

“... try, try again!”

Vicksburg campaign success

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**Presented to the Camp Olden Civil War Round Table,
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Images in this presentation were primarily downloaded from the internet. Unsuccessful attempts were made to contact the webmaster for use of photographs of modern day views.

“Distractions” and Port Gibson maps used are from Bearss (1985); map of Grierson’s Raid from Brown (1981), both cited below.

Text was gleaned from the following outstanding resources:

Bearss, Edwin Cole (1985): “The Vicksburg Campaign: Volume 2 - Grant Strikes A Fatal Blow” and “Volume 3 - Unvexed To The Sea”, published by Morningside House, Inc., Dayton, OH

Brown, D. Alexander (1981): “Grierson’s Raid”, published by Morningside House, Inc., Dayton, OH

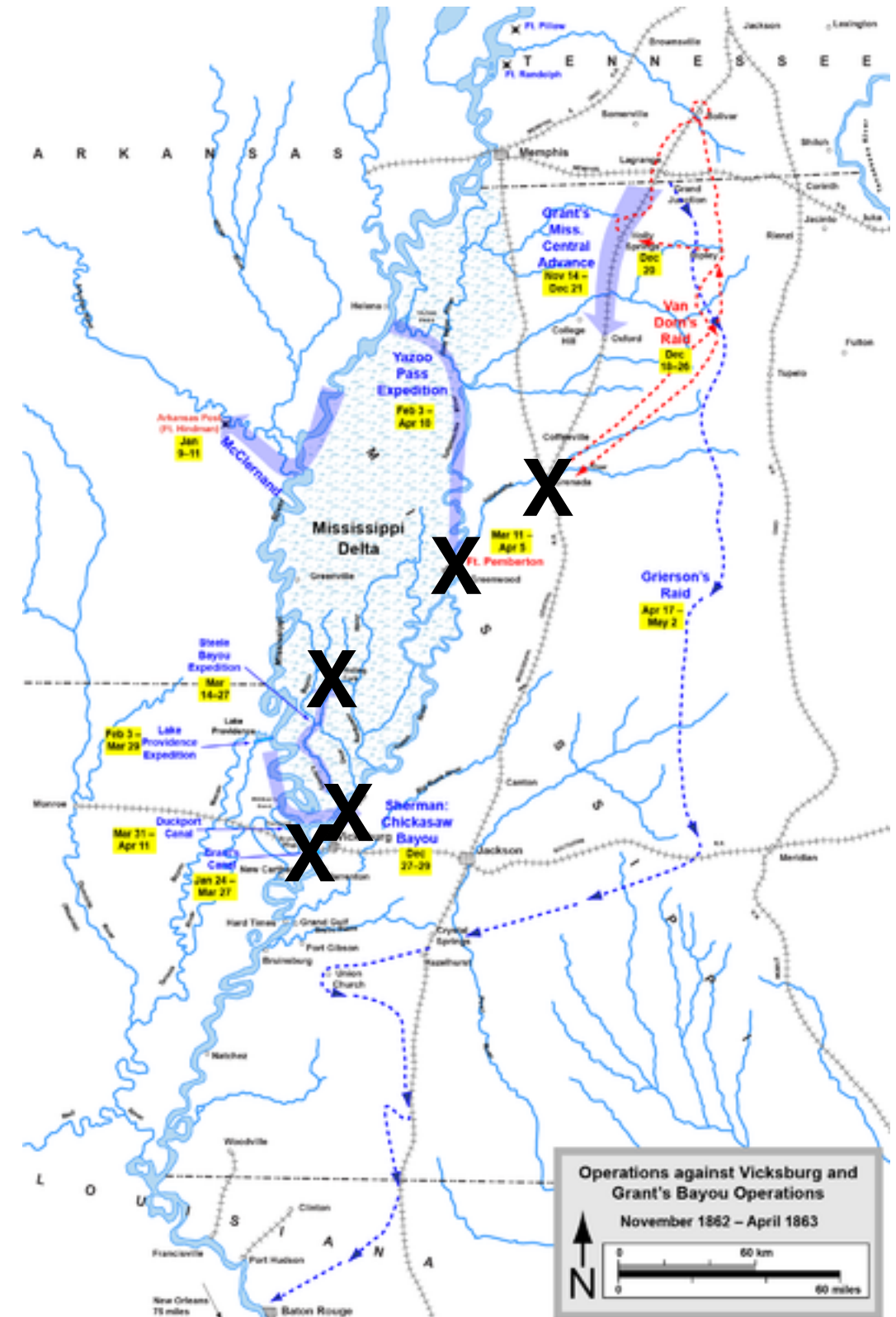
Vicksburg's importance

- Rail head for the Trans-Mississippi
- First high point on the Mississippi River downriver of Memphis
- Lincoln (1862): “See what a lot of land these fellows hold, of which Vicksburg is the key... The war can never be brought to a close until that key is in our pocket.”
- Halleck to Grant March 20, 1863: “...the opening of the Mississippi River will be of more advantage to us than forty Richmonds.”



Grant's failures

- Mississippi Central approach (Nov - Dec 1862)
- Chickasaw Bayou (Dec 1862)
- Yazoo Pass (Feb - Apr '63)
- Steele's Bayou (Mar '63)
- Grant's Canal (Jan - Mar '63)

