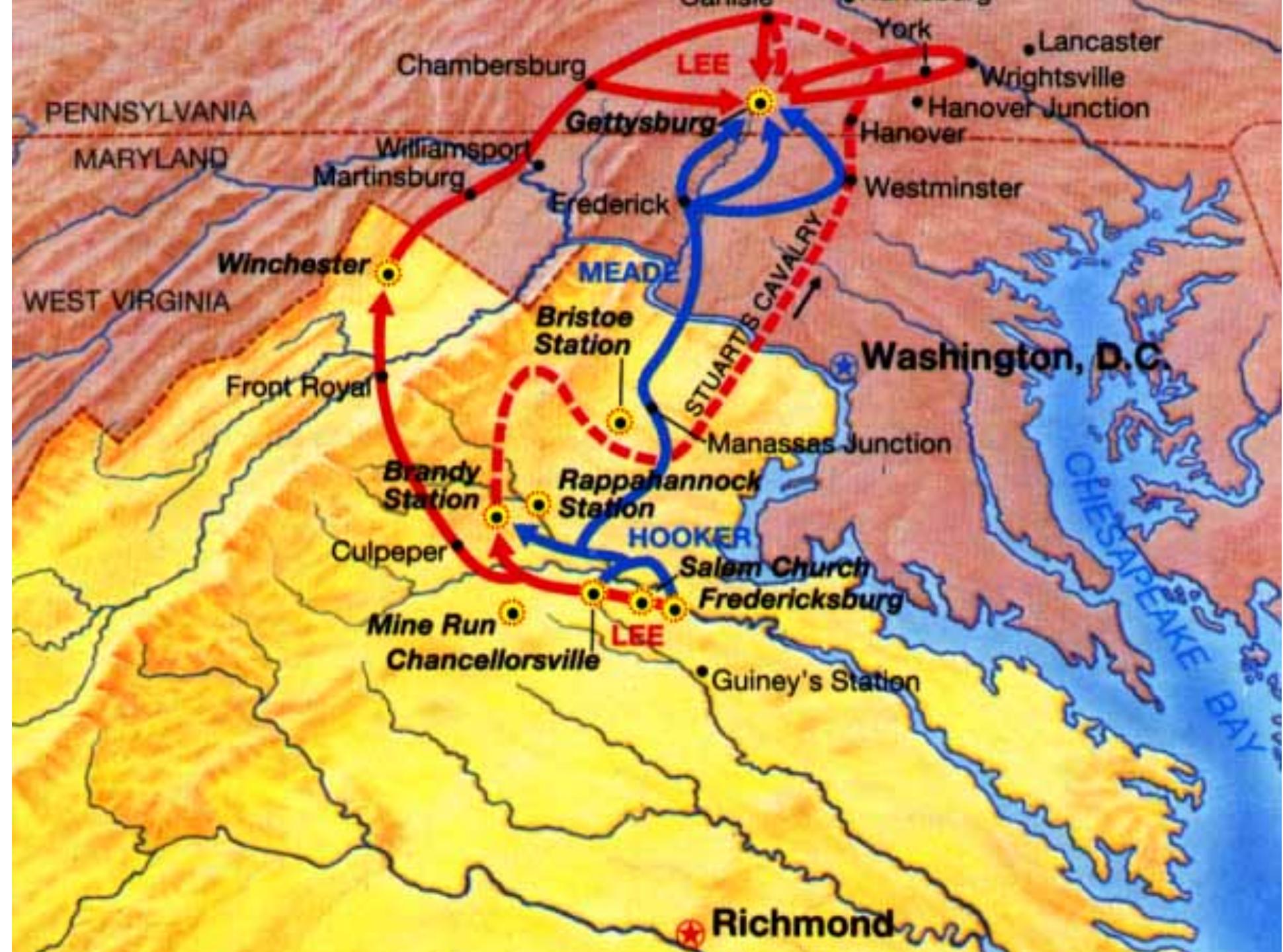


# Gettysburg and Vicksburg

Early July, 1863

# Military situation, early 1863

- Morale in Lee's Army was running high
- Union army discouraged
  - Emancipation Proclamation unpopular with some troops and many northern Democrats
  - Major Union defeat at Fredericksburg, VA, in late 1862
- Lincoln puts General "Fighting Joe" Hooker in charge
  - Instituted various measures to boost morale
- Yet at Chancellorsville, the US is again badly whipped
  - Despite having twice as many men, better fed and equipped
  - And having good military intelligence in advance



