

*A BGES Civil War Field University Program:
West to Vicksburg:
Part 5 of Our Signature Vicksburg Campaign
Study*

The campaign had been stunning. Having crossed the Mississippi River and pushed the Confederates away from Port Gibson and Grand Gulf, Grant turned north, shifting his focus toward the Confederate capital of Jackson. Following victories at Raymond and Jackson, he had chased a reluctant and timid Gen. Joseph E. Johnston away from the Union's field of operations.

The Confederate Commander in Vicksburg, Gen. John C. Pemberton had marched out of his river front fortifications with his unconditioned garrison troops to reach out toward Johnston's so-called Army of Relief. Instead he ran into Grant near Edwards and then, after being soundly defeated, was further whipped in front of the Big Black River Bridge. Grant was cinching the sack, and Pemberton and his command were in the bag. This combo action was dramatic and decisive, leaving little doubt as to the fate of Pemberton's army.

Wednesday, March 20, 2019

6:30 PM. Meet at the Hampton Inn at 6:30 PM to pick up your reading books and enjoy the hospitality hour at the hotel that 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, March 21, 2019

8:00 AM. We will return to Grant's triumph in Jackson by traveling the historic road from Vicksburg to the state capital in Jackson, where we open the day with a discussion of Grant's intelligence network and his decision to turn to the west toward Vicksburg. We will continue on the intelligence theme through Clinton, where we will have lunch. The afternoon will put us in the footsteps of McPherson's 17th Corps to the Jones Plantation, where we will listen in on the revealing conversation between McPherson and 13th Corps Commander John A. McClernand. That leads us back to Grant, where he is made aware of McClernand's aggressive intentions. We will follow Grant's response and directives to his subordinates. We will take that track to the point in which he runs into a Confederate roadblock. The remainder of the day will shift us to the Confederate perspective and in their

footsteps to Mrs. Ellison's farm. We will break contact and return to Vicksburg, where we will arrive in time for happy hour. We provide lunch, with dinner on your own.

Friday, March 22, 2019

8:00 AM. You know the collision is coming and we will move to contact from Mrs. Ellison's farm to Gen. William Wings Loring's initial position before moving to the attacking Federals' positions with Gen. John Logan's attack outside of Edwards. We press into the region of fighting around Champion Hill through the position to the critical crossroads beyond Champion Hill. As the fighting is moving along a wide front, we will move after lunch to Coker House Ridge, where we will follow the destructive fire of the Chicago Mercantile Battery and the delaying tactics of Confederate general Lloyd Tilghman back to Cotton Ridge. After the evisceration of Tilghman by a Union artillery shell, we will follow Loring's withdrawal from the fight and his decision to abandon Pemberton and take his division to join forces with Johnston. This decision will set the stage for the Confederate disaster at Big Black River the next day. We will return to the hotel in time for happy hour. We will provide lunch, and you'll have dinner on your own.

Saturday, March 23, 2019

8:00 AM. Our program continues with the Confederate retreat via Bridgeport and Sherman's move forward. This often overlooked march puts Pemberton in a precarious position and will demand a return to the protection of the lines in front of Vicksburg. Sadly for the Confederates' fortunes, the fruits of Loring's treachery will soon play out on the banks of the Big Black River. Here Pemberton, not knowing that Loring has bugged out, has held open the bridge to allow Loring to cross—he isn't coming. We will examine the Federals' attack plan and then describe the brief but fierce fight that overwhelms the small Confederate force. The remainder of the day brings Grant's army to Vicksburg as it begins its envelopment. We finish our day with General McPherson at his headquarters. We provide both lunch, and a dinner at the Cracker Barrel.

Sunday, March 24, 2019

8:00 AM. Today we follow all the elements of the siege that is to follow. As Grant prescribes the deployments and establishes the depots necessary to envelop the doomed Confederate garrison and the remaining civilian population—even the skeptical Sherman is forced to admit this is a campaign!

The rest of the day is devoted to a detailed examination of the still extant and often overlooked Confederate bastion, which moves from South Fort to Fort Hill, river front to river front, with a commanding position at the point in which vessels wishing to pass the city will be most vulnerable—a 180-degree turn in the river. We will finish by 4:30 for those who want to fly out after 7 PM from Jackson.

This program brings Grant's work of many months together and clearly demonstrates that the campaign dwarfs the preserved Vicksburg NMP. It is the reason many of the outlying sites are now being prepared for incorporation into the park. Like the previous four programs in the series, this stands alone but is integral to a comprehensive understanding of the ultimate surrender on July 4, 1863.

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. He 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 has also 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 by March 6 or you are subject to paying the rack rate.

Transportation:

The closest servicing airport is Jackson (JAN), with a recommended 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 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. Another choice is Amtrak, which services Jackson, Mississippi.

Recommended Reading:

You will be provided with a reading book and maps upon arrival. We recommend the following books to enhance your preparation for this tour. 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: *Grant Strikes the Fatal Blow (The Vicksburg Campaign Series Volume 2)*. This volume is out of print and can be had on the secondary market for prices up to and above \$75

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

Registration Form
West to Vicksburg, Part 5 of
The BGES' Signature Campaign Study
A BGES Field University Program

Presented by Brigadier General James Parker Hills, Ret.
March 20-24, 2019 from Vicksburg, Mississippi

Because of places we are going, this program is restricted to two vans and no more than 19 people.

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, all admissions, 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

_____ I am not a member but would like to join so that I can get the member's rate or I am a member who is past due to renew. Please accept my donation of

\$_____ (must be \$75 or more, which is tax deductible)

_____ I am sending a deposit of \$300 per person plus full payment for any books and or memberships. Total enclosed is \$ _____. I will pay the balance due before the event.

_____ Check enclosed

Charge my (circle one) MC VISA AMEXP Discover \$ _____

Exp: _____ CVV: _____

Signature: _____

Mail to BGES Seminars, PO Box 1176, Chatham, VA 24531; or fax credit card registrations to 434-432-0596.