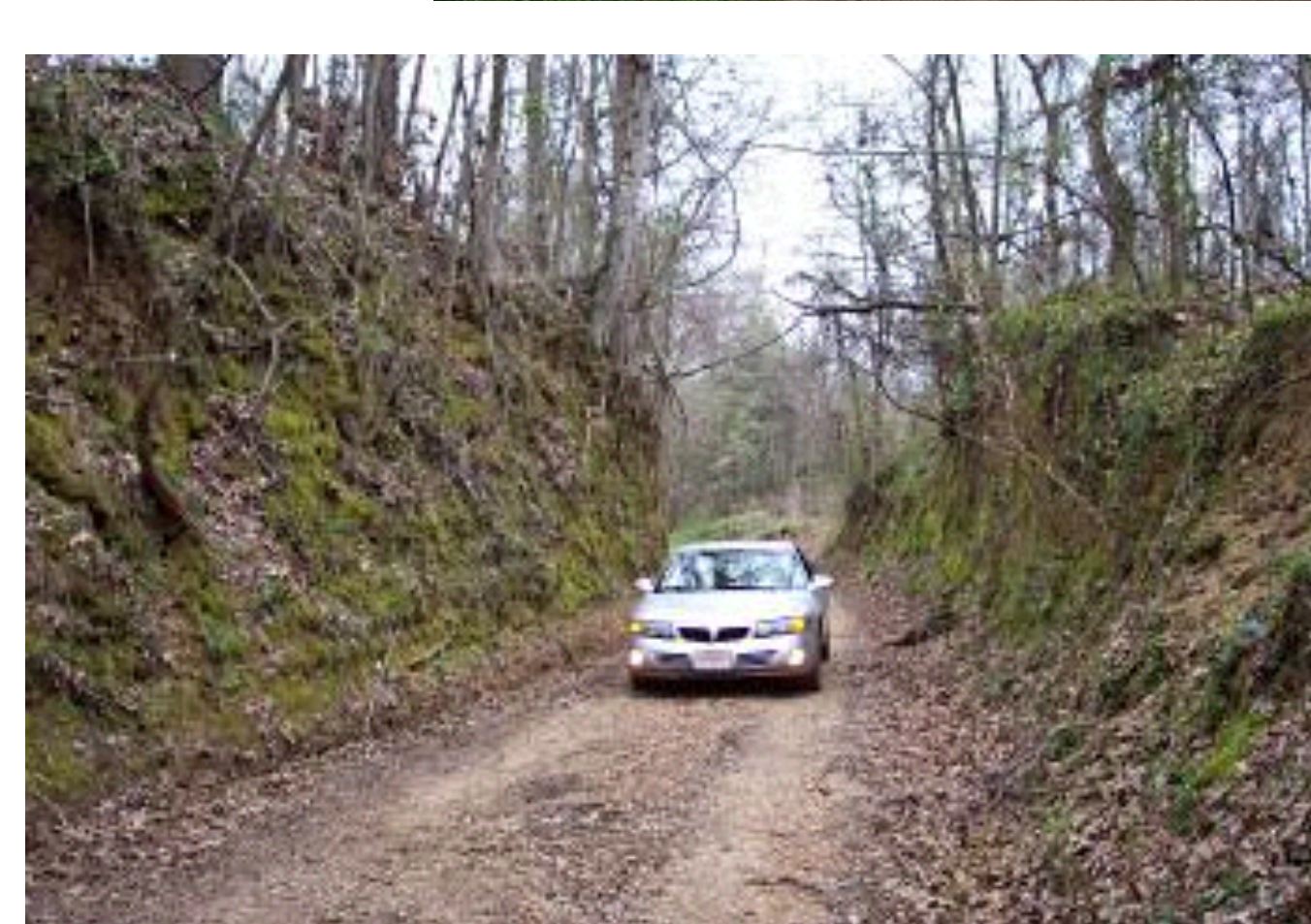


Views of Grant

- Rumored intemperance
- Poor troop handling at Shiloh
- Five failed attempts to take Vicksburg
- John Nicolay to wife: "Grant's attempt to take Vicksburg looks to me very much like a total failure..."
- Viewed as the equal of McClellan, Burnside, Fremont and Buell. Ordered by Halleck to co-operate with Banks to take Port Hudson, LA

Topography

Louisiana

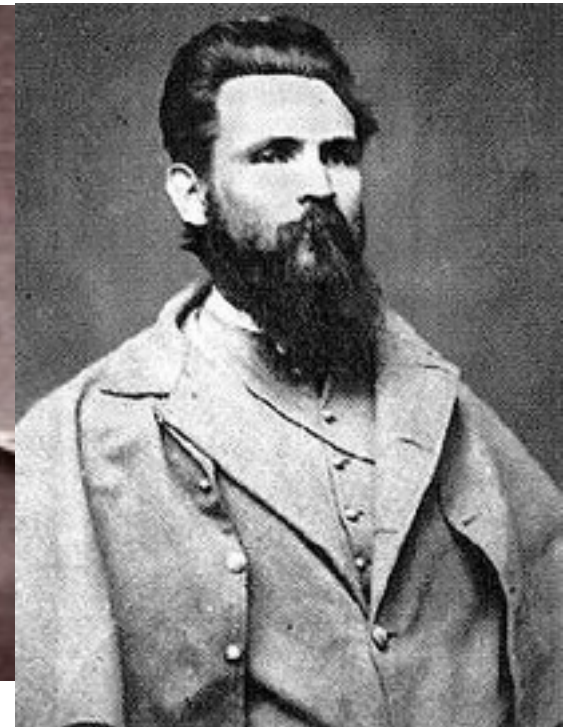
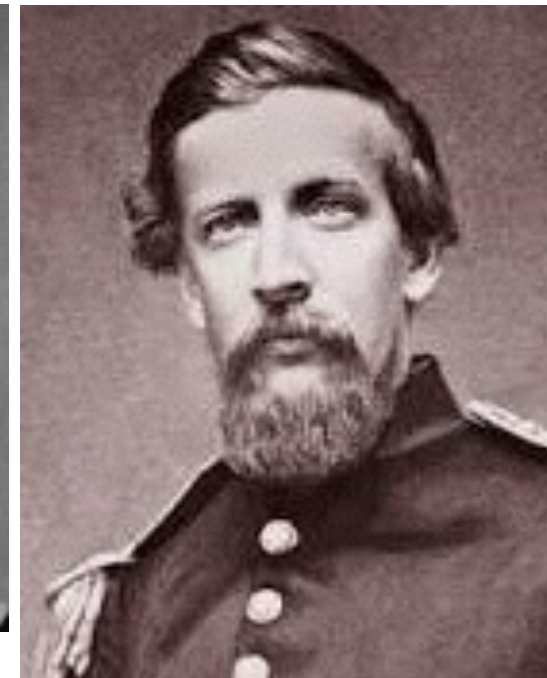
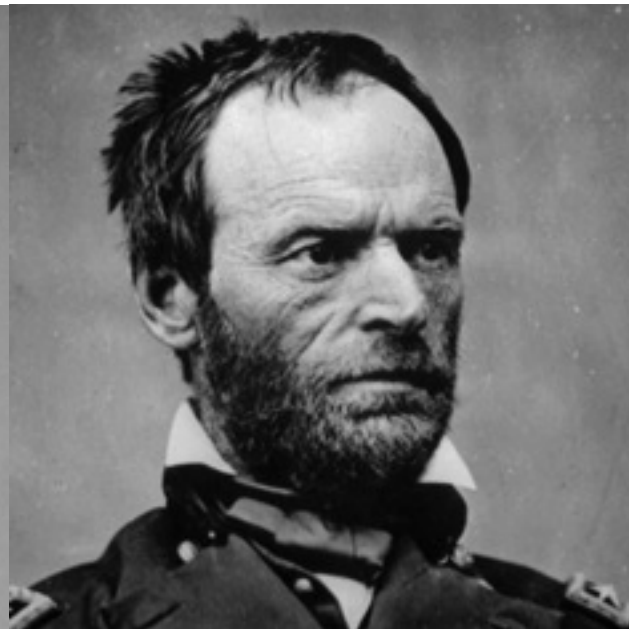
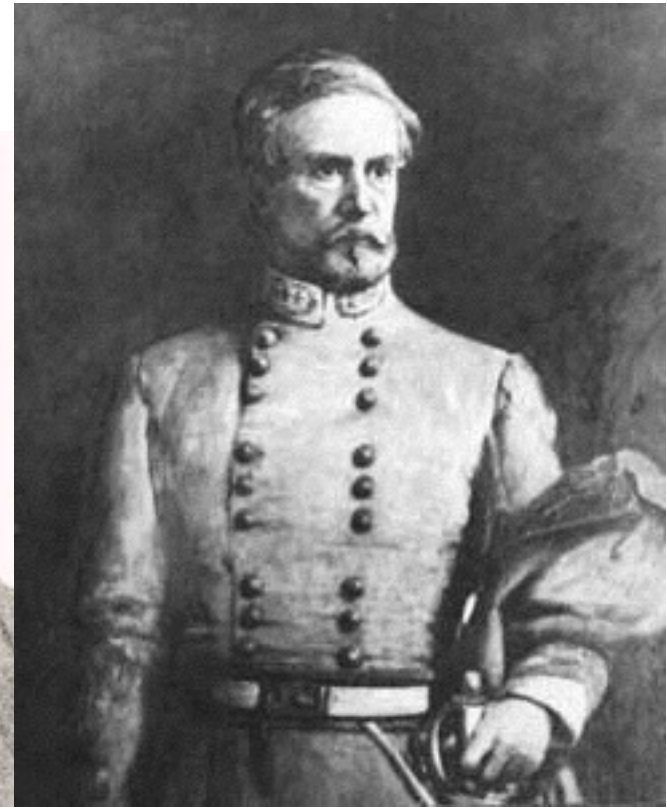