# Joseph Hooker

- Some of same organizational strengths of McClellan
- Had a good plan for defeating Lee's forces
- But execution poor
- Knocked unconscious at Chancellorsville
- Resigns his command right before Gettysburg



# Chancellorsville Campaign, May 1863

- Considered Lee's greatest victory
- When the Union army began to advance against him, Lee divided his army
  - Went against one of the key principles of warfare: when faced with a larger enemy, never divide forces
- Lee won his “perfect battle,” but paid a high price
  - 13,000 casualties; 22% of his entire army
    - Lost his best general, Stonewall Jackson
- Union lost 17,000 men; 13% of Army of the Potomac
  - May 3: second bloodiest day in the Civil War
- Heightened Lee's feeling of invincibility



# Debating Confederate strategy

- Council of War meeting in Richmond where Confederates debate options
  - Lee could send large number of troops west to protect Vicksburg
  - Or he could hunker down defensively
  - But Lee wanted instead to invade the north
- Why?
  - Growing peace movement in the Union
  - Eager to erode northern support for war; eye on 1864 election
  - Still faint hope for British recognition
  - Wanted to give Virginia a break from fighting
    - Needed to feed and supply his troops
  - Hoping for that one decisive victory
    - “Chancellorsville syndrome”

# Gettysburg (July 1-3, 1863)

- Largest and most famous battle in U.S. history; an action of “gigantic magnitude” (NYT)
  - 160,000 troops involved
  - More than 50,000 casualties
    - 23,000 Union; 28,000 Confederate
      - 7k killed; 33k wounded; 11k missing
- Location of the battle somewhat accidental
  - Confederate troops seeking shoes ran into Union troops
  - But was not entirely random, because Gettysburg was at the confluence of a number roads
    - Allowed troops to arrive relatively quickly

# Gettysburg



# Gettysburg, cont.

- Union forces led by Gen. George Meade
  - Had *just* been put in command of the Army of the Potomac
- July 1: Confederate victory; only fall of dark saves the Union
- July 2: Union troops arrive (some having marched 30 miles!)
  - Massive and dramatic fighting (Little Round Top, Culp's Hill)
- July 3: Gen. James Longstreet urges Lee to strategically retreat
  - Lee insists on attacking
  - Pickett's charge
    - Biggest infantry assault of war: 13k men charging across an open field
    - Considered single biggest miscalculation by a general in the war
      - (50% casualty rate)
    - Lee apologized to troops; offered to resign
- But Lincoln blamed Meade blamed for not pursuing retreating Confederate troops
  - Gen. Meade offered to resign, too!

# Gettysburg







# Mass death

*"It seemed impossible to tread the streets without walking over maimed men . . . they lay on the bloody ground, sick with the poisons of wounds, grim with the dust of long marches and the smoke and powder of battle, looking up with wild haggard faces imploringly for succor."*

Sophronia Bucklin, Union Nurse



A HARVEST OF DEATH, GETTYSBURG, PENNSYLVANIA

# Gettysburg Address, Nov. 19, 1863

- Delivered on occasion of the dedication of the Soldiers' National Cemetery
- Lincoln wasn't even the featured speaker
  - Edward Everett; famous orator who spoke from memory for two hours: "*I should be glad, if I could flatter myself that I came as near to the central idea of the occasion, in two hours, as you did in two minutes.*"
- Speech didn't attract much attention in Lincoln's lifetime
- "Rediscovered" during 1876 Centennial
- What was Lincoln attempting to accomplish?
- What makes it so meaningful?

Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field, as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives, that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

But, in a larger sense, we can not dedicate— we can not consecrate— we can not hallow this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have con-

never forgotten us. But in a larger sense, we can not dedicate— we can not consecrate— we can not hallow this ground. The living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion—that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain—that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom—and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

Abraham Lincoln.

November 19. 1863.

