's parapet. (Although promoted from Colonel to Brigadier General prior to his death, Garrott did not live to receive notification of the action.)

Situated a mile farther south was the **Salient Work**, overlooking Hall's Ferry Road. Securing the Confederate right flank was **South Fort**, 1-¾ miles south of the **Salient Work**, and just west of Warrenton Road. Originally part of Vicksburg's river defenses, the big guns mounted here at first could only register on the river. But provision was soon made so the cannon could be quickly shifted to bear on Warrenton Road, in the event the city was attacked from the land side. These guns were the most powerful weapons emplaced in the land defenses around the city.

Stockade Redan

3^d Louisiana Redan

Great Redoubt

2^d Texas Lunette

Railroad Redoubt

Square Fort/ Fort Garrott

Salient Work

South Fort



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