Rodney Road



Vicksburg ("Fort Hill")

Dramatis personae



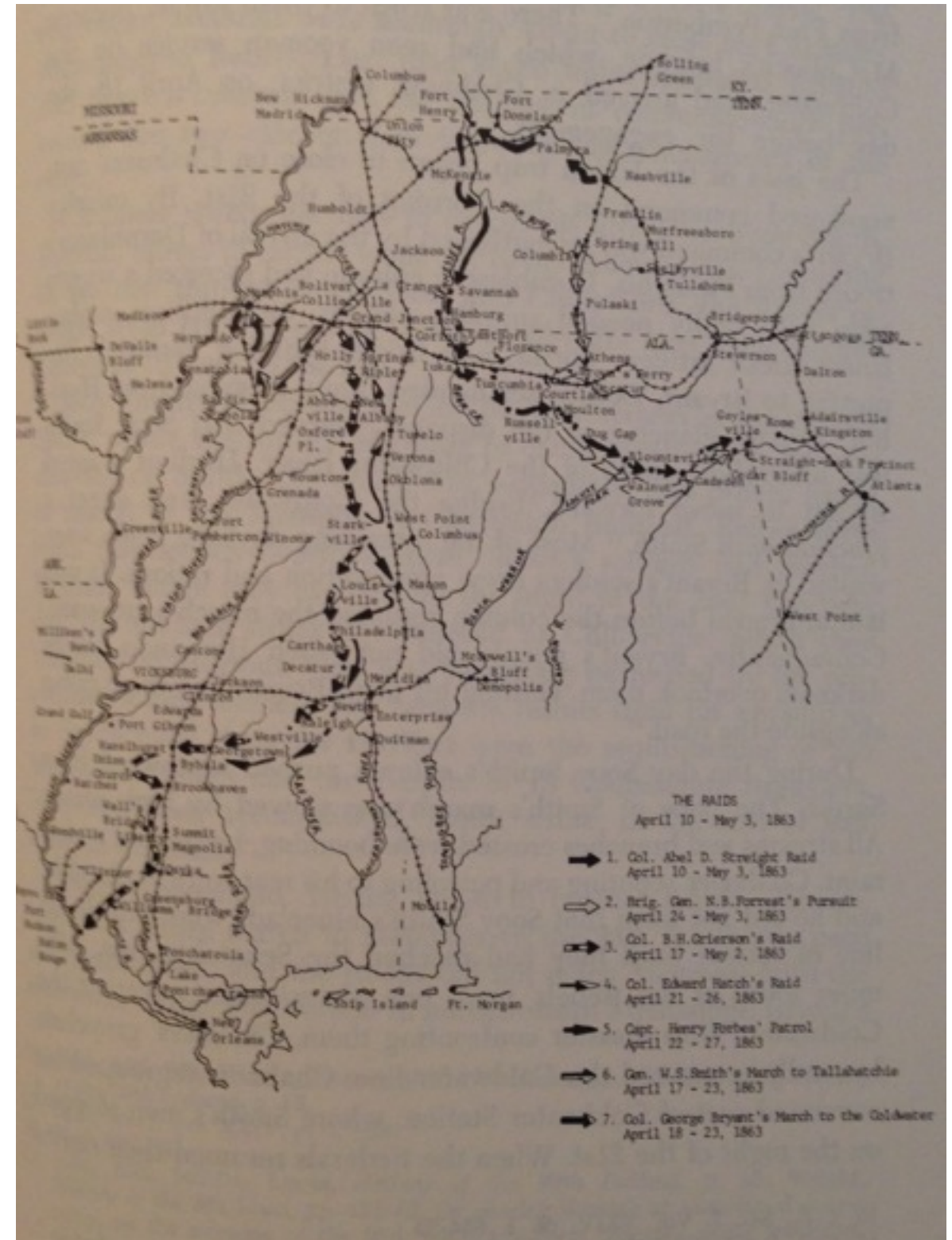
XIII

XVII

XV

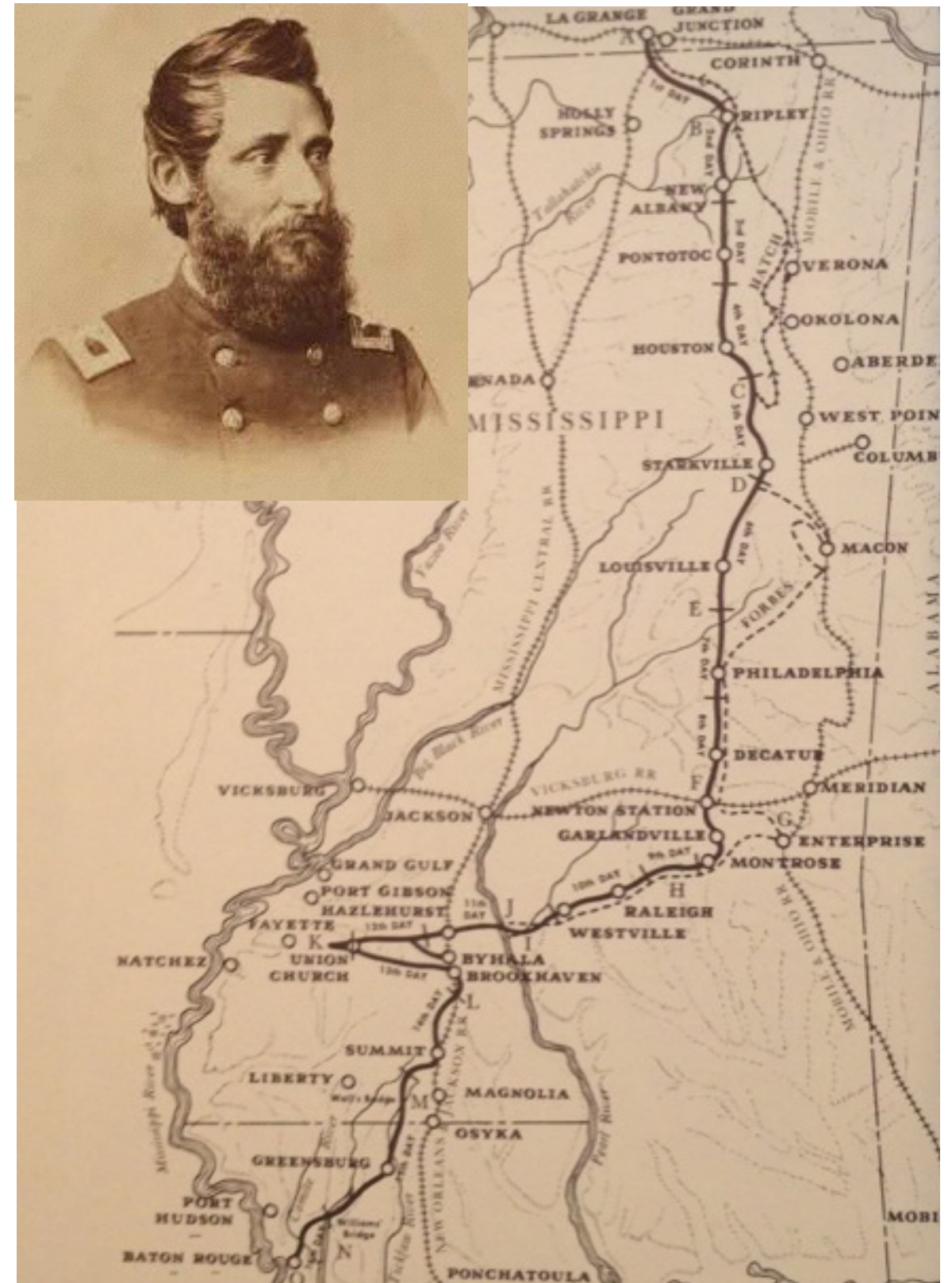
Distractions

- MG Frederick Steele's Greenville Expedition (April 2-25)
 - Decoy into "backwaters" (Deer Creek) north of Vicksburg
- 1 - Col. Abel Streight's Raid (April 10-May 8)
 - Sever Bragg's supply line (Western & Atlantic RR)
- 2 - Col. Benjamin Grierson's Raid (April 17-May 8)
 - Sever Pemberton's communication (Southern RR)