# Gettysburg Address

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***“Fourscore and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation or any nation so conceived and so dedicated can long endure. We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field as a final resting-place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.”***

# Gettysburg Address

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*“But in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow this ground. The brave men, living and dead who struggled here have consecrated it far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us the living rather to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion—that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain, **that this nation under God shall have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people, by the people, for the people shall not perish from the earth.**”*

# Turning Point?

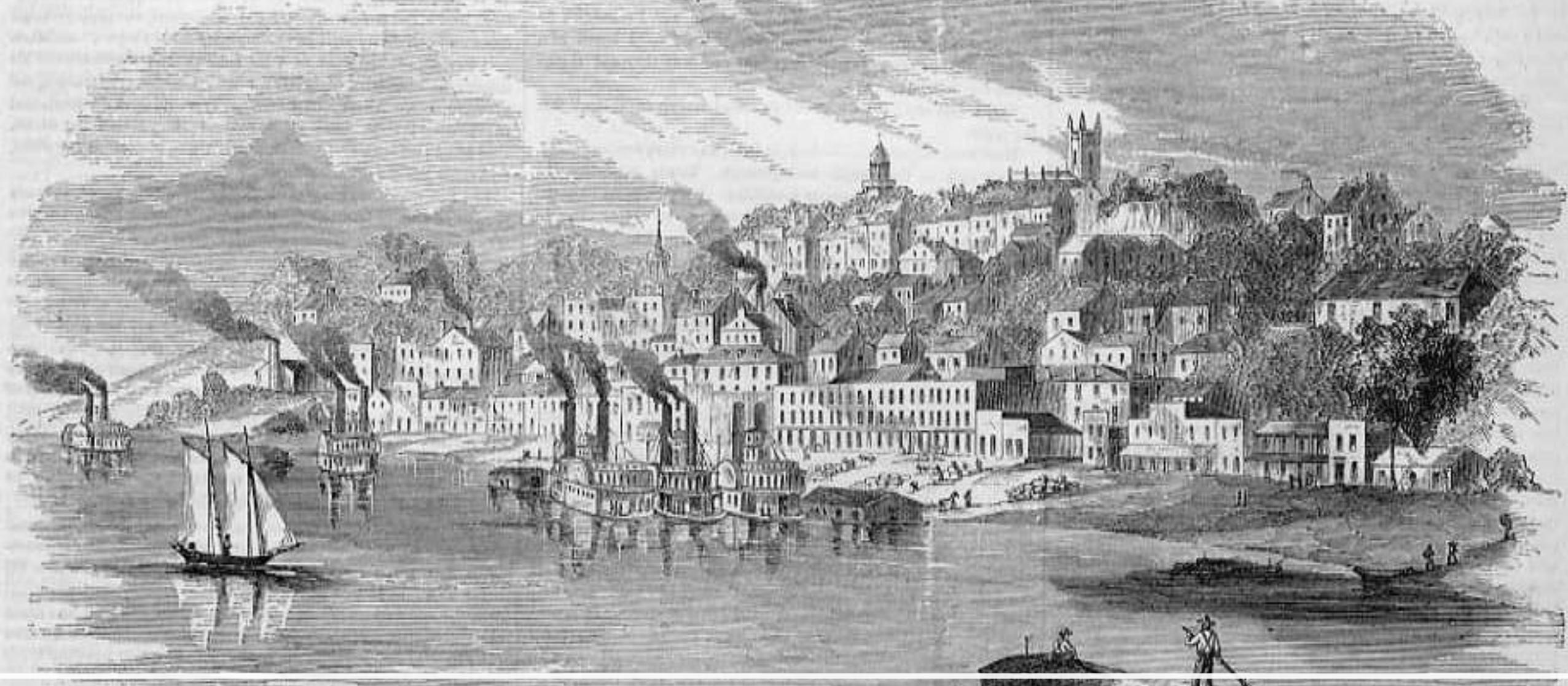
- Gettysburg often seen as decisive turning point of the war
  - Confederates never again threatened North
- But Union victory at Vicksburg—which incredibly occurred at *the very same time*—was strategically even more important
  - At the time, Jefferson Davis was much more depressed about the loss at Vicksburg than Gettysburg
- Also, if Gettysburg was so decisive, why did the war last almost two more years?
  - Points to the fallacy of looking at the war solely or even primarily as a military operation
    - Political factors just as important

