

*A 2019 BGES Civil War Field University Program:  
Initial Attempts to Take Vicksburg:  
Part 6 of Our Signature Vicksburg Campaign  
Study*

Grant's progress had been breathtaking. Facing little legitimate resistance from Gen. Joe Johnston's Army of Relief, he turned his back on the general and focused on hitting Lt. Gen. John C. Pemberton's force outside of its fortifications. Crushing victories at Champions Hill and Big Black River Bridge caused Pemberton to scurry back to his prepared entrenchments to await developments. He wouldn't have long to wait.

Grant, perhaps a bit contemptuous of what he had seen thus far, immediately ordered an assault for May 19. This tour focuses on the defenses, tactics, and considerations that faced Grant as he sought to capture this critical and strategic position.

**Wednesday, October 16, 2019**

6:30 PM. Meet at the Hampton Inn to pick up your reading books and enjoy the hospitality hour at the hotel (which starts at 5 PM). At 7, we will adjourn to the meeting room for an opening lecture. Parker takes great pride in his PowerPoint presentations, and it shows. His lecture will bring you up-to-date on the campaign thus far, tying it into the greater geopolitical considerations and detailing the operations and diversions Grant constructed for this plan. We will enjoy pizza and other snacks during his lecture.

**Thursday, October 17, 2019**

8:00 AM. We will get lots of "Boots on the Ground" time with this study tour with little time en route. We open this morning following McClernand's XIII corps as it moves into position for its May 19 attack on what is the Confederate center. As the morning tour ends with the opening of McClernand's artillery and Landrum's advance, we will break contact to have lunch at the Vicksburg Country Club.

We will continue with McClernand's assault after lunch, picking up the various elements of the general advance. We will hit the Railroad Redoubt and then take the Confederates' positions receiving the heavy blows, working our way to the Square Fort and down to the Kentucky Memorial—a great interpretative spot. We are in no man's land, and we will turn again with the Federals and Peter Osterhaus' attack.

While Hills is best known for his strategic positioning and getting into the generals' heads, this tour as you will have seen today shows that he is a great tactics guy as well. We will call it a day and head back to the hotel for happy hour. We will provide lunch, with dinner on your own.

### **Friday, October 18, 2019**

8:00 AM. This study tour really works out well, with two days of attacks and two completely segmented fields of attack—thus we finished McClernand and the XIII Corps on the 19th; now we turn our attention to McPherson (XVII Corps) and Sherman on the other side of the road. Starting today from Ransom's XVII Corps brigade campsite, we will move sequentially through the various brigades, divisions, and artillery support. Most will recognize the Shirley House, and we will interface with Quinby's, McArthur's, and Logan's division components all working on their portions of the general attack line to Green's Redan and Glass Bayou. After walking that line, we will break for Goldie's Trail BBQ.

This afternoon we will turn to William T. Sherman's XV Corps on Grant's extreme right. You may know that Sherman had not been Grant's strongest Corps Commander—McClernand had earned that title. But Grant was in the inner circle, whereas the politician McClernand was not. After reaching the vicinity of General Blair's Division, we will move up the Graveyard Road, following first Giles Smith's attack, followed by T.K. Smith's advance on his left, finally shifting to Ewing's attack on the adjoining 27th Louisiana Lunette. The Confederate position was anchored by the Stockade Redan, and we will occupy it to take a defensive look at the attack pattern. We then will move over to the most awesome of the advances—along Thayer's approach. From his Division commander's, Steele's, position, we will summarize Sherman's efforts on this first attack at Vicksburg. The fighting on the 19th was over. We will return to the hotel in time for happy hour. We will provide lunch, and you'll have dinner on your own

### **Saturday, October 19, 2019**

8:00 AM. Grant had been checked and his nose bloodied—did he learn anything? We know that he scheduled another attack, but how did he prepare for this one, and how was it to be different from the one on the 19th? We will start our morning at Mount Ararat, where Grant holds a commanders' call on the morning of the 20th. The decision is to attack again on the 22nd. Only one of the three Corps Commanders seemed to take it seriously—John McClernand, the man Grant and the other West Pointers despised! We will see how McClernand prepared for his attack, traveling to the 2nd Texas Lunette, where "Whiskey" Smith's troops would probe the depth of the Confederates' position. We will then skip ahead to McClernand's attack on the same spot on the 22nd, before breaking for lunch at MacAlister's Deli.

We pick up in the afternoon at the frequently overlooked artillery position known as Maloney's Battery, where we will summarize McClernand's understanding of and planned execution of his orders. If you are looking for a fighting general on the 22nd, you are in the right spot—if he was a West Pointer he would have been commended. We will present the Federals' attack on the Railroad Redoubt and the multiple attacks on the Square Fort, culminating with a trip to the wonderfully restored Iowa Monument and John McClernand's statue to discuss Grant and McClernand. We will finish our day with Quinby's Division aligned next to McClernand's Corps and will walk Boomer's Brigade attack, ending the day on a downer—the death of Boomer. We will return to the hotel for happy hour. We provide both lunch, and then dinner at the Cracker Barrel.