Distractions

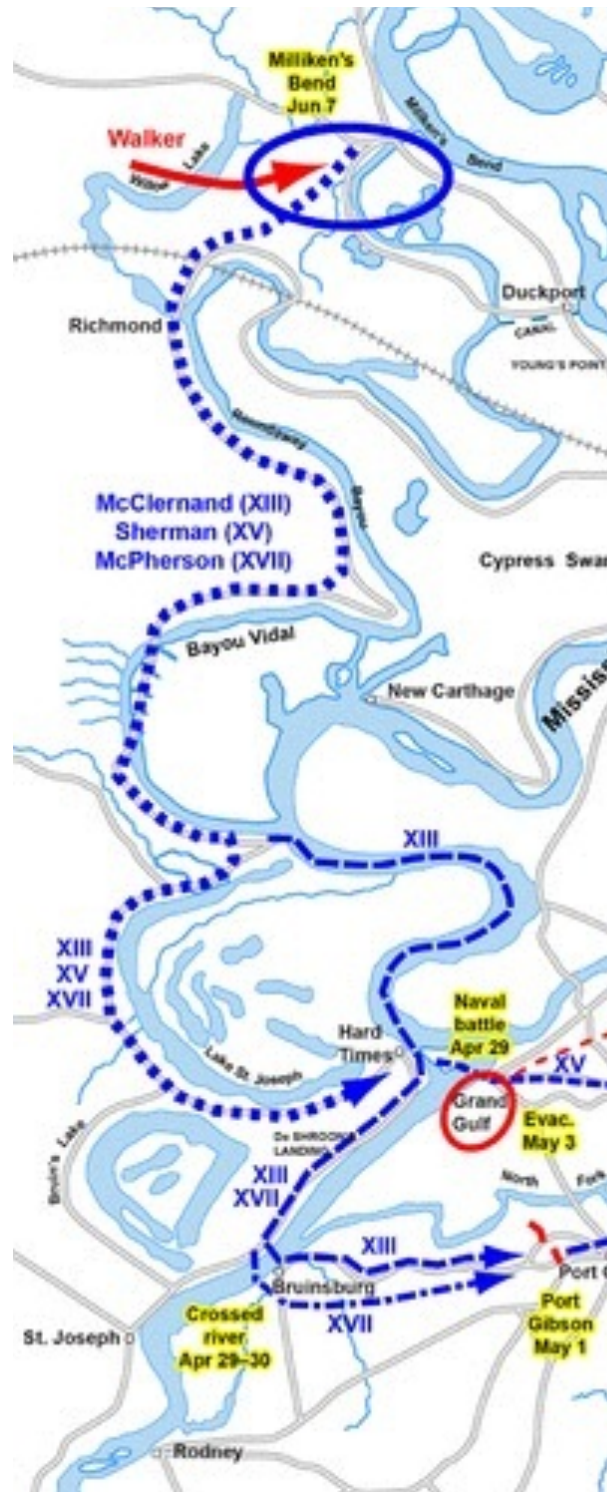
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Presentation Outline

- Grant's move down the River's west bank
- Porter runs the Vicksburg batteries
- The Union landing on the MS side of the River
- Battle of Port Gibson
- Four battles in six days
 - Raymond, Jackson, Champion Hill and Big Black Bridge
- Siege of Vicksburg and ultimate victory

Grant's West Bank move



- Grant advanced Corps in relays: McClernand's XIII, McPherson's XVII, Sherman's XV (left flank)
- Naval assault on Grand Gulf failed on Apr 29, 1863. Grant, feeling unarmed transports were no match for the guns, moved further downriver and crossed at Bruinsburg rather than Romney after hearing from a slave the former was undefended

Running the batteries



April 16: 12 barges and 7 ironclads. 300,000 rations and ammunition

Concentrated fire of the centre, upper and lower batteries, both water and bluff, was directed upon the channel, which here ran within one hundred yards of the shore. At the same moment innumerable floats of turpentine and other combustible materials were set ablaze. In the face of all this fire, the boats made their way with but little loss except the transport Henry Clay which was set on fire and sunk.