# Changing nature of the war, beginning mid-1863

- From intermittent battles to constant campaigning
- Last 2½ years of the war: Lengthy sieges; trench warfare
- Union pursued a more centralized military strategy
  - Campaigns on multiple fronts; higher death rates
- New kind of warfare involving *massive* armies cut off from their supply lines
  - Pioneered especially by Grant and William T. Sherman
  - Destroying civilian morale as a war aim

# Vicksburg, MS

- Population of about 5K
- Sits on a high bluff, was heavily fortified
- Strategically critical
  - Railroads – brought in supplies and food from the West
  - Last stretch of the Mississippi River the Confederacy controlled was between Vicksburg and Port Huron
- Lincoln knew this topography well
  - Had ridden flat boats down the river as a young man

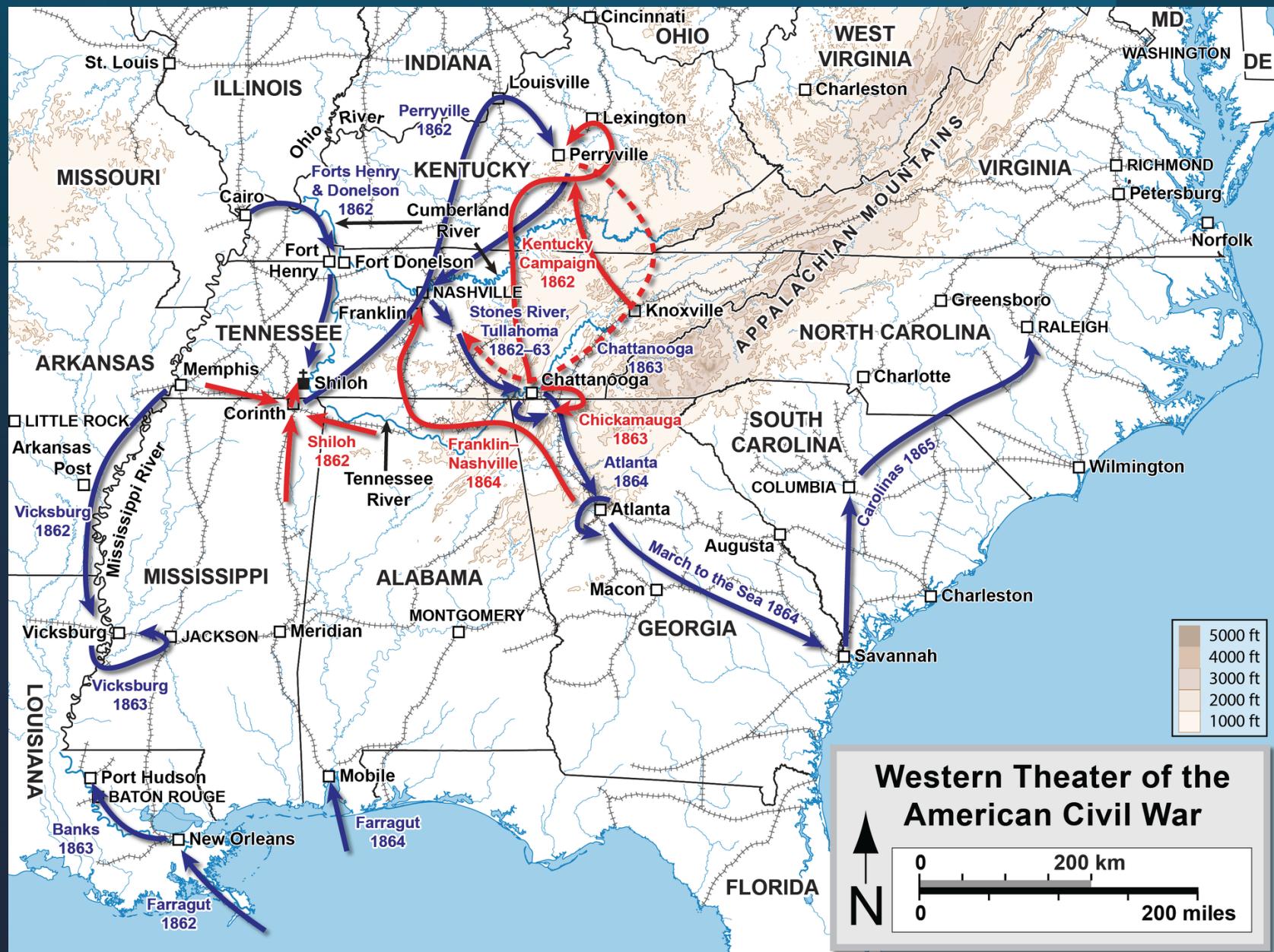


Vicksburg, 1855



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# Failed attempts (Feb.-March 1863)