### **Sunday, October 20, 2019**

8:00 AM. This morning we set out to take on one of the enigmas and, indeed, the key controversy on the 22nd. We pick up McPherson's 17th Corps attack following Quinby's Division attack—he holds a reserve that he does not commit and inexplicably fails to support McClernand's promising advance. We then move to Logan's Division along a front from the old Superintendent's house, across the fields to the Shirley House. We then will walk John E. Smith's brigade attack before analyzing Grant's battlefield management on the 22nd—there are more than a few questions.

After lunch at Monsour's At the Biscuit Factory, we will return to the Graveyard Road, where Sherman and Grant debate McClernand's claims of success and determine if or how to support his attack. Our remaining attacks are dramatic in the extreme—the "Forlorn Hope" and other relentless attacks against the Stockade Redan. Then the attack along Thayer's approach, finishing with discussion of the use of Steele's Division (Thayer and Wood) on this careless day. Like the previous five programs in the series, this stands alone. For those liking battlefield action, this is as good as it gets in this campaign. Finally someone presents a program that puts all the winding roads and endless monuments in perspective. However, perhaps no monument will mean more than that of Gen. Lloyd Tilghman, and by the end of the day you will understand. We return to the hotel and this program completed, but in anticipation of VII and VIII in 2020.

### **About the Faculty:**

**Parker Hills** is the nation's leading historian on the Vicksburg Campaign and a scholar of some note on the Gettysburg Campaign. He has a well-earned reputation for the highest standards of preparation on tours and the exceptional educational value of his content. Being with Parker is like taking a senior military service school course in which you will surely leave with far more knowledge than when you arrived. Parker is a graduate of the U.S. Army War College, and he is in high demand from businesses and military organizations that want his leadership training. Parker

is the founder of BattleFocus and is a retired general officer who served on both active duty as a battery commander in Korea, and as an aide to General of the Army Omar Bradley. He was the Director of Public Affairs for the Mississippi National Guard, and he founded the Regional Counter Drug Training Academy in Meridian, Mississippi. Parker is the co-author of *Receding Tide, Vicksburg and Gettysburg, The Campaigns that Changed the Civil War*. He also has published the *Vicksburg Campaign Driving Guide* and *The Art of Commemoration*—a book that reveals the symbolism and beauty of the commemorative memorialization at the Vicksburg park. He also is the driving force for Civil War preservation in the state of Mississippi, and largely through his efforts the Raymond Battlefield Park exists. He is in high demand, and his programs cost a little more, but, you will quickly see that they are well worth it.

### **Hotel Information:**

Our headquarters hotel is the Hampton Inn on Clay Street, across from the Vicksburg National Military Park. Our block rate is \$94 per night, plus tax. Call 601-636-6100 and ask for Group Code BG1. Reservations must be made before September 30 or you are subject to paying the rack rate.

### **Transportation:**

The closest servicing airport is Jackson Municipal (JAN), which offers a limo service, Go-FER-Girls (601-636-2574) to and from Vicksburg for \$75 one way. We have used them, and they were reliable and timely. You can get a much better airfare flying into New Orleans (MSY) and driving the 150 miles to the program. This is a program where driving is a great option. Amtrak does service Jackson, Mississippi.

### **Recommended Reading:**

You will be provided with a reading book and maps upon arrival. The following books are suggested to enhance your readiness for the program. Amazon.com has a program to support non-profits IF YOU SIGN UP to support Blue and Gray Education Society (EIN 54-1720582) at [AmazonSmile](#). When you sign up there rather than the normal Amazon site, one-half of one percent of your purchase price will be provided to BGES as a donation from Amazon. This will apply not only on this purchase but others you may make at other times.

Edwin C. Bearss and James P. Hills: [\*Receding Tide: Vicksburg and Gettysburg, The Campaigns that Changed the Civil War\*](#) \$30

Warren Grabau: [\*Ninety-Eight Days: Geographers View Vicksburg Campaign\*](#)

*Registration Form*  
*Initial Attempts to Take Vicksburg, Part 6 of*  
*The BGES' Signature Campaign Study*  
*A BGES Field University Program*  
*Presented by Brigadier General James Parker Hills, Ret.*  
*October 16-20, 2019 from Vicksburg, Mississippi*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Registration includes four lunches, a welcoming reception and group dinner, nightly happy hours, a reading book with maps, the academic program, support of a professional historian, tour director, park admission, and transportation. We will also provide snacks, bottled water, and a limited selection of sodas.

\_\_\_\_\_ Registration \$950

\_\_\_\_\_ Current BGES member \$880

\_\_\_\_\_ Teacher/full time student with identification \$800

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Mail to BGES Seminars, P.O. Box 1176, Chatham, VA 24531 or fax credit card registrations to 434-432-0596. You may also register online at [www.blueandgrayeducation.org](http://www.blueandgrayeducation.org).