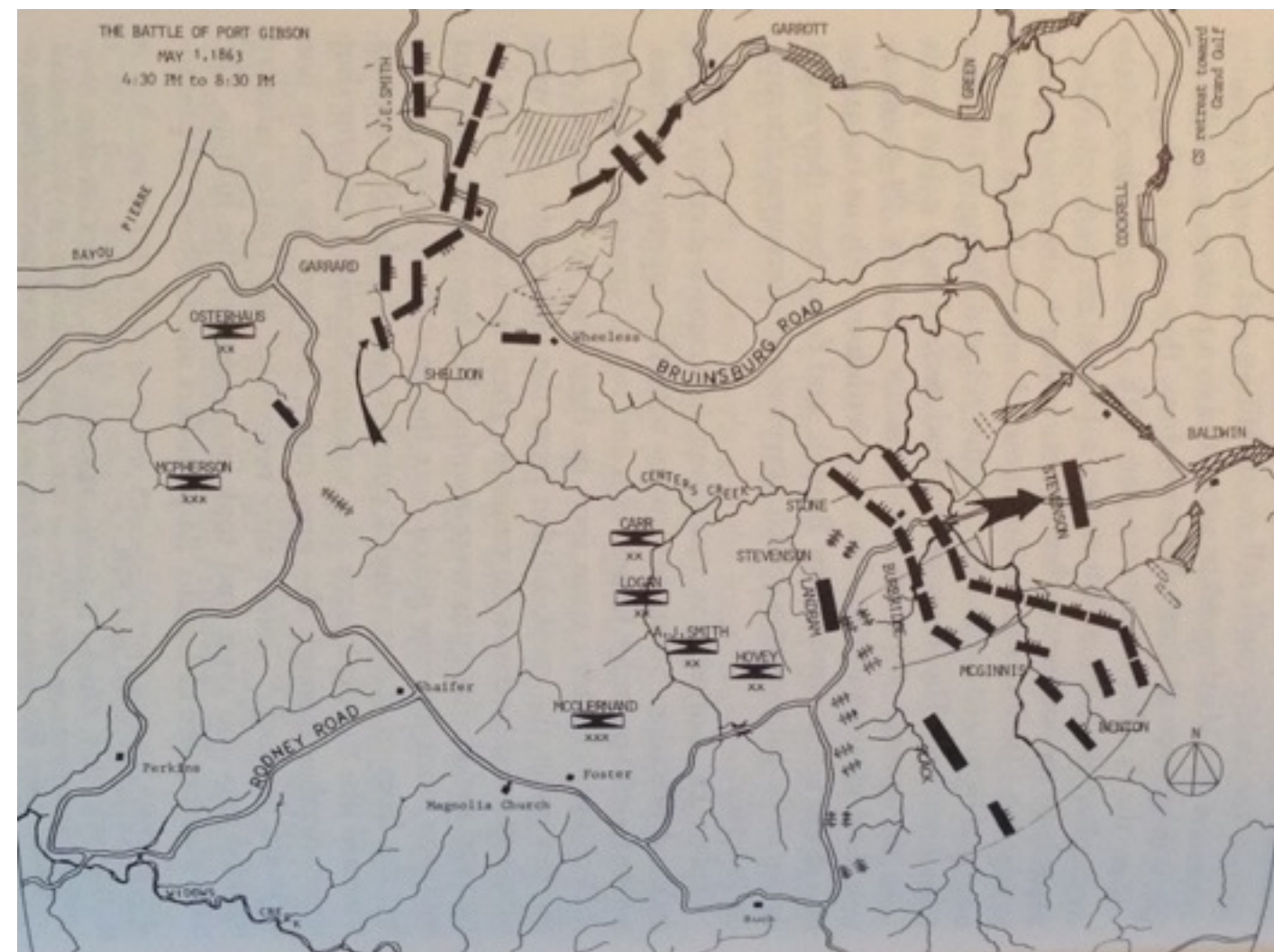
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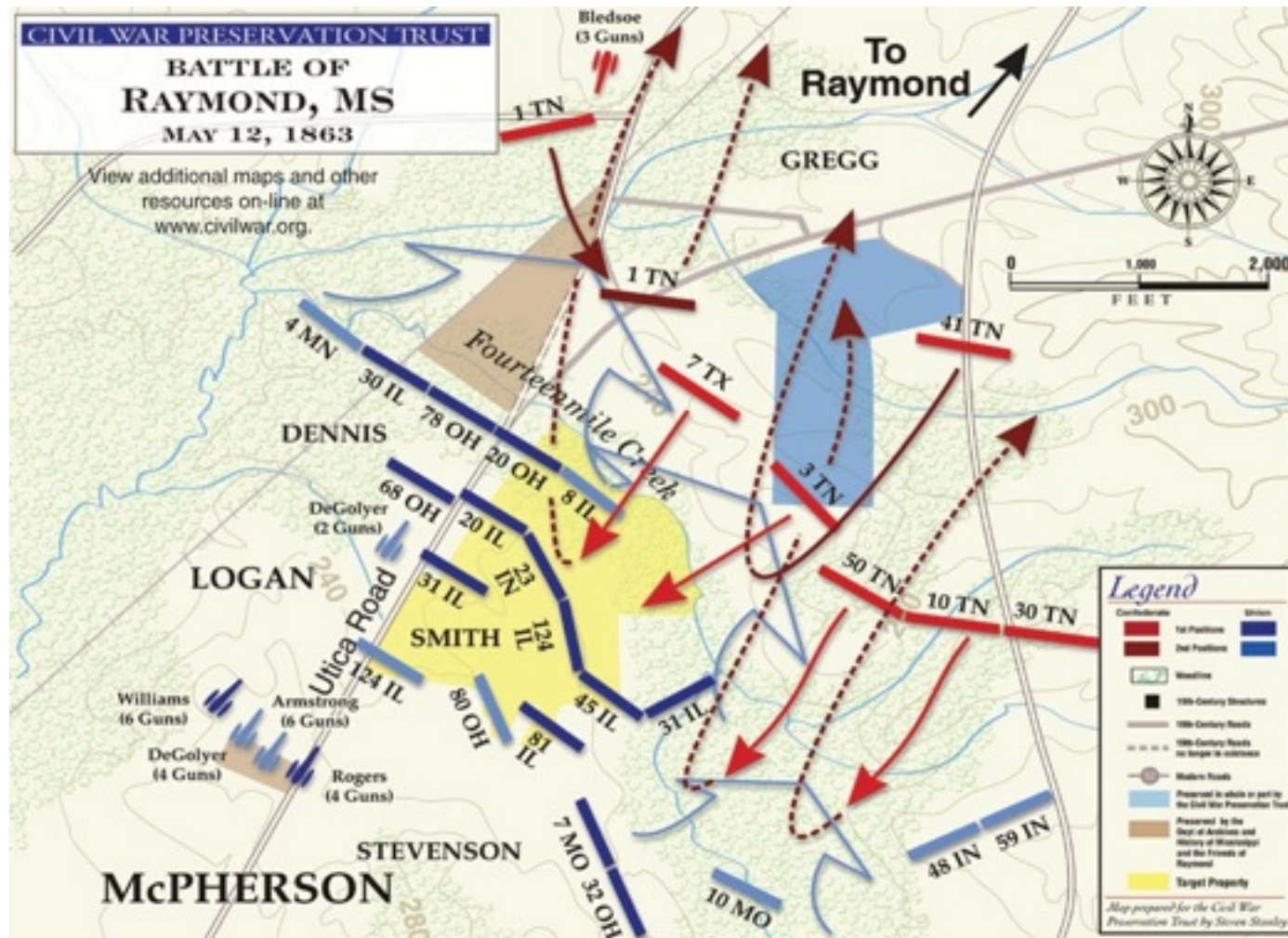
April 22: 12 barges, 5 side wheel and 1 stern wheel steam transports. 600,000 rations

Battle of Port Gibson

- May 1, 1863 McClelland's XIII Corps vs. Bowen
- Union had interior lines, but terrain precluded their use
- Bowen (and Pemberton) only realized Bruinsburg was the main effort after 5 hours of fighting! This kept forces tied down at Grand Gulf
- Union victory resulted in Confederate retreat to Big Black Bridge and Vicksburg, behind the Big Black River