- Grant made **four** failed attempts to get to Vicksburg
- Some involved building canals, even trying to get the river to change course (!)
- Incredibly difficult labor – Union soldiers laboring in the muck
  - Succumbing to malaria
  - Grant widely criticized in the press
- But ultimately revealed his extraordinary tenacity



# Crossing the Mississippi

- Grant came up with a new scheme
  - Have Adm. David Dixon Porter takes his fleet past Vicksburg (which he did on the night of April 16)
- Relied on engineers to build bridges across the marshy bayous
  - They built 4; about 4K feet of bridges
- Also relied on intelligence provided by the enslaved
- Had his men cross MS and live off the land
- Once he's across, he decided to take Jackson, MS first
- Then, laid siege to Vicksburg



BY CURRIER & IRENE,  
COLUMBIA.

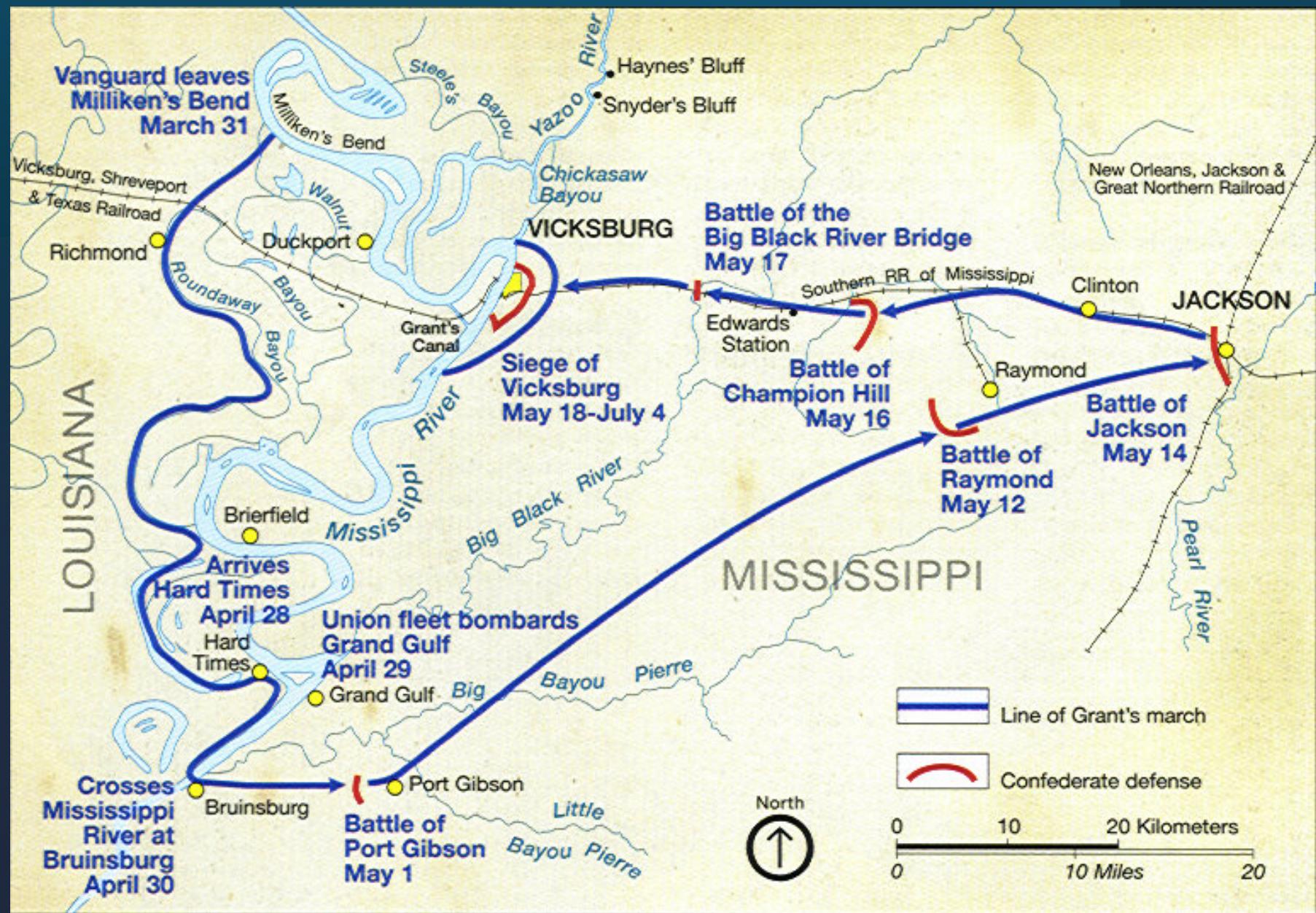
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LAFAYETTE & GENI PRICE.