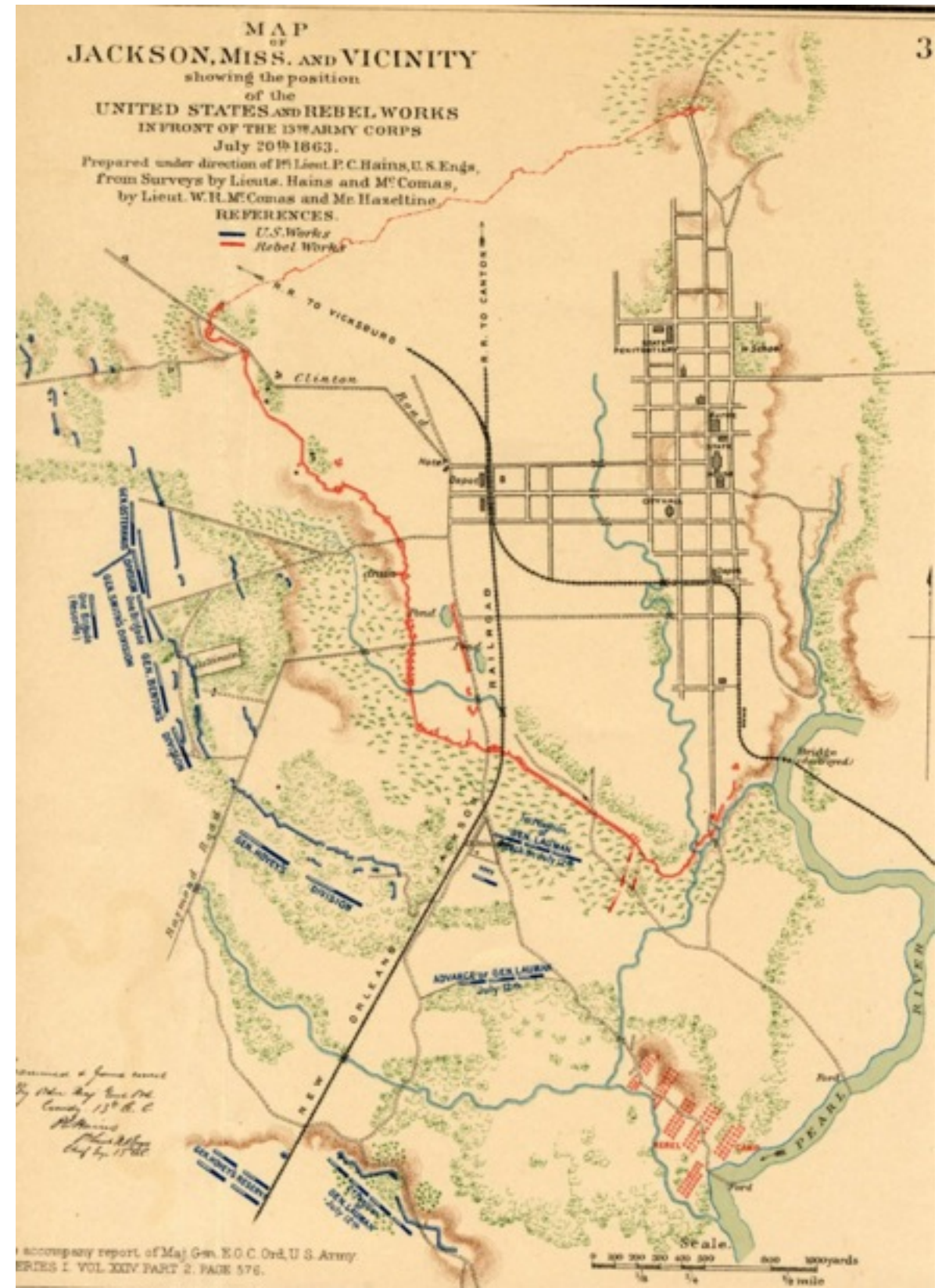
Battle of Raymond



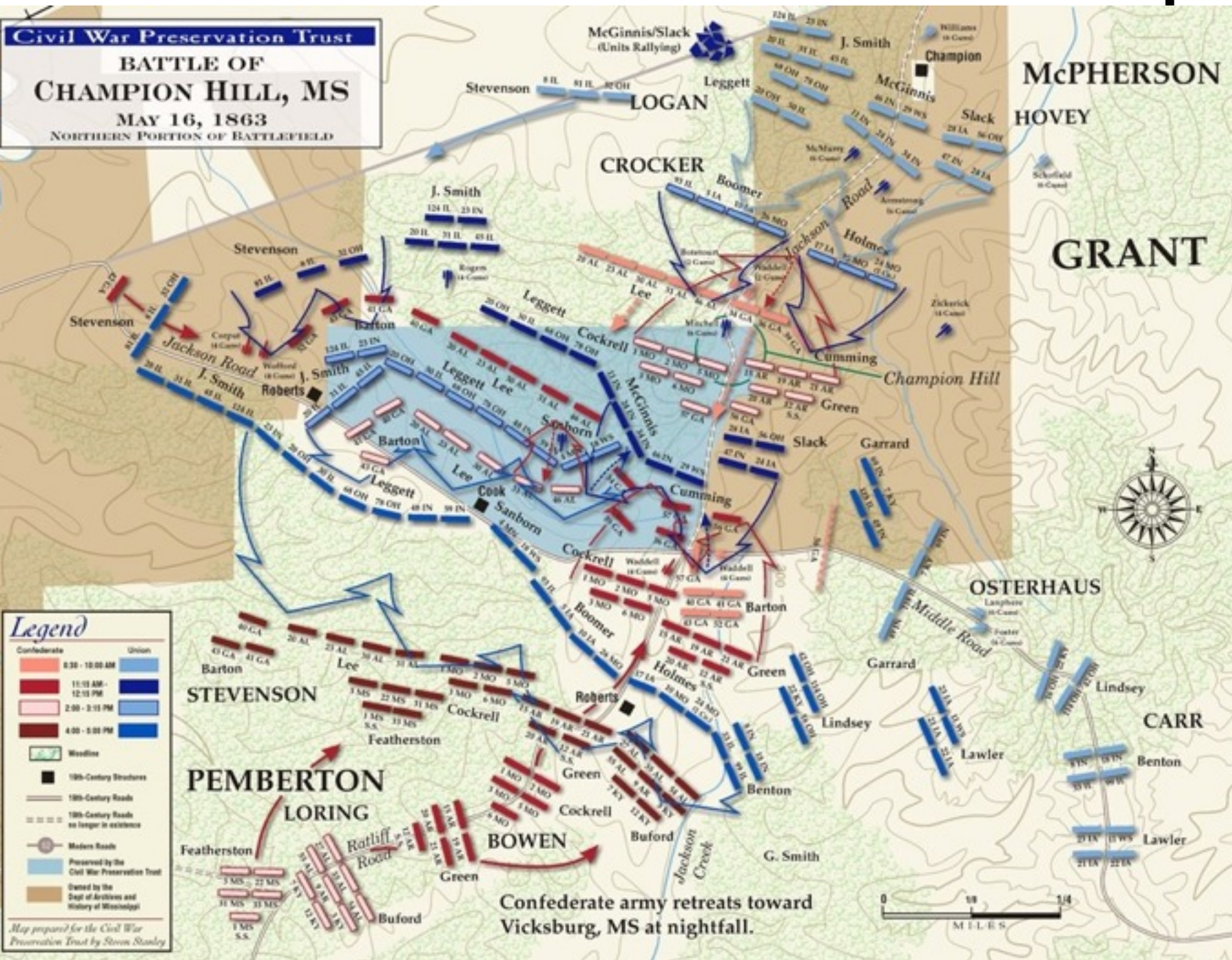
- May 12, 1863: McPherson's XVII Corps vs. Gregg's Brigade
- XVII Corps was committed piecemeal, teaching McPherson lessons he would use in the future. Overwhelming numbers overcame this and eventually drove Confederates to the north and east
- Important result: Grant realized CS troops were gathering at Jackson in greater numbers than he thought. Diverted drive from Edwards Station to Jackson to eliminate:
 - Rebel threat to rear
 - Jx as a communication and manufacturing center

Battle of Jackson

- May 14, 1863: Sherman's XV Corps from SW converge on Jackson with McPherson's XVII Corps from W
- Gregg misinterpreted Union effort and concentrated CS troops against McPherson
- Johnston upon arrival in Jackson on May 13 wired Richmond "I am too late" and ordered Jx abandoned at 0300 the 14th.



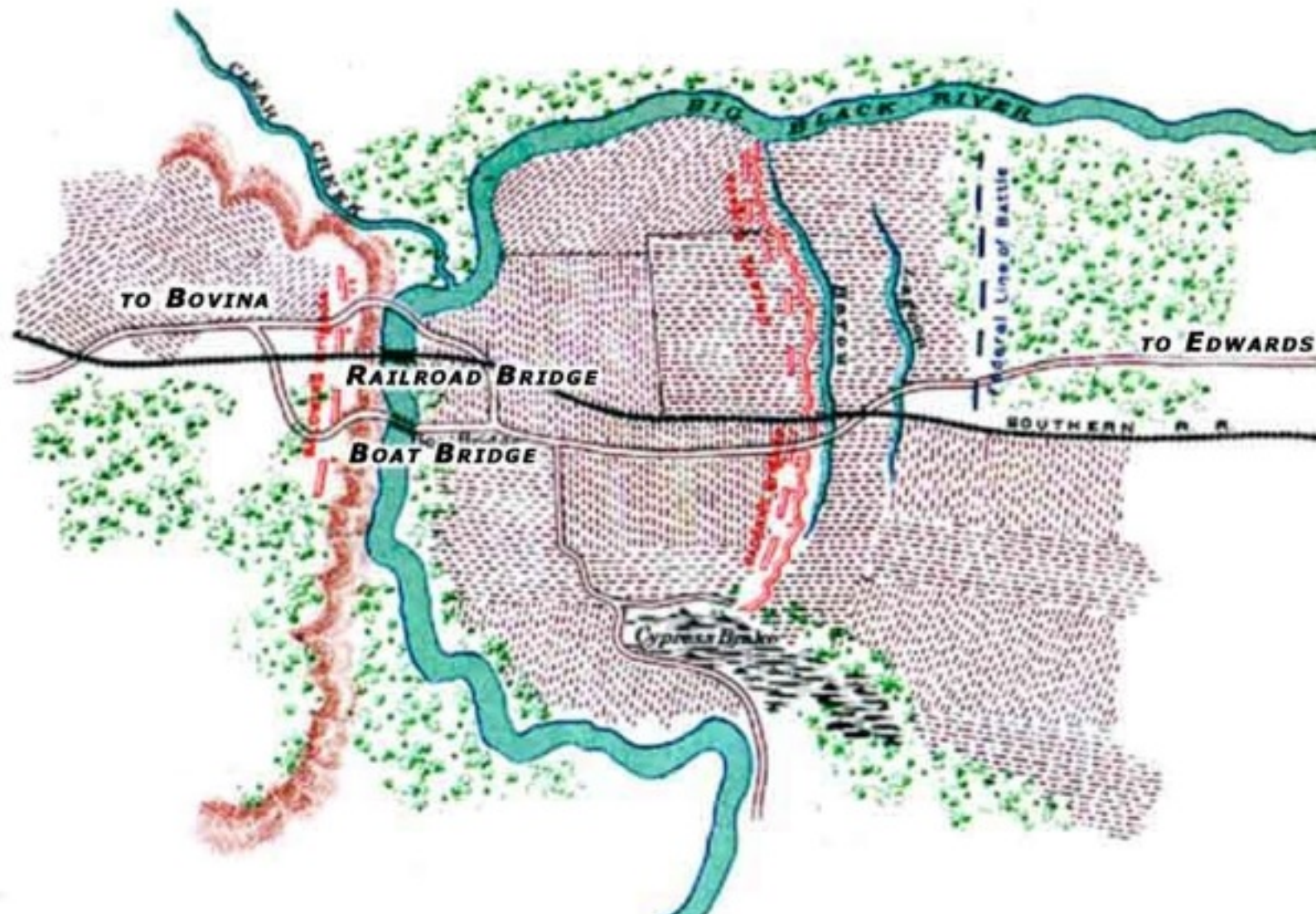
Battle of Champion Hill



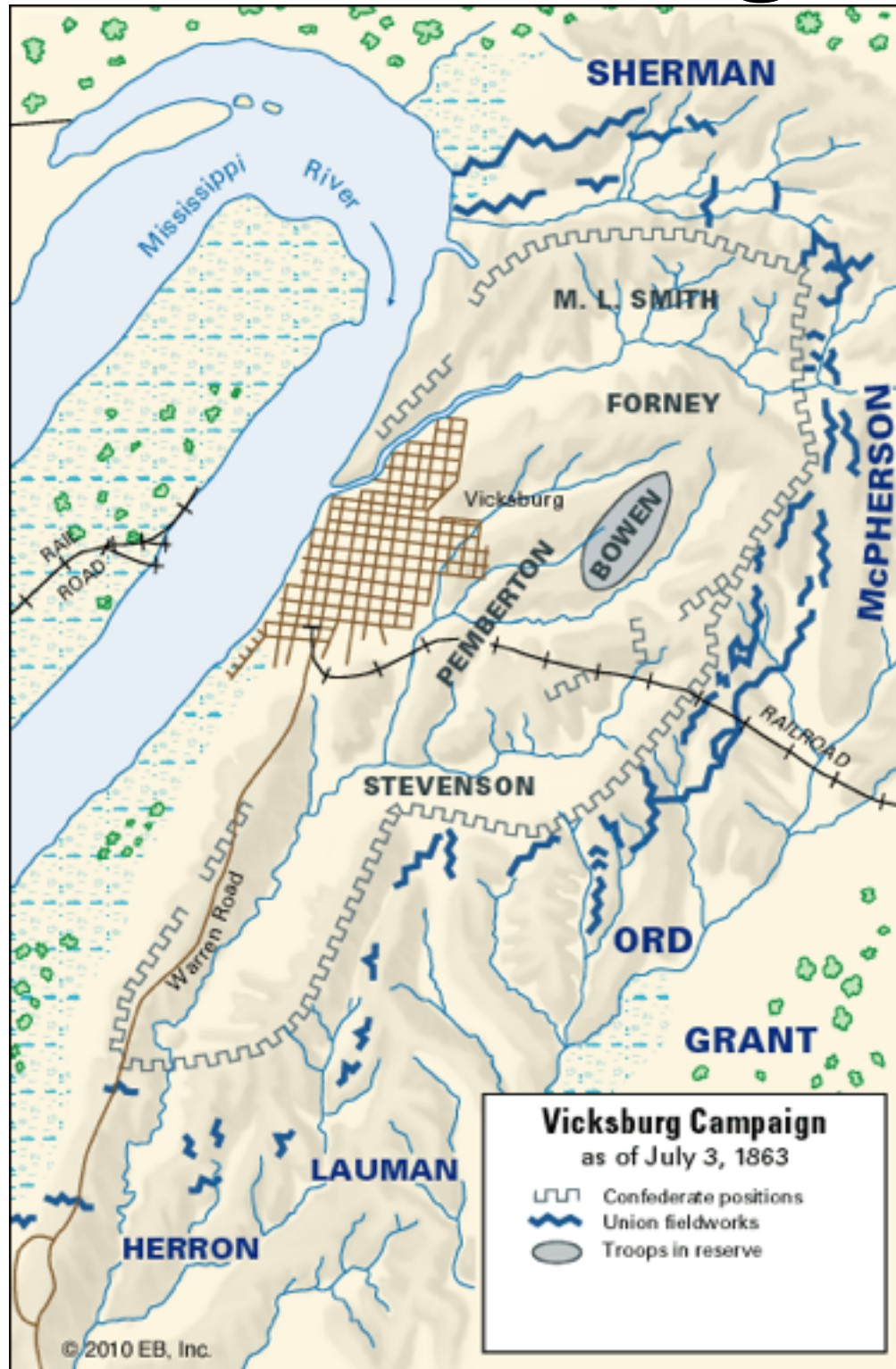
- May 16, 1863: McPherson's XVII Corps and McClernand's XIII Corps converge on Pemberton's 3 divisions from the W and SW, respectively
- McClernand failed to cut off Confederate escape route, so they retreat to Big Black River line