FLAG SHIP BENTON.

### ADMIRAL PORTER'S FLEET RUNNING THE REBEL BLOCKADE OF THE MISSISSIPPI AT VICKSBURG, APRIL 16<sup>TH</sup> 1863

At ten P.M. the boats left their moorings steamed down the river, the Benton, Admiral Porter, taking the lead — as they approached the point opposite the town, a terrible fire of the centre, upper and lower batteries, both water and land, was directed upon the channel, which here ran within one hundred yards of the shore. At the same moment carts 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



# Grant after crossing MS

Grant's memoirs: "*I felt a degree of relief scarcely ever equaled since. Vicksburg was not yet taken it is true, nor were its defenders demoralized by any of our previous moves. I was now in the enemy's country, with a vast river and the stronghold of Vicksburg between me and my base of supplies. But I was on dry ground on the same side of the river with the enemy. All the campaigns, labors, hardships and exposures from the month of December previous to this time that had been made and endured, were for the accomplishment of this one object.*"

# Siege of Vicksburg (May 26-July 3)

- Lasted for 46 days
- Some of the first real trench warfare
- Civilians dug caves into the riverbank
- Unions used mines to try to weaken the Confederate fortifications
- Confederates grew hungry; rationing imposed
- By the end of the siege, Grant had over 80,000 men under his command
- Pemberton has only 30,000

# Surrender

- On July 3 (same day as Pickett's charge), Grant moved within 100 yards of rebels
- On July 4 Gen. Pemberton surrendered
  - Soldiers and civilians fed by Union Army
  - Confederate soldiers were paroled after signing oath!
    - Left city with parole documents promising not to take up arms again
    - Grant faced many of them again at Chattanooga

VICKSBURG, MISSISSIPPI, JULY 8<sup>th</sup> A. D. 1863.

TO ALL WHOM IT MAY CONCERN, KNOW YE THAT:

I, W. D. Denman, a private, 20<sup>th</sup> Reg't Ala.

Vols. C. S. A., being a Prisoner of War, in the hands of the United States Forces, in virtue of the capitulation of the City of Vicksburg and its garrison, by Lieut. Gen John C. Pemberton, C. S. A., Commanding, on the 4th day of July, 1863, do in pursuance of the terms of said capitulation, give this my solemn parole under oath—

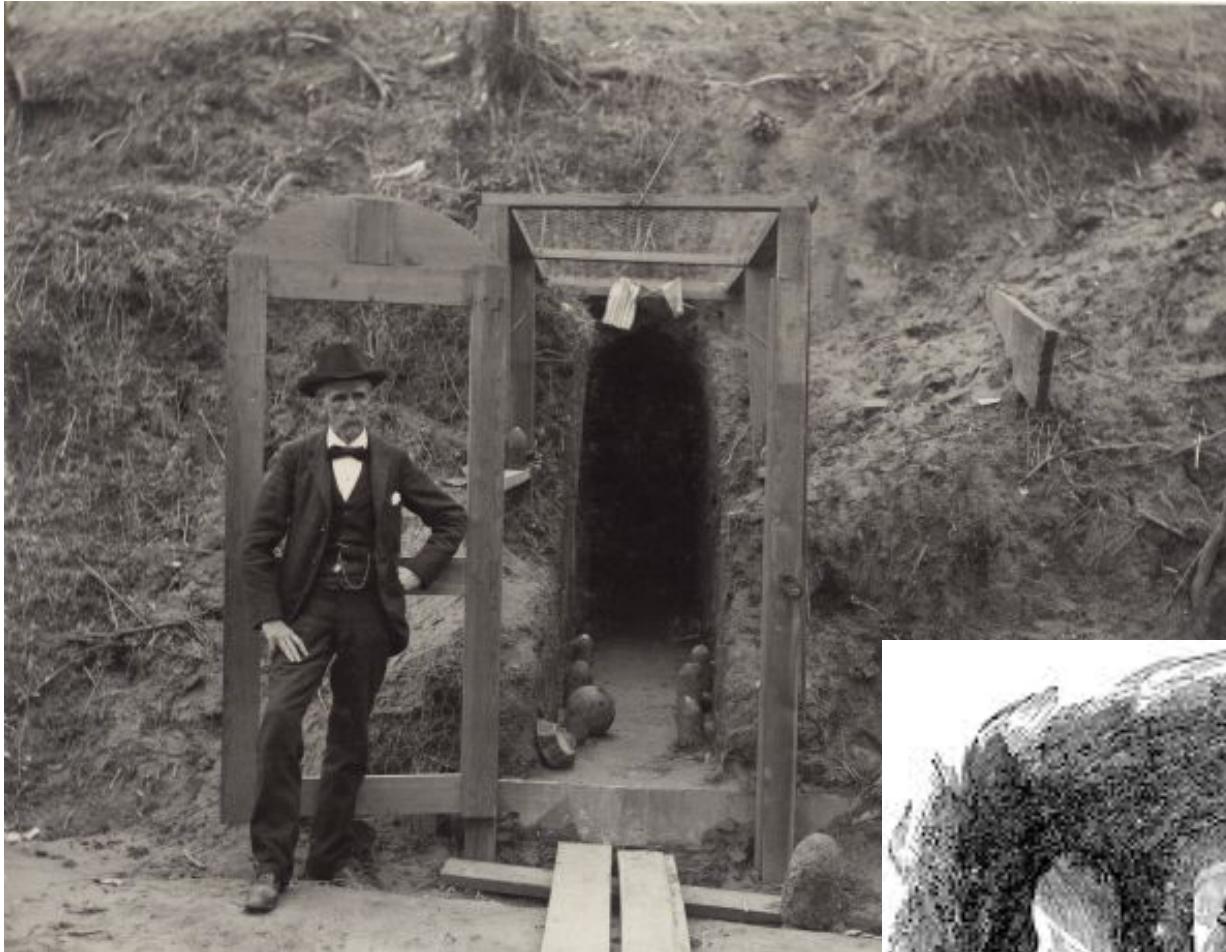
That I will not take up arms again against the United States, nor serve in any military, police, or constabulary force in any Fort, Garrison or field work, held by the Confederate States of America, against the United States of America, nor as guard of prisons, depots or stores, nor discharge any duties usually performed by Officers or soldiers against the United States of America, until duly exchanged by the proper authorities.

W. D. Denman

Sworn to and subscribed before me at Vicksburg, Miss., this 8<sup>th</sup> day of July, 1863.

John L. Fry 20<sup>th</sup> Reg't Ohio Vols.  
Major AND PAROLING OFFICER.





# Vicksburg: Impact

- When Vicksburg fell, it undermined the notion of a Confederate nation
- Along with Gettysburg victory, gave a huge boost to Northern morale
- Had a big impact on the Confederate elections
- Elevated Grant