Battle of Big Black Bridge

- McClelland's XIII Corps, following up on the victory at Champion Hill, assaults Bowen's division defending east bank of Big Black River
- Routed Confederates retreat into Vicksburg defenses



Assaults and Siege of Vicksburg and capitulation



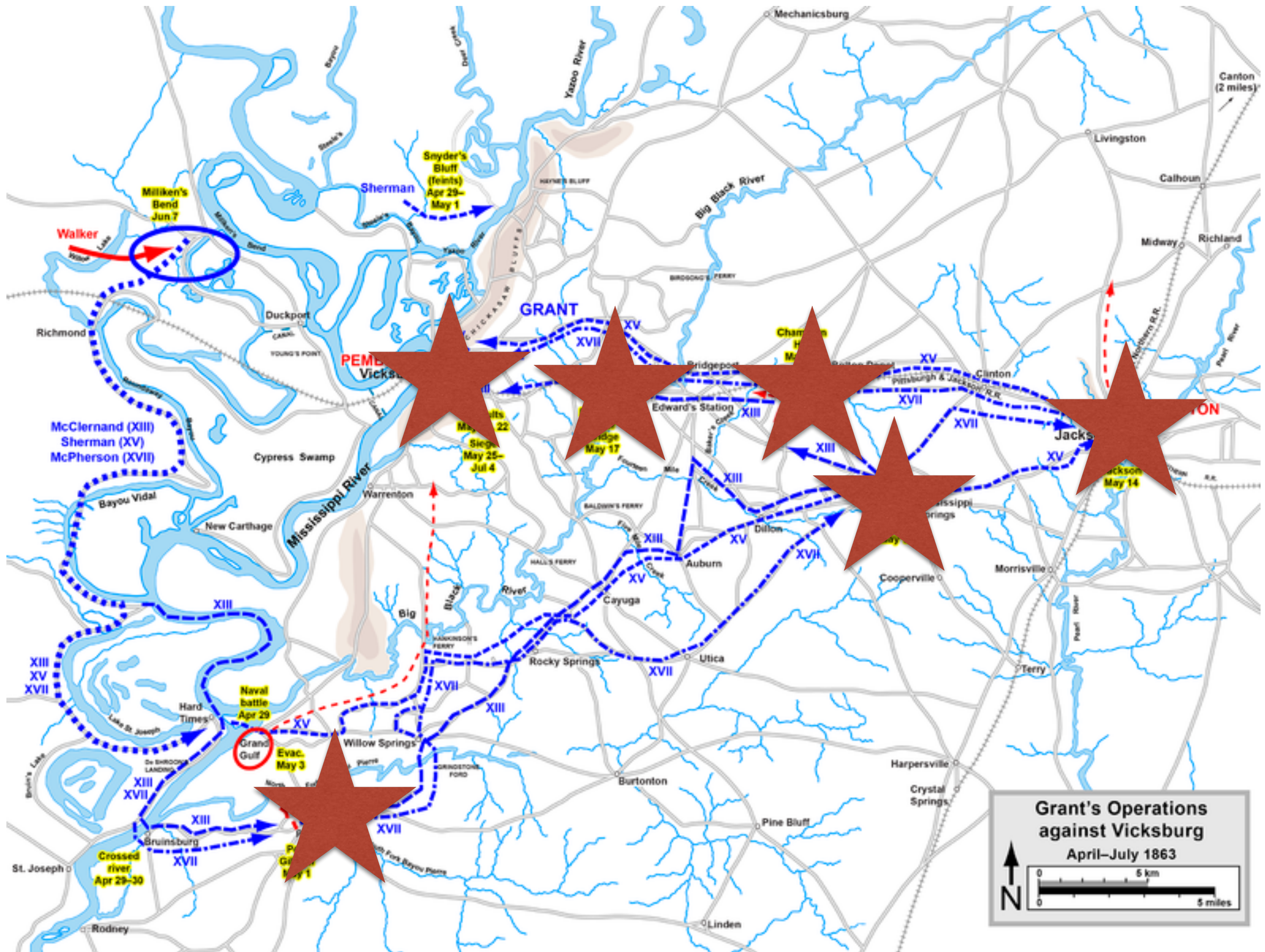
- Two failed assaults (May 19th and May 22nd) followed by a 47 day siege resulted in surrender of the Vicksburg garrison on July 4, 1863
- May 19: 157/777/8 vs. 8/62/0+
- May 22: 502/2550/147 no CSA reports
 - Grant sacks McClelland for insubordination. Replaced by E.O.C. Ord.
- Surrender netted 29,495 men and 172 guns
- Lincoln to Grant: "I wish now to make the personal acknowledgement that you were right and I was wrong."

Events during the siege

- Johnston's Army of Relief kept off-balance by raids in NW MS (Mizner). Relief attempted in June from Jackson and trans-Mississippi when Grant had already received reinforcements from upriver
- Mine explosion beneath the Louisiana Redan
- *The Daily Citizen* newspaper printed on wallpaper
- "Appeal for help" on June 28 to Gen. Pemberton from "Many Soldiers": "This army is now ripe for mutiny, unless it can be fed."

Consequences

- Campaign battle casualties: Union 10,142; Confederate 9,091 (+29,495 surrendered)
- Confederate violation of paroles made at Vicksburg and Port Hudson (“invalid on technical grounds”) led to Grant abolishing the parole system leading to Andersonville horrors among others
- Five days after Vicksburg’s fall, Gardiner surrendered ~6,000 garrison at Port Hudson to Banks forces. Lincoln to James Conkling: “The Father of Waters again goes unvexed to the sea.”
- A majority of Confederates who signed paroles deserted the Army once it marched out of Vicksburg and went home



Final Thoughts

- Josiah Gorgas' diary: "... Vicksburgh and Port Hudson capitulated, surrendering thirty-five thousand men and forty-five thousand arms... Yesterday we rode on the pinnacle of success — today absolute ruin seems to be our portion. The Confederacy totters to its destruction."
- *Memoirs of General William T. Sherman, by Himself*: "The campaign of Vicksburg, in its conception and execution, belonged exclusively to General Grant, not only in the great whole, but in the thousands of details... No commanding general of an army ever gave more of his attention to details..."
- British Gen. J.F.C. Fuller: "Vicksburg, and not Gettysburg, was the crisis of the Confederacy."

Final irony...

- On April 27, 1876 a new channel formed in the Mississippi River and bypassed Vicksburg
- US Army CoE dug a canal in the Yazoo so Vx port facilities were still useful



Grant's School of Hard Knocks

- Change your base of operations when you are thrown a curve ball
- Develop a good working relationship with the Navy
- Supplement your supply line by local foraging
- Divert the enemy's attention from your true objective
- Lessons were learned and applied when Grant became commander of all US forces

Internet resources

- www.civilwaralbum.com/vicksburg/index.htm

“A Virtual Tour” photo album of modern sites pertaining to the Vicksburg Campaign

- www.nps.gov/abpp/battles/bycampgn.htm

Text description of battles in *all* Theaters by the American Battlefield Protection Program (ABPP)

- <http://civilwaranimated.com/VicksburgAnimation.html>

Animated map of all Western Theater actions up to and including Vicksburg's surrender